Rep. Brian Baird (D-WA)
Chairman, Subcommittee on Research & Science Education
House Committee on Science and Technology

Joint Subcommittee Hearing with Armed Services Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities:

Role of the Social and Behavioral Sciences in National Security

Good morning. First, I want to thank my colleagues Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Thornberry and their staff for working with me and Dr. Ehlers and our staff to bring together our two committees for this hearing.

There are few greater challenges facing our country than national security. While technology has and will continue to improve our ability to meet that challenge head-on, our successes and failures at all scales are largely driven by people, not technology.

Exactly one year ago, I found myself on the Floor of this House defending the National Science Foundation's merit review system and specifically its research portfolio in the social and behavioral sciences from specious attacks. Unfortunately some of my colleagues failed to do their homework that day. One of the grants they chose to single out has been cited by the U.S. Army Research Institute as crucial in helping to train our soldiers currently stationed in the Middle East. The title of the grant was "The Accuracy in the Cross-Cultural Understanding of Others' Emotions." This research, currently being carried out with NSF funds, is directly relevant to understanding and predicting behavior, detecting deception and improving relations within numerous national security settings – not just the soldiers in the field.

In fact the National Science Foundation supports basic research across the social and behavioral sciences that could have near- or longer-term application to our national security needs, even if the terms "national security" or "Iraq" or "military" never show up in the grant titles. Similarly, the Department of Defense supports some of its own, typically more application-driven social and behavioral science research. I believe that there is a real opportunity for increased collaboration between these two agencies in support of research that meets both of their criteria and advances both of their missions.

I am happy to be working with my colleagues on the Armed Services Committee to provide a forum for discussion about mechanisms for such collaboration. I also look forward to learning more from our witnesses about the full range of relevant social and behavioral science research needs and how such research

can be translated into practice to strengthen our national security. I thank all of the witnesses for being here this morning.