

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*****Lessons From Fort Hood: Improving our Ability to Connect the Dots***

September 14, 2012 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Oversight, Investigations, and Management subcommittee hearing entitled “Lessons From Fort Hood: Improving our Ability to Connect the Dots”:

“Three days ago, we marked the eleventh anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

That tragedy left us with a number of valuable lessons. As the 9/11 Commission found, government agencies charged with collecting intelligence and law enforcement data did not “connect the dots” that could have revealed that attacks of the proportion launched on 9/11 were underway.

Since that time, the importance of horizontal information sharing among Federal agencies and vertical information sharing from Federal agencies to State, local, and tribal entities has been weaved into our homeland security efforts.

However, on November 5, 2009, the tragic events that occurred at the Army base located in Fort Hood, Texas, once again revealed that the failure to connect the dots can lead to disastrous results.

On that day, 13 people lost their lives and 43 individuals were wounded at the hand of a single gunman who was on the separate radars of the FBI and the DOD. Unfortunately, that information was not coordinated.

In some of the reports and the rhetoric following the Ft. Hood shooting, there were claims that the failure to connect the dots was based on “political correctness.”

I strongly disagree. The information sharing challenges that we faced then and continue to face now are more grounded in protecting turf than being timid.

To conclude that the source of the missteps was based on the religion of the perpetrator takes us backwards and takes our eyes off the ball.

Instead, our focus should be on ensuring that communication systems, information technology, training and protocols are improved government-wide.

And most importantly, removing stovepipes.

The Fort Hood shooting occurred nearly three years ago. Fortunately, since that time, information sharing has improved and we have the death of Osama bin Laden, the conviction of the New York City subway bomber and other success stories as proof of this joint effort.”

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