

NEWS ALERT



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Homeland Security Committee

Rep. Bennie G. Thompson, Chairman



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson

H.R. 5498 - the WMD Prevention and Preparedness Act of 2010

June 15, 2010 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Emerging Threats, Cybersecurity, and Science and Technology subcommittee hearing on H.R. 5498, the *WMD Prevention and Preparedness Act of 2010*:

“Today, our Nation is facing a number of different challenges – challenges which demand a great deal of attention. There are those who say that we should just concentrate on cleaning up the oil spill in the Gulf, or supporting our military efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, or getting our economy back on track.

Even in the face of these seemingly overwhelming challenges, we cannot afford to turn a blind eye to the ever-present terrorist threat. The attempted Times Square and Christmas Day attacks certainly underscore the need to stay vigilant.

We also need to avoid the “failures in imagination” that the 9/11 Commission identified prior to that devastating attack. Now, more than ever, we have to address emerging terrorist threats – because our enemies are constantly coming up with innovative ways to attack this nation.

That’s why H.R. 5498 – the *WMD Prevention and Preparedness Act of 2010* – is so important. With this bipartisan bill, we are telling our enemies that we are taking steps right now to prevent, deter, prepare for, detect, attribute, respond to, and recover from a WMD attack.

By taking this comprehensive approach – addressing homeland security, intelligence, public health, and foreign affairs matters – H.R. 5498 puts us in better stead to counter the WMD threat before another attack occurs.

The bipartisan WMD Commission – with its reports and testimony before this Committee – has warned us that unless we “act with great urgency,” a WMD terrorist event will occur somewhere in the world by 2013, and that such an event would most likely be a biological attack.

In response, with H.R. 5498, we address the WMD threat in general and the biological threat specifically. The bill has the support of the WMD Commission, but we need more than that.

We need the cooperation of our colleagues on the Hill to help us swiftly pass this bill and deliver it to the President for his signature. As the WMD Commission has pointed out, we cannot afford to allow turf battles and fights over jurisdiction to keep us from doing the right thing by better securing our Nation against the threat of WMD.”

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