

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*****Preventing Nuclear Terrorism: Does DHS have an Effective and Efficient Nuclear Detection Strategy?***

July 26, 2012 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection, and Security Technologies subcommittee hearing entitled “Preventing Nuclear Terrorism: Does DHS have an Effective and Efficient Nuclear Detection Strategy?”:

“Exactly one year ago, we had a similar hearing on our nuclear detection capabilities. As we continue to seek ways to resolve known vulnerabilities, the work of DNDO can play an important role in the security of our borders and ports of entry by assuring that radiological and nuclear materials are detected before they enter this country.

Many DHS components contribute to meeting the Department’s strategic goal of preventing unauthorized acquisition or use of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear materials and capabilities, but only DNDO has detection as a core mission.

Since its creation, the Department has maintained existing programs, and established new programs dedicated to the detection of radiological and nuclear materials. These programs initially lacked a unified strategy that integrated their activities with the programs of other federal departments.

In 2010, the Department, in coordination with other federal agencies, released a strategic plan for the global nuclear detection architecture that provided this unified strategy. It is my understanding that the strategy does not provide guidance to participating entities; leaves program level budgeting to the discretion of the component, and does not establish performance measures and benchmarks. It seems that without these elements, the strategy is not a road map to success and may well be a path to nowhere.

I raise the need for these elements because I do not want DNDO to repeat the ASP fiasco. After several years, a few GAO reports, and \$393 million, DNDO has come to the conclusion that ASP is not a workable product.

And while I commend you for accepting the truth, it is my understanding that this conclusion could have been reached much sooner and without the expenditure of millions of dollars if DNDO had talked to CBP and understood the needs of the product’s end-user.

I hope that the Global Nuclear Detection Architecture and strategy is an effort to revamp the process that allowed the ASP fiasco to occur. However, I cannot be assured that DNDO has learned from this experience without knowing that routine management tools like performance measures and benchmarks are in place. Hopefully, our witnesses today will tell us that DNDO has turned a corner and is not likely to repeat its unfortunate past.”

# # #

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Please contact Adam Comis at (202) 225-9978