

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*****Assessing DHS 10 Years Later: How Wisely is DHS Spending Taxpayer Dollars?***

February 15, 2013 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency hearing entitled “Assessing DHS 10 Years Later: How Wisely is DHS Spending Taxpayer Dollars?”:

“Today’s hearing addresses a basic issue: how the Department spends taxpayer dollars. For a period of years now, the Federal government, including the Department of Homeland Security, has been required to do more with less. As a result, the Department must continue to maximize all of its resources to ensure that appropriated dollars are spent wisely using risk-based calculations.

Unfortunately, past examples – such as SBInet, Deepwater, Financial Management Integration and the recent removal of Raspican’s Advanced Imaging Technology machines from airports – indicate that too often, the Department misses the mark.

In too many of its major procurements, the Department experiences cost overruns and missed deadlines while delivering a substandard product. Unfortunately, the Department is not buying widgets from ACME. Among other things, it is purchasing screening equipment to ensure that weapons are not carried onto passenger airplanes. It is purchasing underground sensors and monitors to secure our borders from dangerous criminals attempting to enter our country undetected. It is investing in technology to keep computers systems safe from cyber attacks. It is setting up information technology systems so that Federal employees from multiple agencies, in addition to State and local governments, can connect the dots to foster information sharing in a way that did not exist prior to the September 11 terrorist attacks.

Needless to say, it is imperative that the Department fixes its acquisition shortfalls and put line authority and enforcement mechanisms in place to hold people accountable when the Department’s written rules and strategies are not followed.

In addition to these controls, the Department should also take further steps to reduce its overreliance on contractors. The cost of carrying such a large contractor workforce hinders our ability to build capacity with institutional knowledge within the federal workforce. Americans, including myself, expect that those given the responsibility of managing our scarce homeland security resources will do so prudently, with an eye toward avoiding waste.”

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