

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson****“The Mumbai Attacks:
A Wake-Up Call for America’s Private Sector”**

March 11, 2009 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Transportation Security and Infrastructure Protection Subcommittee hearing entitled “The Mumbai Attacks: A Wake-Up Call for America’s Private Sector”:

“For more than 60 hours last November, the world watched as Mumbai – India’s entertainment and financial capital – was terrorized by attacks on hotels, hospitals, the main railway station, and other public places. By the time the siege was over, 10 terrorists had killed more than 160 people using automatic weapons and explosives.

The style of attack, the weapons and technology used, and the diversity of the targets raise new questions for how we should approach counterterrorism and security measures here at home— at all levels of government and in the private sector.

It has become clear that the type of attack carried out in Mumbai – a “Fedayeen” - style attack, where small groups engage in combat operations, as distinguished from suicide bombings – poses a challenge to our soft targets and our law enforcement community.

The Committee has jurisdiction over the security of critical infrastructure, 85% of which is owned by the private sector. As such, it is critical that we study this emerging “Mumbai style” of attack, evaluate how well DHS engages private sector partners in efforts to secure against such attacks, and review how the private sector acts on shared information.

By examining DHS’ outreach to the private sector during and in the aftermath of these attacks, we can determine whether it provided stakeholders, such as hotels, with actionable information about the threat situation, the groups involved, and mitigation measures to be implemented. DHS, NYPD, and FBI will address what happened in Mumbai, both in terms of events and tactics, as well as how information was shared in the United States. They can also provide insight into domestic measures we can implement to secure these types of assets from similar attacks. Dr. Fair from RAND will provide us with perspective on the group implicated in the attacks, Lashkar-e-Taiba, as well as its potential for operating outside the South Asia region.

Witnesses from InterContinental Hotels and NYU will address the implementation of security efforts at these types of critical infrastructure since September 11, 2001, and the status of security in America’s hotels.

As we did in the 110th Congress, this Committee will continue to conduct robust oversight of the Department’s approach to securing critical infrastructure in the private sector, and whether voluntary security efforts are working. In the last Congress, we passed a provision in the 9/11 Act, which sought to promote private sector security in a market-based manner, and I look forward to supporting the implementation of that legislation in the 111th Congress.”

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