

Opening Statement

REP. BART GORDON (D-TN)
Ranking Member

U.S. House Committee on Science

HEARING: *Border Security - How Can Technologies Help Secure Our Borders?*

September 13, 2006

Securing the Nation's borders is one of the main responsibilities of the Department of Homeland Security.

Border control is prominent in the current debate on illegal immigration and certainly is a necessary component of the larger issue of defending the country against terrorist attacks.

Technology has an important role to play in border security simply because of the size and nature of the problem. There are thousands of miles of border, much of it remote and rugged, and a limited number of enforcement officers.

Technology can provide the tools needed to multiply the effectiveness of the border patrol officers in detecting and apprehending illegal intruders at the border.

The question is what detection, surveillance, communication, and computer-aided analysis and control technologies are appropriate and cost-effective, and how can they be integrated into an effective system for border security?

The Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology Directorate has developed a research portfolio that is focused on improving border security.

I am particularly interested in hearing how the S&T Directorate will be providing its expertise and advice to assist the Border Patrol in its procurement of the new integrated border control system called for under the Secure Border Initiative.

The Secure Border Initiative is an ambitious undertaking that follows past, unsuccessful efforts to integrate and automate sensors and surveillance technologies in a user-friendly system.

To succeed this time will require close supervision by DHS. I hope to hear that the S&T Directorate will be closely involved with the establishment of the new border control system and with its evolution, as new technology becomes available.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for calling this hearing, and I look forward to our discussion with the panel.