

NEWS ALERT



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Homeland Security Committee

Rep. Bennie G. Thompson, Chairman



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson

I&A Reconceived: Defining a Homeland Security Intelligence Role

September 24, 2009 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Intelligence, Information Sharing & Terrorism Risk Assessment Subcommittee hearing entitled “I&A Reconceived: Defining a Homeland Security Intelligence Role”:

“I would like to thank Acting Under Secretary Bart Johnson for appearing here today to testify on these changes. You have a lot on your plate, Mr. Johnson, but I am looking forward to hearing how your work is progressing. In many ways, I am looking forward to your testimony because I have already seen some of the positive change you have brought to the organization.

For example, just three months ago to the day, I asked you for assurances that the Office of Intelligence and Analysis would adopt a process for vetting its products to help it avoid problems like those we saw surrounding the right wing extremism report.

I understand that I&A now has a structured product review process that, while still in its infancy, is a step in the right direction, and you are to be congratulated for your prompt action.

However, six years have now passed since the inception of the Office of Intelligence and Analysis.

In those six years, this Committee has consistently heard about I&A principles and underlying efforts to break down traditional stovepipes, set mission-based agendas, and develop an integrated Homeland Security Intelligence Enterprise.

But we are still not there yet. I agree with Chairwoman Harman that after six years, our conversation must go beyond the underlying principles for which I&A should stand.

As I see it, I&A's number one job is to serve as the ultimate coordinator. I&A has to not only coordinate intelligence analysis and information sharing within DHS, but must emerge as a model for sharing with its federal, state, local and tribal partners.

It is this essential coordination that ensures our intelligence and law enforcement agencies across all levels of government across the nation have the information they need, when they need it, and allows us to effectively protect our citizens.

That said, just as important as recognizing and formalizing this crucial mission is taking action to create a strategy that can guide the organization to success in accomplishing that mission.

After all, results matter. And after six years, I&A is long overdue for a strategic plan that helps I&A deliver results, measure those results, and course correct if or when those results are insufficient.

Mr. Johnson, we are here to support your efforts to make I&A a results-oriented organization. We want, as you do, for I&A to be successful. We hope that you will consider us your partner as you move the organization forward.

But the success of I&A will largely be up to you, the dedicated people who work with you, and the steps you take as you formulate a solid strategic plan and metrics that can be used to evaluate and adapt that plan.”

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