

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson****“The FY 2010 Budget for the Directorate for Science & Technology, the Office of Health Affairs, and the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office”**

June 9, 2009 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the full Committee hearing entitled “The FY 2010 Budget for the Directorate for Science & Technology, the Office of Health Affairs, and the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office”:

“In July 2008, presidential candidate Barack Obama delivered a speech at Purdue University where he discussed the need to “confront 21st Century threats.” President Obama warned against fighting the last war. He said America needs to stay one step ahead of the threats of the 21st century, instead of responding to the threats that have already come. He spoke about the need to reduce the risk from three potentially catastrophic threats: nuclear weapons, biological attacks, and cyber warfare.

Nuclear, biological, and cyber attack all pose the potential for large-scale destruction. The capacity to inflict such damage is proliferating not only to other countries, but potentially to terrorist groups as well. Indeed, the weapons of biological and cyber attack derive from commercial technologies that cost relatively little to acquire and can be used with near anonymity.

Nuclear weapons and materials are spreading ever more widely. I share President Obama’s concern about these three significant threats to our nation. The Department of Homeland Security is tasked with significant responsibilities in each of these mission areas, and I am pleased to welcome our witnesses from S&T, Health Affairs, and DNDO to provide us with a performance and budget update.

This Committee stands ready to provide you with the support you need. I also ask that you continue to seek our guidance. We have performed countless hours of investigation and oversight into the Department’s work to mitigate nuclear, bio, and cyber threats. We hope that you will find our experience and advice useful.

Today, I seek assurance from you that the Department’s budget matches the President’s established priorities.

One area of concern is cybersecurity at the Science and Technology Directorate. Though the cyber budget has grown over the last several years, S&T is only requesting \$36 Million for cybersecurity research and development. This program is one of the most successful at S&T. I’d like to hear Mr. Buswell explain why that program is one of the most consistently underfunded programs.

I hope that our witnesses can also explain the elimination of funding for DNDO’s Systems Acquisition and Securing the Cities Initiative. Both programs are essential to reducing the nuclear threat domestically, so I am interested to learn why neither program will receive funding. This Committee fully supports President Obama’s threat prioritization, and we stand ready to see that his vision is achieved.

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