

TOM DAVIS, VIRGINIA,
CHAIRMAN

DAN BURTON, INDIANA
CHRISTOPHER SHAYS, CONNECTICUT
ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, FLORIDA
JOHN M. McHUGH, NEW YORK
JOHN L. MICA, FLORIDA
MARK E. SOUDER, INDIANA
STEVEN C. LATOURETTE, OHIO
DOUG OSE, CALIFORNIA
RON LEWIS, KENTUCKY
JO ANN DAVIS, VIRGINIA
TODD RUSSELL PLATTS, PENNSYLVANIA
CHRIS CANNON, UTAH
ADAM H. PUTNAM, FLORIDA
EDWARD L. SCHROCK, VIRGINIA
JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR., TENNESSEE
NATHAN DEAL, GEORGIA
CANDICE MILLER, MICHIGAN
TIM MURPHY, PENNSYLVANIA
MICHAEL R. TURNER, OHIO
JOHN R. CARTER, TEXAS
MARSHA BLACKBURN, TENNESSEE
PATRICK J. TIBERI, OHIO
KATHERINE HARRIS, FLORIDA

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074
FACSIMILE (202) 225-3974
MINORITY (202) 225-5051
TTY (202) 225-6852

www.house.gov/reform

HENRY A. WAXMAN, CALIFORNIA,
RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

TOM LANTOS, CALIFORNIA
MAJOR R. OWENS, NEW YORK
EDOLPHUS TOWNS, NEW YORK
PAUL E. KANJORSKI, PENNSYLVANIA
CAROLYN B. MALONEY, NEW YORK
ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS, MARYLAND
DENNIS J. KUCINICH, OHIO
DANNY K. DAVIS, ILLINOIS
JOHN F. TIERNEY, MASSACHUSETTS
Wm. LACY CLAY, MISSOURI
DIANE E. WATSON, CALIFORNIA
STEPHEN F. LYNCH, MASSACHUSETTS
CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, MARYLAND
LINDA T. SANCHEZ, CALIFORNIA
C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER,
MARYLAND
ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON,
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
JIM COOPER, TENNESSEE

BERNARD SANDERS, VERMONT,
INDEPENDENT

Subcommittee on Technology, Information Policy, Intergovernmental Relations and the Census

Congressman Adam Putnam, Chairman



OVERSIGHT HEARING STATEMENT BY ADAM PUTNAM, CHAIRMAN

Hearing topic: "*Facilitating an Enhanced Information-Sharing Network That Links Law Enforcement and Homeland Security for Federal, State and Local Governments.*"

Tuesday, July 13, 2004

2:00 p.m.

Room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building

OPENING STATEMENT

Good afternoon and welcome to the Subcommittee's hearing on "Facilitating an Enhanced Information-Sharing Network That Links Law Enforcement and Homeland Security for Federal, State and Local Governments." This hearing will address the initiatives and strategies being implemented to enhance information sharing capabilities between Federal, state and local law enforcement agencies and homeland security activities. There are many examples of direct and indirect linkage between criminal activity and terrorist-related activity. Accordingly, law enforcement agencies at all levels of government should have effective collaborative capabilities for information sharing.

The need to effectively coordinate the efforts of Federal, state and local governments for homeland security is now well understood. September 11th highlighted the increasing risk of terrorist attacks on U.S. soil. Consequently, Federal, state and local governments recognized an urgent need to effectively unify their efforts to enhance homeland security

by employing the unique contribution that each level of government can make on the basis of its capabilities and knowledge of its own environment. U.S. intelligence and law enforcement communities continuously assess both foreign and domestic terrorist threats to the United States. In October 2001, Congress passed the USA PATRIOT Act, to improve the sharing of information between the intelligence and law enforcement communities.

Information sharing and coordination among government organizations are central to producing comprehensive and practical approaches and solutions to combating threats. Having information on threats and actual incidents experienced by others can help an organization identify trends, better understand the risk it faces, and determine what preventive measures should be implemented. In addition, comprehensive, timely information on incidents can help Federal and nonfederal analysis centers determine the nature of an attack, provide warnings, and advise on how to mitigate an imminent attack. Also, sharing information on known terrorists and criminals can help to secure our Nation's borders.

There is clear, compelling and documented evidence to support the notion that there are instances of a direct link between criminal activity such as drug trafficking, illegal gambling, and money laundering whose primary beneficiaries are terrorists organizations. Cutting off funding sources and interrupting the linkage that supports the threat activity will contribute to a more secure America.

Another critical issue in developing effective analysis and warning capabilities is to ensure that appropriate intelligence and other threat information, both cyber and physical, are received from the intelligence and law enforcement communities. For example, there has been considerable public debate regarding the quality and timeliness of intelligence data shared between and among relevant intelligence, law enforcement, and other agencies. Today, we will not focus on the rear view mirror or dwell unnecessarily on past breakdowns in the process of gathering and sharing information. Further, today's hearing will only address this matter in the unclassified space, acknowledging that there is an enormously valuable and important component of information sharing managed and conducted in the classified space. No matter the source, it is important that relevant information be available to appropriate decision makers to enhance our prevention efforts in the law enforcement and homeland security communities on behalf of protecting our citizens from foreign or domestic terrorism. We need only to be reminded of the "sniper" tragedy in the Washington area during the fall of 2002, to reflect on the intrinsic value of such collaboration.

During this hearing, we will examine the efforts and progress achieved in developing secure, reliable, and interoperable information-sharing networks that facilitate a comprehensive and real-time information-sharing capability that is dependable and that respects privacy provisions. The Subcommittee will seek a better understanding of how improved collaboration, cooperation, and communications will enhance improved two-way flow of information between appropriate Federal, state and local law enforcement entities.

Information barriers can be, depending on the case, cultural, organizational, human, or technological. Such barriers often prevent the formation of integrated information systems across all levels of government.

Federal, state, and city governments have undertaken initiatives to improve the sharing of information that could be used to fight terrorism and protect the homeland. Many of the initiatives are implemented by states and cities and are not necessarily coordinated with other sharing initiatives, including those implemented by the Federal government.

While beneficial to participants, the initiatives do not necessarily integrate others into a truly national system and may inadvertently hamper information sharing for this reason. A lack of effective integration could increase the risk that officials will overlook, or never even receive, information needed to prevent a terrorist attack.

New technologies for data integration and interoperability could enable agencies to share information without the need for radical structural changes. Developing and implementing appropriate technological solutions can improve the effectiveness and efficiency of information sharing. Additionally, tools, processes, and technologies available today address privacy issues and provide protection against privacy intrusion.

With the threat environment that exists in the world today, it is increasingly important that cross-agency and intergovernmental collaboration is effective and efficient. Accordingly, the Subcommittee will explore progress and obstacles to achieving the most successful implementation of a national strategy for information sharing related to law enforcement and homeland security.

All law enforcement agencies must act in partnership to maximize the benefits of information gathering and analysis to prevent and respond to terrorist attacks. Protocols for reciprocal exchanges of information have to be firmly established because the free flow of information among Federal, state and local law enforcement agencies is vital to fighting the war on terrorism and protecting citizens.

#####