

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY, EMERGING THREATS,  
AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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## Statement of Rep. Christopher Shays September 29, 2003

The emergence of terrorism as a threat to domestic security laid bare our myriad vulnerabilities, but also unleashed a tidal wave of national scientific ingenuity and creativity.

Well before September 11<sup>th</sup>, government, businesses and individuals pursued development of new technologies to strengthen homeland defenses. Research labs, defense contractors, Members of Congress and others have been inundated with proposals for everything from satellite monitored cargo containers to individual radiation detectors.

What happens to all those ideas? Who is responsible for sorting through that mountain of paper, sifting wheat from chaff, and making sure only the best concepts move forward to prototype and the marketplace?

In the past, we found duplication and a lack of coordination in federal counterterrorism research and development programs. Testimony before this Subcommittee in March 2000 described overlapping, unfocused chemical and biological defense research programs in the Department of Defense (DOD), the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, Department of Energy labs, and the Department of Justice.

We also heard about an established interagency forum for evaluation and rapid prototyping of counterterrorism technologies called the Technical Support Working Group (TSWG).

Now, to that already crowded field, add the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which Congress charged to act as both a developer and clearinghouse for innovative technologies.

Today we focus on the TSWG process, their performance and their potential role, with DHS, in channeling the torrent of homeland security technologies into a coherent stream.

In terms of process, the working group relies on Broad Area Announcements to sweep the technological horizon for proposals. Subgroups of interested agency representatives and experts use streamlined formats to speed evaluation of the responses. Projects meeting specific requirements have been nurtured and brought quickly to production.

In the near term, DHS will use the working group process to direct a substantial volume of annual funding for prototype technologies. But DHS officials concede they are establishing similar and overlapping capabilities. So we asked TSWG participants, both government agencies and private sector innovators, to assess the past and potential of the working group in establishing and implementing government-wide priorities for homeland security technologies.

We thank all our witnesses for their time and expertise, and we look forward to their testimony.