

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*****Securing Ammonium Nitrate: Using Lessons Learned in Afghanistan to Protect the Homeland from IED's***

July 12, 2012 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection, and Security Technologies subcommittee hearing entitled “Securing Ammonium Nitrate: Using Lessons Learned in Afghanistan to Protect the Homeland from IED’s”:

“The purpose of this hearing is to receive testimony on the collaborative efforts of U.S. agencies to detect and prevent the smuggling of calcium ammonium nitrate fertilizer and other explosive precursors from Pakistan into Afghanistan.

As I have been told, DHS has not received specific legislative authority to provide security assistance to Pakistan or Afghanistan in preventing ammonium nitrate, CAN, or other explosive precursor smuggling. As a result, the State Department, USAID, DOD, or other agencies that do have that authority and budget, typically allocate funding from their relevant accounts to DHS.

This is an interesting topic and I look forward to hearing from our witnesses and learning how these issues affect domestic homeland security.

General, I understand you will be making a trip to my congressional district in next month. I hope to join you in Yazoo City, which is the home of one of the few agricultural ammonium nitrate facilities left in the country. That plant employs 250 people full time. Many have worked at the plant all their lives. I think you will be impressed with the security they have in place and the measures they take to follow every load to its destination.

I have worked with the fertilizer industry for over 10 years to assure that ammonium nitrate is secure. They have many voluntary controls in place and were consulted in development of the ammonium nitrate security legislation. The regulations to implement the legislation—still pending at DHS - will help to further secure ammonium nitrate domestically.

As you know, fertilizers produced in this country are used in producing about 50 percent of food throughout the world. Because of the importance of fertilizer use in crop production, we must assure the appropriate balance between security and the availability of fertilizers.

I believe the world could learn something on ammonium nitrate security from the United States.”

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