

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson****“Over-Classification and Pseudo-Classification of Government Information: The Response of the Program Manager of the Information Sharing Environment”**

April 26, 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 “Over-Classification and Pseudo-Classification of Government Information: The Response of the Program Manager of the Information Sharing Environment”:

“Information sharing between the Federal government and its State, local and tribal partners is critical to making America safer. I am pleased to hear that we are moving towards a system that emphasizes the creation and distribution of unclassified material.

The elimination of over a hundred Sensitive But Unclassified (SBU) designations will make it easier to share information. It will also help end the ongoing confusion caused by a lack of standards. Ambassador McNamara’s creation of a Controlled Unclassified (CUI) Framework is an important first step, and I applaud his efforts.

However, the new CUI Framework will only get us half-way to the goal of ensuring both vertical and horizontal information-sharing. Indeed, all the homeland security information in the world is worthless if we can’t get it to the right people at the right time. Congress has been advocating for and Ambassador McNamara has been working towards the creation of the Interagency Threat Assessment and Coordination Group – the I-TAG – based at the National Counter-Terrorism Center.

To my dismay, it recently came to my attention that the commitment to its creation may be waning.

I hope this is not the case. When DHS and others say that State, local and tribal agencies are essential partners in making America safer, they should mean it. Indeed, the work done by the CUI working group will be of little use if DHS does not adopt the new regime and share more and better homeland security information under its framework.”

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Please contact Dena Graziano or Todd Levett at (202) 225-9978

