

The Honorable James Langevin
Chairman

ETCS&T Subcommittee
Committee on Homeland Security

Hearing:

***Countering the Nuclear Threat to the Homeland:
Evaluating the Procurement of Radiation
Detection Technologies***

Opening Statement

I would like to compliment Dr. Oxford and the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office for moving so aggressively to procure and deploy technologies to detect radiological and special nuclear materials at the Nation's ports of entry.

You have accomplished a lot. As of February 2007, Radiation Portal Monitors (RPM) were scanning 100% of all U.S. mail, 89% of all cargo entering through U.S. seaports, 96% of cargo at the Southern border and 91% at the Northern border, with expected increases to 97% at seaports and 99% at the Southern border by the end of FY07.

To date, roughly 1,000 RPMs have been deployed. Future deployments designed to scan 100% of all conveyances will require an additional 1,500 – 2,000 units over a deployment schedule through FY13.

While the subcommittee is impressed with DNDO's efforts, we are concerned that such an aggressive schedule might have resulted in short cuts in the decision-making process to acquire ASP technology.

This is the fundamental question that the subcommittee is examining today.

The October 2006 report and the testimony submitted by Mr. Aloise certainly points to this possibility.

I would like to say that I feel that both of the witnesses here are doing their duty to protect this country, and I applaud the hard work and dedication of both of you.

It is my hope that through an open and thorough discussion that we will come to some

agreement on how best to move forward.

For example, the cost benefit analysis assumed a 95% positive identification rate for highly enriched uranium (HEU).

The 2005 tests of the equipment showed that currently the Advanced Spectroscopic Portals (ASP) did not perform nearly this well.

We need to figure out why, whether expecting this kind of performance is realistic, and if not, how to move forward from here.