



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)**

***How Effective is the Science and Technology Directorate?:  
Stakeholder Perspectives***

**Emergency Preparedness, Response & Communications Subcommittee**

**November 7, 2017**

I want to send my condolences to the families affected by last week's tragic terrorist attack in New York City and to thank the first responders for their heroic efforts.

I also want to send my thoughts and prayers to the families of those killed at the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas on Sunday. Over the past five years, we have seen mass killings at an elementary school, a movie theater, a work place, a night club, a college campus, and a music festival.

No community is immune from the indiscriminate pain that mass shootings inflict. It is time for Republican leadership to put aside politics and take meaningful steps to ensure that this nation's gun laws work to protect our citizens and law enforcement.

Turning to the subject of today's hearing, I am pleased that this Subcommittee is continuing the Committee's efforts to help S&T mature into a dynamic research and development organization capable of meeting the evolving needs of the Homeland Security Enterprise.

When the Committee last held a hearing on the Science and Technology Directorate, I raised concerns about the lack of a unified DHS policy defining research and development priorities, stakeholder engagement processes, and ongoing budget challenges.

I am pleased that the former Under Secretary for Science and Technology, Dr. Reggie Brothers, is here today to talk about what he did to tackle those challenges.

From identifying DHS' Visionary Goals and establishing the Integrated Product Team process to launching the Homeland Security Innovation Program, Dr. Brothers provided clarity to S&T's long-term priorities, improved the coordination of research and development activities, and attracted new industry to the homeland security space.

I commend Dr. Brothers for his efforts to leave S&T a better organization than it was when he found it.

That said, there are ongoing challenges undermining S&T's potential. First, S&T's budget is not what it should be, and the Trump Administration's FY 2018 budget request sought irresponsible cuts that would have cut into the bone of S&T's activities.

Although I am pleased that some of the funding was restoring in the House spending measure, I remain concerned that research and development of security technologies is not a top priority of the Trump Administration.

Second, Congress has failed to enact legislation to clarify S&T's mission and authorities. Despite this Committee's efforts to address long-standing challenges at S&T, our Senate counterparts have so far refused to act. I hope for a different outcome this Congress.

Lastly, I am not confident we are fully leveraging the expertise of all of the colleges and universities that are capable of contributing in this space, and I hope to learn more about how S&T can better work with academic institutions..

Before I close, I want to echo Ranking Member Payne's comments regarding the need to reschedule the Full Committee hearing on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's preparedness and response capabilities as soon as possible.

The Federal response to the devastation caused by Hurricanes in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands is not what it should be, and American citizens are suffering as a result. If we can put a man on the moon and bring him back, surely we can turn the power back on and provide reliable access to clean water within 7 weeks.

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