



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

Challenging the Status Quo at TSA: Perspectives on the Future of Transportation Security

July 10, 2012 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Transportation Security subcommittee hearing entitled “Challenging the Status Quo at TSA: Perspectives on the Future of Transportation Security”:

“In the 111th Congress, I chaired a Full Committee oversight hearing on the attempted bombing of Northwest Airlines Flight 253 on Christmas Day 2009. That hearing shed light on a complex system of international counterterrorism efforts and the importance of timely and accurate information sharing.

The Committee learned about steps taken by the Administration to eliminate the gaps that allowed passengers to board a plane headed for the United States. Additionally, since the Christmas Day bomber, this government has spent a great deal of money on increasingly sophisticated technology and has implemented checkpoint pat-down procedures.

It is safe to say that neither the technology nor the touching has been welcomed by the flying public. The Department has also made great efforts to enhance airport security by strengthening relationships with international partners and enhancing checkpoint security here at home.

But because we have recently observed several instances in which crewmembers and passengers have gone beyond the call of duty to prevent a catastrophic event during a flight, our thinking on these issues must continue to evolve.

We must begin to ask what happens when all layers of security have been compromised and crewmembers and passengers are faced with an in-cabin security threat? Federal Air Marshals cannot be on every plane.

We cannot continue to ignore the importance of airline crew. TSA must ensure that our frontline transportation workers are afforded the training and resources required to effectively respond to a national security threat.”

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