



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

“Border Security Threats to the Homeland: DHS’ Response to Innovative Tactics and Techniques”

June 18, 2012 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Border and Maritime Security subcommittee hearing entitled “Border Security Threats to the Homeland: DHS’ Response to Innovative Tactics and Techniques”

“Today, the Subcommittee is examining the Department of Homeland Security’s response to tactics used by smugglers and traffickers who seek to cross our Nation’s borders.

The Department of Homeland Security has made unprecedented efforts to better secure our borders in recent years, with the support of Congress.

In response, cartels and other criminal organizations are exploiting different methods to bring their contraband into this country.

For example, these organizations may seek to use semi- or fully- submersible vessels to move their narcotics from the source zones in Latin America closer to their destination in the U.S.

They may build or exploit existing border tunnels to evade the Border Patrol and secret their drugs into the country.

Or they may seek to bring drugs into the U.S. via boat from Mexico, landing on the coast of California rather than risking detection attempting to come across the land border.

It is important to understand the various methods being used by these smuggling and trafficking organizations, to try to stay a step ahead of them.

At the same time, it is worth stating that many of these so-called “innovative” tactics and techniques are neither new nor unknown to DHS and other law enforcement.

Furthermore, these tactics represent only a small part of the smuggling and trafficking threat to the U.S.

The overwhelming majority of illegal narcotics still enter the U.S. either hidden in vehicles or on individuals coming through our ports of entry, or are smuggled through traditional means between the ports of entry.

DHS needs to combat these unusual tactics, but must also keep them in perspective if we are to be successful in addressing the broader problem.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today about how their agencies are working to address border security threats, with an emphasis on the communication and coordination among agencies.

I am particularly pleased to have Admiral Michel of Joint Interagency Task Force – South with us today.

I have had the opportunity to be briefed at JIATF-South and see the work the men and women of that interagency organization are doing in conjunction with their counterparts at DHS and across the Federal government.

I look forward to an update on their efforts and a frank discussion about the challenges they face.

Finally, I would note that I was disappointed that Gen. Michael Kostelnik, the Assistant Commissioner for CBP Air and Marine, is not appearing at today's hearing as originally planned.

One of the key ways DHS has attempted to respond to border security threats over the last decade is through the acquisition and deployment of costly Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UASs).

I had hoped to discuss with Gen. Kostelnik some rather troubling conclusions reached by the DHS Inspector General in a recent report on CBP's use of UASs and their usefulness along our borders.

It is my understanding that he will instead appear before another of the Committee's Subcommittees later this week, at which time I hope to address this important issue with him."

#

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

United States House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
H2-117, Ford House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515
Phone: (202) 226-2616 | Fax: (202) 226-4499
<http://chsdemocrats.house.gov>