

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*****Iranian Terror Operations on American Soil***

October 26, 2011 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Counterterrorism and Intelligence subcommittee and Oversight, Investigations, and Management subcommittee *joint* hearing entitled “Iranian Terror Operations on American Soil”:

“We were recently made aware of an alleged attempt to assassinate the Saudi Arabian Ambassador to the United States in Washington, D.C. The U.S. Government has linked this assassination attempt to high-ranking Iranian officials in the Iranian Revolutionary Guard – Quds Force. I commend the work of our intelligence and law enforcement communities and look forward to seeing justice served in the case.

The United States and Iran have a long history. Even before uncovering the alleged plot to kill the Saudi Ambassador, the United States had designated Iran’s military force – the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps – a terrorist organization. Reports that Iran is vigorously pursuing nuclear weapons and its alleged ties to al-Qaeda are additional reasons why the United States should pay close attention to Iranian activities.

However, recent remarks by some of my Republican colleagues suggesting that the alleged assassination attempt represented the “the crossing of a ‘red line’ by the world’s largest state sponsor of terrorism against the United States and Israel” and claims that “sanctions are not working” may be premature and could inflame an already fragile climate. Furthermore, the individual currently awaiting trial is accused of attempting to enlist a Mexican drug cartel member to assassinate the Saudi Arabian Ambassador to the United States.

Although some have made a point to capitalize on the possible alliance between the Iranians and the Mexican drug cartels, the facts indicate otherwise. We must be careful to stick to the facts. We must not overstate nor overreact to the threat we currently face from Iran.

Some have criticized the sanctions we have placed on Iran as too soft, and have suggested taking actions that would lead us on a path to escalation. But Iran is a nation that has already isolated itself from the world community.

It has lost even more credibility following its latest round of illegitimate elections and the Arab Spring that has swept the Middle East. Let us not lend them the legitimacy they need by taking reckless actions that would lead us down the path to another war.”

#

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Please contact Adam Cornis at (202) 225-9978