OPENING STATEMENT
THE HONORABLE RALPH HALL (R-TX)
Ranking Member, U.S. House Committee on Science and Technology
Oversight of the Networking and Information Technology
Research and Development (NITRD) Program
Thursday, July 31, 2008
2318 Rayburn Office Building

Thank you Chairman Gordon for scheduling this oversight hearing on the NITRD program. This program provides the primary mechanism by which the federal government coordinates this nation's more than 3 billion dollars of unclassified networking and information technology (NIT) research and development (R&D) investments.

The United States is the global leader in NIT, and I agree with the authors of the PCAST Report on this issue when they say that our continued leadership "is essential to U.S. economic prosperity, security, and quality of life."

Given the ever increasing amounts of networking and information technology that affect our everyday lives from power grid and water purification systems to automotive improvements and air traffic control equipment to home health-care devices and educational software programs, it is important that we not only continue to support these R&D efforts but also make sure that this program is appropriately coordinating with our classified cybersecurity initiatives as well. In fact, I believe that this is of vital importance to our homeland security and to our economy.

We have before us today an esteemed panel of NIT experts, and I look forward to hearing their views on how to make an already exemplary interagency program even better.