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PRESS RELEASE: CONGRESSIONAL HEARING ON BIOTERRORISM THREATS

February 14, 2014

The Alliance for Biosecurity commends the House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications for raising awareness of important national security issues and holding the hearing, ***"Bioterrorism: Assessing the Threat"*** on Tuesday, February 11th.

The testimony was compelling and demonstrated the critical need to sustain initiatives to research, develop, and stockpile vaccines, drugs, and other medicines to protect the American public and deter bioterror threats. Subcommittee Chairwoman Susan W. Brooks (R-IN5) observed at the outset of the hearing: "In materials prepared for his appearance before the House Intelligence Committee last week, Director of National Intelligence James Clapper noted that the Intelligence Community remains focused on the '...proliferation of chemical and biological warfare-related materials, and development of WMD delivery systems.' In addition to nation-state actors, the Intelligence Community has also judged that al-Qaeda and its affiliates are intent on conducting CBRN attacks against the United States."

Former Bush Administration official Dr. Kadlec stated:

"[T]he risk of biological attacks on the US with biological agents is an uncertain, imminent reality, ... Biological weapons could inflict grievous harm on America, equal to and potentially greater than nuclear weapons, and any investments to defend against them is a modest insurance policy against an uncertain future. Our best offense remains a robust defense."

Director of the UPMC Center for Health Security, Dr. Inglesby stated: "There are a number of major biological threats that confront the nation. Among these are... the prospect of new pandemics of influenza or other novel emerging infections... that require specific, major planning and action."

Over the past decade, the United States has successfully partnered with companies engaged in the research and development of medical countermeasures (MCMs) to respond to manmade and naturally occurring biological threats. Progress has been achieved, but the work is far from done and must continue uninterrupted. Congress recognized this reality when they reauthorized the Pandemic and All Hazards Preparedness Act during 2013. PAHPRA reauthorized the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA), the Project BioShield Special Reserve Fund, Public Health Emergency Preparedness grants, the Hospital Preparedness Program, funding for pandemic influenza, and others.

"A robust public-private partnership is essential for national preparedness for the chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) threats discussed in this hearing. Alliance members are dedicated to being strong partners in preparing for these threats by developing the vaccines and drugs needed to protect Americans. We rely on the United States Government to do their part by ensuring that the strong market signal provided by the BioShield Special Reserve Fund continues into the future." *Anders Hedegaard, Alliance for Biosecurity Co-Chair, and CEO, Bavarian-Nordic.*

The Alliance for Biosecurity, formed in 2005 to improve the nation's biosecurity through the development of medical countermeasures to address bioterrorism and natural pandemic threats, supports a long-term national security vision for achieving and sustaining defenses against a range of threats that present national security challenges.

For more information, visit the Alliance for Biosecurity website at www.allianceforbiosecurity.org.

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