

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson****Beyond ISE Implementation: Exploring the Way Forward for Information Sharing**

July 30, 2009 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Intelligence, Information Sharing & Terrorism Risk Assessment Subcommittee hearing entitled “Beyond ISE Implementation: Exploring the Way Forward for Information Sharing”:

“No matter how we say it – “knowing what we know,” “connecting the dots,” “getting the right information to the right people at the right time” – we’re talking about the same thing. An environment in which information is shared is an environment in which better decisions can be made and, ultimately, in which people are safer.

However, without such an environment, our first preventers – those who are most likely to detect and stop a terrorist plot in its tracks – may not be able to connect those dots; they may not be prepared to stop the next attack.

This is not a new message. Fortunately, our persistence is starting to pay off. We have seen some progress in information sharing.

The Program Manager for the Information Sharing Environment’s most recent report to Congress describes some admirable work that has been accomplished, including the efforts to create a network of fusion centers and developing a respected ISE Enterprise Architecture Framework.

Nonetheless, and this also is not a new message, we must do more. Although I am pleased to acknowledge progress the ISE has made under Ambassador McNamara’s watchful eye, I am concerned that many of the challenges noted in the ISE report are not new challenges.

For example, formulating a means to protect the privacy and civil rights of American citizens in the design and operation of the ISE was required under the legislation that mandated the original ISE Implementation Plan.

However, while the ISE has issued Privacy Guidelines, the 2009 ISE report says nine Departments or Agencies under the ISE are still developing their privacy protection policy required by those guidelines, and three do not even have a policy in development.

It is challenges such as these that we are here to explore today. I hope each of our witnesses will be forthcoming in your assessments of these and other challenges that lie ahead for the information sharing environment.

Only by helping us fully understand the challenges ahead can we hope to work together to craft solutions to these problems.”

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