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**The Honorable James Langevin**

***Opening Statement – “Nuclear Smuggling Detection: Recent Tests of Advanced Spectroscopic Portal Monitors” March 5, 2008***

Good morning. I thank the witnesses for being here at this important hearing. Today we are discussing a very important project for the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office – the Advanced Spectroscopic Portal Monitor.

This subcommittee held its first hearing on this topic one year ago, and we will continue to provide robust oversight on this project until we are sure that we are deploying the best technology possible to detect radiological and nuclear materials coming across our borders. Given that we are holding yet another hearing on this topic, I think it is fair to say that we are not quite there yet. While I applaud the DNDO for its aggressive pursuit of new detection technologies, I still remain deeply concerned that the Advanced Spectroscopic Portal Monitors have not been properly tested and evaluated.

In one of the reports we will discuss today, the Independent Review Team reiterates a recommendation made by GAO over a year ago: development and testing should not be done by the same organization. This lack of a rigorous and independent testing program can easily lead to the development and even the deployment of ineffective equipment. The two reports under consideration today both raise as many questions and concerns as they answer. It is my hope that the Advanced Spectroscopic Portal will ultimately function as intended. But at this point, I expect Secretary Chertoff will require many more unequivocal test results before he is ready to certify to Congress that the ASP represents a significant increase in operational effectiveness over the currently deployed systems. Perhaps the field tests underway by CBP will add this needed level of clarity.

Not all of the news presented in these reports is bad. There are several results that point to progress for the ASP program. However, both reports are extremely nuanced and do not seem to give clear, strong indications of whether this project is achieving its stated goals. In fact, there are several statements included in these reports that, if taken at face value and on their own, would cause most people to say that ASP has failed or is at the very least in serious jeopardy of doing so. For example, the Phase 3 report states that when it comes to identifying masked sources, the Polyvinyl Toluene (PVT) performs better than ASP. However, upon a more extensive review of the entire report, it becomes evident that this statement does not mean exactly what it seems to say. I will explore this issue further in my questions.

I do not want to see this program fail. Let me say this again: I do not want to see this program fail – it's far too important. The advantages of an effective spectroscopic portal over the current binary "alarm / no alarm" option offered by the current PVT monitors would represent a major increase in homeland security, but only if they work as intended. Current tests still have not unequivocally demonstrated – in an operational setting – that the ASP represents a significant improvement over current technologies. This is an important point. While it may be easy to only focus on the simplistic, big-picture items, this is a subtle and nuanced issue that we cannot afford to overlook.

I hope this hearing will allow us to delve into the details of these two reports and to make clear exactly what was said, what was not, and where we go from here. I should note that the GAO has been a great help and a trusted source on this issue for Congress. For various reasons no GAO representative was able to attend today's hearing, but we will continue to rely on their counsel in the future and implore those witnesses here today to cooperate with GAO as they fulfill their role as Congress' trusted auditor. I once again thank the witnesses for being here and look forward to your testimony.