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**Hearing Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)
*Ending the Crisis: America's Borders and the Path to Security***

February 7, 2017

I would note that the urgent border security crisis facing our Nation is not occurring at our southern border, but rather is one of President Trump's own making.

His Executive Order banning all travel from seven majority-Muslim countries and suspending our refugee program under the guise of security does nothing to make us safer.

Blocking the admission of green card holders, who are doctors, scientists, business owners and other valued members of our society, does nothing to make us safer.

Suspending the admission of refugees like this teddy bear holding four year old Somali girl who had been vetted for years, does nothing to make us safer.

To the contrary, the Executive Order makes America less safe by serving as a recruitment and propaganda tool for terrorist groups, complicating coordination with allies and partners in the fight against terrorism, and distracting border security personnel from the job of thoroughly screening all travelers to this country on an individualized basis.

No amount of fearmongering via Twitter or "alternative facts" will change the fact that on January 27th, with the stroke of a pen, President Trump changed this nation's standing both at home and abroad.

Democratic Members have many questions about President Trump's unconstitutional Muslim ban, and have signed a letter to Chairman McCaul asking for a hearing to allow for a thorough examination of the issues.

I want to thank our witness, Secretary of Homeland Security, General John F. Kelly, for testifying before the Committee today and for his long and distinguished record of service to our Nation.

Frankly, it is somewhat unfair that Secretary Kelly is being called on to defend an Executive Order that, by most accounts, he was required to implement with almost no notice. The White House officials who directed the roll out of the Executive Order should be here to answer for this debacle.

President Trump's words and actions related to the southern border and the government and

people of Mexico have been counterproductive, to put it mildly.

Like the Muslim Ban, Trump's proposed "border wall" will do little to better secure America's borders but will cost the Americans billions.

The Department of Homeland Security has no metrics to show that border walls enhance security in a way that justifies their exorbitant cost.

Putting the wall on the American taxpayers' credit card, knowing that Mexico has absolutely no intention of paying for it, will surely leave the American taxpayers stuck with the bill.

Instead, we need border security policy that keeps terrorists, their instruments, criminals, and contraband out of this country, while upholding American values and ensuring the flow of legitimate travelers and commerce that is vital to our Nation's economy and our way of life.

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