Hearing Statement of Daniel K. Akaka
"Securing the National Capital Region:
An Examination of the NCR's Strategic Plan"
Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal
Workforce, and the District of Columbia
September 28, 2006

Thank you Mr. Chairman. Today we convene the Subcommittee's

third hearing on the security of the National Capital Region, and I welcome

our witnesses back to the Subcommittee.

From what I can see, you've made tremendous progress.

Completing a Homeland Security Strategic Plan for the NCR is a huge step

forward. Bringing 14 state and local jurisdictions together and achieving

consensus is not easy, however – in the case of the Nation's capital – it is

necessary. And I commend you for accomplishing this task.

The final version of the Strategic Plan is a vast improvement upon

the draft documents that preceded it.

However, I have a few suggestions for improvement:

• The first is metrics. Many of the goals in the plan are hard to

measure.

• The second is the timeline. Most of the target dates are in 2006,

2007, and 2008. A strategic plan should look beyond two years into

the future.

I encourage you to treat the plan as a working document so it may be continually reviewed and updated.

While the focus of today's hearing is the Strategic Plan, I also would like to address the issue of interoperability and the Urban Area Security Initiative grants.

The NCR has made great strides in the area of interoperable communications. Many have asked whether first responders in the NCR have the ability to communicate with each other in times of crisis. As our witnesses' will tell us, the answer is yes.

My staff attended a demonstration of the communications capability of the NCR jurisdictions in early September, and they listened as Prince George's County firefighters talked to their counterparts in Montgomery County who talked to the DC police. Press reports which state that Prince George's County is not interoperable with the rest of the NCR have oversimplified the issue. First responders from PG County can communicate with first responders in the rest of the NCR through a technical bridge – otherwise known as a patch – which takes mere minutes to apply. This region is far ahead of most parts of the country in terms of

interoperability – which is an immensely difficult challenge. You **all**

deserve credit for that.

An area of concern for me is this year's NCR UASI grant application.

This region has access to unprecedented resources and expertise –

including the DHS Office of National Capital Region Coordination –

because it is the Nation's capital. So I was surprised to hear DHS say the

region's UASI application was lacking. I hope that next year it is risk and

need – not paperwork – that determines the NCR's homeland security

funding.   In particular, I want to ensure that the DHS ONCRC is providing

adequate assistance to the region, given that members of this

Subcommittee worked to significantly increase the ONCRC's budget in FY

07.

Again, I would like to commend the members of the NCR – both state

and local officials – for what you have accomplished because your jobs are

not easy. Many challenges lie ahead, and I urge you to continue on a path

of cooperation and coordination. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.