

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*****Strategy and Mission of the DHS Science and Technology Directorate***

September 9, 2014 (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 joint hearing entitled “Strategy and Mission of the DHS Science and Technology Directorate”:

“Research and Development on technologies is a key component of DHS’s efforts to detect, prevent, and mitigate terrorist threats. Given the size of DHS, its role in the federal government, and the dynamics of the current threat picture, R&D should be a priority. DHS should have a cohesive policy that defines responsibilities for coordinating R&D and mechanisms to track all DHS R&D projects.

Unfortunately, this is not the case. Multiple entities across DHS conduct various types of R&D in pursuit of their respective missions. According to GAO, DHS does not have a department-wide policy defining R&D or guidance directing components how to report R&D activities and investments. Consequently, it leaves Congress to question where the Science and Technology Directorate fits in this picture.

Does S&T have the ability to maintain oversight of its investment in R&D across the Department? What are S&T’s limitations in its ability to oversee components’ R&D efforts and align them with agency wide goals and priorities? This fragmented approach to allows R&D within S&T to be an easy target for offsets.

As my colleagues across the aisle continue to support extreme budget cuts that affect the funding levels for the Department, programs that are not clear in their mission and do not have metrics to illustrate their value heighten their vulnerability.

Congress recognizes that threat picture is evolving. Accordingly, it should make sense to continue to investments in innovation; however, these investments must be justified. It has not been made clear to this Committee if S&T has a system to monitor research milestones and collect feedback from customers and end-users on the effectiveness of the services delivered by the directorate. There have to be metrics that justify how S&T develops security solutions.

Mr. Under Secretary, you and I both know the importance of innovation. The next technology that could advance the Department’s goals could be in the hands of a small business owner.

Unfortunately, there have been instances where small companies complain about their difficulty in working with S&T. I hope to hear the strategy the directorate has to improve its relationships with small and minority businesses.

Mr. Chairman, I hope the Committee will take these matters seriously as we learn how the directorate will carry out its strategic plans, management directives, and operational programs going forward.”

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