



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)

***World Wide Threats:
Keeping America Secure in the New Age of Terror***

November 30, 2017

In the wake of the disturbing rise in domestic terrorism in recent years, Democratic Members of this Committee have repeatedly asked for a hearing on this important topic. While this hearing is our annual one examining worldwide threats, a great deal of our conversation will likely be focused on the terror threat from right here at home.

Incidents like the 2015 killing of nine churchgoers by a white supremacist at Mother Emmanuel Church in Charleston and the hate-fueled violence that left a young woman dead and 19 others injured during a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville earlier this year highlight the threat posed by domestic extremists.

Domestic terrorist organizations have even adopted some of the same techniques for recruitment and radicalization as foreign terrorist organizations, using the Internet to reach followers and coordinate their actions.

Unfortunately, President Trump insists on fueling the fire of hatred and extremism in America, calling the marchers in Charlottesville “very fine people” and just yesterday re-tweeting inflammatory anti-Muslim videos posted by a far-right British organization. James Clapper, the former Director of National Intelligence, called Trump’s re-tweeting of the videos “bizarre and disturbing” and said his action undermines our relationship with our “friends and allies.”

Americans should be able to look to our President for a steady hand and responsible leadership in uncertain times, but unfortunately President Trump consistently conducts himself in a way that jeopardizes our security and is not befitting of the office he holds.

Also, though they cannot say so themselves, the President’s actions make the already difficult jobs of the witnesses joining us on the first panel today even harder. The Department of Homeland Security, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and National Counterterrorism Center play key roles in securing the homeland from terrorists both foreign and domestic.

I hope to hear from these witnesses today about the challenges they face, what emerging threats we should be aware of, and how Congress can support them in their mission, consistent with our American laws and values.

Since much of our focus is typically on foreign terrorists, today I am especially interested in hearing how the witnesses assess the threat from domestic extremist and terrorist groups and learning what can be done to protect us from this rising concern.

I also look forward to hearing from our second panel of witnesses on this topic later this morning. They bring special expertise on domestic extremism and terrorism issues and I hope Members will hear what they have to say and engage in a thoughtful dialogue.

The Southern Poverty Law Center in particular is dedicated to fighting hate and seeking justice and equality for all Americans, and I look forward to their recommendations for countering the ideologies that are inspiring violence in America. I had hoped to have NAACP testify as well, but their invitation was issued less than 24 hours prior to the hearing and the late notice prevents their participation today. I look forward to inviting them to testify at a future hearing.

In closing, I want to say that we know there are those around the world who seek to come here and do Americans harm. Those charged with preventing such attacks have the unwavering support of all the Members of this Committee, consistent with the laws and values of our Nation.

I hope that the same attention and resources will be dedicated to fighting domestic extremism and terrorism here at home to ensure the security of all Americans.

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