

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson****“Fixing the Homeland Security Information Network: Finding the Way Forward For Better Information Sharing”**

May 10, 2007 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Intelligence, Information Sharing, and Terrorism Risk Assessment Subcommittee hearing entitled “Fixing the Homeland Security Information Network: Finding the Way Forward For Better Information Sharing”:

“This week, the press reported that the Deputy Director of Operations Coordination said that DHS operates under the philosophy of: ‘If you build something good, they will come.’

Homeland security is no place for a field of dreams. As the Department’s Inspector General found last June, it’s not clear that the HSIN is ‘something good.’

He found that on any given day, only 6% of HSIN law enforcement users and only 2% of counter-terrorism and emergency management users log on to the system. And every month, only 6% of HSIN law enforcement users and only 1% of counter-terrorism and emergency management users actually post something on the system. Now, I know things may have improved over the last eleven months.

But I think we’d be living in a dream world if we believed that the HSIN is anywhere near where it needs to be. Can we really say that the HSIN is ‘something good’ when GAO finds that it duplicates other systems that do the same job for half the cost?

Is the HSIN ‘something good’ when it doesn’t integrate with other systems – forcing first preventers to log on to multiple networks just to be sure they’re not missing any critical information? Is the HSIN ‘something good’ when no one is accountable for its slow progress because those who set it in motion have gone on to other jobs?

How can the HSIN be ‘something good’ when – by Admiral Rufe’s own admission just three weeks ago – DHS has not clearly defined the system’s purpose or its scope? Indeed, why would HSIN’s target audience – State, local, and tribal law enforcement and emergency responders – see it as ‘something good’ when they were never invited to the table in the first place to help shape what it would be?”

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