



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson**

### ***Creating 'One DHS' Part I: Standardizing Department of Homeland Security Financial Management***

October 29, 2009 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Management, Investigations, and Oversight Subcommittee hearing entitled “Creating ‘One DHS’ Part I: Standardizing Department of Homeland Security Financial Management”:

“The Department of Homeland Security has one of the largest budgets in the federal government.

Each year approximately \$40 billion in appropriated funds flows in and out of the Department.

Among other things, these funds are used to pay over 200,000 employees, provide disaster aid to states and local governments and purchase the equipment used by those protecting our borders.

We owe it to taxpayers to ensure that these funds are appropriately used, fully accounted for, and auditable.

Unfortunately, this is not the case at the Department of Homeland Security.

Six years into several attempts at integrating its financial management systems, and millions of dollars later, the Department is still using thirteen different systems that cannot talk to each other, that do not adequately reflect where funds are located and is unable to let the Department of Treasury know, at any given moment, how much money is left in the Department of Homeland Security budget.

Fortunately, the Department knows that the way out of this conundrum is to integrate its systems. Unfortunately, I am concerned that it may be heading down the same path it took when previous attempts to integrate the Department’s financial management systems failed.

There is a saying that goes “if you keep doing the same thing, you will keep getting the same result.”

Yet, once again, the Department is relying on contractors to do the work that should be performed by the government.

In this instance, the Department intends to allow a contractor to define what the Department needs, then design what it will receive, then map out the strategy for implementation.

The fact that the Department released a Request for Proposal before first defining its financial management strategy is troublesome, and sounds like putting the cart before the horse.

Past lessons have taught us that over-relying on contractors can lead to lack of proper oversight, performance problems and skyrocketing costs.

To that end, I would urge the Department, in an effort to reduce costs, to develop its own strategy for integrating its financial management systems and to establish a more solid road map.

Moreover, I am greatly concerned with the findings that the GAO will be presenting us with today.

Although the Department has received much guidance from the GAO on the steps that must be taken to successfully integrate its financial management systems it appears as if this advice has falling by the wayside.

I look forward to listening to our witnesses' testimony today regarding what steps are being taken to correct existing deficiencies and whether those steps are enough to prevent an unacceptable outcome."

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