

**OPENING STATEMENT
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SUBCOMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**Hearing on:
*The Department of Homeland Security's Research and Development Budget
Priorities for Fiscal Year 2008*
Thursday, March 8, 2007
2318 Rayburn House Office Building**

I first want to thank Chairman Wu for holding this critically important hearing on the science and technology developments at the Department of Homeland Security. Also, a special thank you to our esteemed panel of witnesses for taking time to dialogue with us about the role science and technology is playing in securing our nation.

Mr. Chairman, I strongly believe our nation's scientific enterprise remains a critical component of homeland security. The efforts of the Science and Technology Directorate and the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office contribute to the preparedness of our nation against terrorism and natural disasters. These organizations tap into the limitless creativity of our nation's scientists and engineers to bring cutting edge technology to those defending our nation from servicemen and women to border patrol agents to first responders.

I'm particularly pleased to welcome Admiral Cohen and Mr. Vayl (V a l e) Oxford to this subcommittee hearing. Gentlemen your service to our great nation is greatly appreciated and I very much enjoyed meeting with you both this week. I look forward to continuing the conversations we started in regards to the exciting opportunities scientific research is providing to the securing of our homeland. This Committee is committed to supporting your work and helping you create both a balanced and innovative research portfolio.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ms. Marilyn Ward for joining us today to take part in this discussion. Ms. Ward's organization, the National Public Safety Telecommunications Council includes representatives from many different first responder communities. Such representatives include the the International Associations of Chiefs of Police, Emergency Mangers, as well as Fire Chiefs. Ms. Ward, I look forward to hearing from you on how the Department's research and development activities can further support our nation's first responders. In particular, your appearance will allow us to examine one highly influential program in the Science and Technology Directorate, the Office for Interoperable Communications. This office has worked for the last several years with first-responders to improve the interoperability of communications equipment and that work continues today in cooperation with the new Office of Emergency Communication within the DHS Preparedness Directorate.

I am eager to not only hear from our witnesses how science and technology efforts are yielding immediate benefits to the defense of our nation, but also ways we can improve upon these efforts.

The President has requested over \$1.3 billion dollars in funding for the two organizations before us today for fiscal year 2008. How that funding is allocated across the various programs and projects in your organizations, I have no doubt, is a difficult task considering the reality of the world we now live in. Whether the greatest threat to our country is a radiological device coming through our ports, or an infectious disease outbreak, or a cyber attack on our nation's financial infrastructure; the fundamental challenge before us is how to best distribute limited funding in the face of these highly uncertain and varied threats.

In addition to prioritizing these various threats our country now faces, we must also consider the nature of research performed to combat them. Do we focus federal spending towards long-term, basic research? What percentage of funding do we allocate towards incremental improvements to current capabilities?

With these overarching questions in mind, I look forward to delving more deeply into the activities of the Science and Technology Directorate and the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office. I once again thank all the witnesses for taking the time to be here today and anticipate this hearing will yield a fruitful and productive conversation. Mr. Chairman, I look forward to continuing to work with you on this subcommittee, and with that I yield back the balance of my time.