

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*****Understanding the Homeland Threat Landscape -
Considerations for the 112th Congress***

February 9, 2011 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the full Committee hearing entitled “Understanding the Homeland Threat Landscape - Considerations for the 112th Congress”:

“I want to encourage my colleagues to remember that our words travel far beyond these four walls.

For several weeks, we have seen protests across North Africa and the Middle East. In many ways, these protests represent a demand for democracy. Yet we know that this same region has been home to some who have called for jihad.

The United States—the world’s only remaining super power—occupies a providential position. If we take the right action, many of our concerns about a terrorist threat from this region could be significantly reduced.

That is why I want to ensure that our examination of the global threat from terrorist activity does not complicate the job being done by the State Department and others in this Administration. We must recognize that this predominantly Muslim area of the world is seeking to embrace democracy. Let us take care that nothing we do or say here today works to undermine those efforts.

Since September 11th, the threat of terrorist attack has become an undeniable and unsettling feature of American society. However, combating the terrorist threat depends on accurate intelligence and an unbiased assessment of the size, scope, depth and breadth of the threat.

The lessons learned from past wars are clear—we cannot defeat an enemy we do not know. Unreliable information, personal opinion or narrow agendas cannot inform our assessment of a threat to our nation.

We have seen the result of unreliable intelligence in Iraq. Our examination of the global threat must look at the vulnerabilities within commerce, transportation and all aspects of our modern lives. We must find and eliminate these vulnerabilities, focus on what we can do, and keep this nation safe.

We can secure an airplane. We can secure the border. We can secure a federal building. We can secure a chemical plant or a nuclear facility. We must not become distracted from our basic mission to keep this nation safe and maintain the security of the people.”

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