

NEWS ALERT



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Homeland Security Committee

Rep. Bennie G. Thompson, Chairman



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson

Countering the Nuclear Threat to the Homeland: Evaluating the Deployment of Radiation Detection Technologies

March 21, 2007 (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 entitled Countering the Nuclear Threat to the Homeland: Evaluating the Deployment of Radiation Detection Technologies:

“A nuclear weapon is really our worst nightmare as far as terrorist weapons. The most likely method of such an attack is for a terrorist to acquire a nuclear weapon or nuclear weapon materials overseas, and so we must find them and stop them.

This effort requires motivated and vigilant officers armed with the best equipment we can give them. CBP officers working at our nation’s ports of entry (POE) have an extremely difficult job. They must make hundreds of decisions every day to clear a container or personal vehicle for transit into the United States, require further inspection, or even deny entry or interdict such a vehicle.

This challenging work environment requires intensive and effective training. I have read that a few thousand officers have received on the job training on non-intrusive imaging (NII) equipment at ports of entry, and that current CBP policy is to train all new officers during their initial training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC).

I know that NII is actually a very small part of the radiological and nuclear detection scheme, so I’d like to hear about the training received on portal monitors and handheld devices as well. We also must protect the health of our officers who are looking for radiation or using active radiation sources from overexposure, so I’d like to address that issue as well.”

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