



Committee on
HOMELAND SECURITY
Chairman Michael McCaul

Opening Statement

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**Statement of Subcommittee Chairman John Ratcliffe (R-Texas)
Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection, and Security Technologies**

“Examining DHS Science and Technology Directorate’s Engagement with Academia and Industry”

Remarks as Prepared

Good morning, the Subcommittee meets today to examine the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology (S&T) Directorate. The ability for S&T to engage with academia and industry is a critically important function, especially in times of shrinking budgets and limited resources. S&T must be able to leverage the resources of academia, Federally Funded Research and Development Centers, industry, and the full spectrum of what S&T Undersecretary Dr. Reginald Brothers has called the “S&T ecosystem” in order to better enable the DHS components to carry out their missions to protect the homeland. To accomplish this, Dr. Brothers has made the development of the Homeland Security Industrial Base one of his top priorities. Dr. Brothers is modeling the Homeland Security Industrial Base off of the Department of Defense’s (DOD) Defense Industrial Base (DIB), which is largely successful in being the private sector engine for the military. While the DOD model is a good one for DOD, there needs to be greater focus on meeting the needs of the Department of Homeland Security. The DOD DIB model cannot be simply applied to DHS; they are vastly different agencies, on very different scales, and have different mission needs of their technology investments. DHS does not buy, acquire, or conduct R&D on the same scale as the military. I think Dr. Brothers is on the right path, but we need to ensure we are addressing the needs of DHS, messaging the needs and direction of its components to the small and medium sizes businesses that are interested in doing business in the homeland security ecosystem.

The S&T Directorate has several programs and divisions within the directorate aimed at enabling the communication and notification of business and academic research opportunities including: the S&T Small Business Innovation Research Program, the Technology Transfer Program, and the Commercialization Office.

Over the past year the Subcommittee has met with several industry, academic, and Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDC) that collaborate with S&T to better understand the very broad scope and R&D mandate that S&T is faced with. Additionally, we have learned about many of the successes of the Directorate, but also many of the challenges S&T has in fulfilling its mission.

Feedback from industry and academia informs us that S&T does not always effectively communicate its R&D priorities and the technology needs of the components it serves. In turn this poor outreach and messaging leaves small and medium sized businesses in the dark on how they should best invest their internal R&D dollars to position themselves to compete and win contracts with the department. Additionally, S&T's coordination of awarding contracts to small and medium size businesses, FFRDCs and academia is inconsistent within the divisions of the Directorate, which must be problematic for these organizations that do not have the time or resources to wait around for several months for S&T to award a contract. This appears to be a department wide issue however it is particularly problematic when trying to develop R&D contracts in a very fast moving and dynamic technological environment.

Some of the actions that Dr. Brothers has taken to address the communication of priorities and notification of business and research opportunities have been to develop and publish visionary goals developed in consultation with industry leaders. These visionary goals coupled with the strategic plan should help industry and academia better understand S&T's priorities to inform their own technology developments to meet the needs of the DHS components.

Today the Subcommittee meets to examine the progress Dr. Brothers has made in addressing these challenges, to hear directly from academia and industry representatives on their engagement experience with S&T, and what improvements still need to be made. I applaud Dr. Brothers for the steps he has taken to create the visionary goals and strategic plan, although it remains to be seen if this strategic plan can be properly implemented and be effectively communicated to S&T's academic and industry partners. In Dr. Brothers' testimony before this Subcommittee last fall, he acknowledged the work S&T still has to do to improve transparency and information sharing with industry and academia so they may align their investments to better suit DHS S&T and DHS component needs. I look forward to working with him, industry, FFRDCs and academic leaders to help make S&T successful in their mission to serve the department.

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