

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*****Strengthening International Cooperation on Aviation Security***

April 7, 2011 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Transportation Security subcommittee hearing entitled “Strengthening International Cooperation on Aviation Security”:

“Mr. Chairman, let me just say for the record that I would like to work with you and the Full Committee Chairman in defending the jurisdiction of this Committee and Subcommittee with respect to oversight of TSA. We have the black letter jurisdiction over TSA, not the Transportation Committee, and I think we need to address what I see as a problem with that Committee encroaching in our issue area.

As the Department of Homeland Security and TSA actively engage the international community on aviation security issues, it is important for Congress and this Committee to have a clear understanding of the international landscape that is before us.

To secure the international aviation system, we need strong security programs that can be effectively implemented throughout the supply chain, leveraging the resources, intelligence and expertise of governments and the private sector.

Today, I look forward to gaining a greater understanding of where we are today in global aviation security and where we should be. With that said, I would like to welcome and recognize our witnesses. I know that several of you have had to travel overseas to be here today. I appreciate your willingness to provide us with your statements on such important issues.

As has been said, the attack on December 25th 2009 was a reminder that terrorists continue to target our aviation system, and that the threat from overseas is a serious concern. Last Congress, I held a Full Committee hearing that took a close look at the events surrounding this attack, and this Subcommittee conducted important oversight with respect to the incident involving the attempted shipment of explosives from Yemen to U.S. locations.

Our hearings and oversight have shed light on security screening, counterterrorism and information sharing processes that must be improved across governments and stakeholders as we continue to address the very real terrorist threat.

I think the Department has made significant efforts to update aviation security in the aftermath of the Flight 253 and Yemen incidents by strengthening relationships with international partners and enhancing passenger and cargo security for flights inbound to the U.S. Today, I look forward to an update from TSA’s Office of Global Strategies on its developments in partnering with foreign countries and how we are bolstering security.

I would also like to take this opportunity to commend I-CAO for adopting the Declaration on Aviation Security. This declaration, as championed by President Obama and Secretary Napolitano, is a great step in harmonizing security operations and standards internationally.

Establishing key partnerships and relationships with other countries is a critical component towards achieving global aviation security, and I think that we are on the right path forward in establishing and maintaining these relationships which will ultimately help to make us safer.”

#

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Please contact Dena Graziano or Adam Comis at (202) 225-9978

H2-117, Ford House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515
Phone: (202) 226-2616 | Fax: (202) 226-4499
<http://chsdemocrats.house.gov>