

NEWS ALERT



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Homeland Security Committee

Rep. Bennie G. Thompson, Chairman



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson

“Project 28: the Future of SBInet”

June 7, 2007 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Border, Maritime, and Global Counterterrorism Subcommittee hearing entitled “Project 28: the Future of SBInet”:

“June 13, 2007, marks an important date for the SBInet program and for the Department of Homeland Security as a whole. On that date, Project 28 is scheduled to be fully operational, and we will begin to learn whether this \$20 million initial investment is going to be a success.

But more than that, we should start to better understand whether SBInet is the technology solution that will give us the result we have been seeking all along: a more secure border.

Unfortunately, SBInet is the third border technology program that the Department has launched.

We are told, however, that this time around the outcome will be very different, partly because the Department has learned valuable lessons from previous mistakes. We hope that is the case because the American taxpayer has spent more than \$650 million and has waited more than ten years for a successful border security technology program.

If it is successful, Project 28 will finally give our Border Patrol agents the real-time situational awareness they need to take control of this 28 mile stretch of Arizona border, while also helping ensure the agents’ safety. Like many of my colleagues, I will be closely monitoring the rollout of Project 28 in the coming days and weeks, and look forward to visiting the site in the near future.

Of course, Project 28 is only the beginning of the SBInet program, and much work remains to replicate similar technology across our borders. Therefore, the Committee will continue to conduct vigorous oversight over Project 28 and the SBInet program in the coming months and beyond. Project 28 may well be the future of America’s border security... hopefully we got it right this time. “

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