

# **Ranking Member William R. Keating (D-MA) Opening Statement as prepared**

## **SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT, INVESTIGATIONS & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY**

### **“Homeland Security Contracting: Does the Department Effectively Leverage Emerging Technologies”**

**Friday July 15, 2011**

I am particularly pleased to have the Under Secretary for Management testifying today. This is his first appearance before the Subcommittee this Congress and since his confirmation in the Senate. As the chief architect of the Department’s acquisition strategy, I look forward to receiving his input on ways to improve DHS contracting.

Each year, the Department spends approximately one quarter of its annual budget on procurements, making it one of the largest procurement agents in the Federal Government.

The Department’s mission: to secure the nation from the many threats we face; spans many sectors, including aviation, border security, emergency response, and Cybersecurity.

At the heart of this mission is the need to develop and acquire leading and innovative technologies that will keep our country ahead of our enemies on every front.

To make the system work, DHS Headquarters, DHS Components, and the private sector must coordinate and collaborate, sharing ideas and costs.

The Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) is responsible for managing science and technology research from development through transition for Department components and first responders.

Unfortunately, however, Department components have often times looked beyond S&T to outside sources to fulfill their needs resulting in higher administrative costs.

Since the Department’s inception it has been included on the Government Accountability Office’s high risk list, in part, according to GAO, because of its acquisition process.

The Department is now in the process of implementing a new method for managing its Department-wide acquisition strategy.

Hopefully, this will result in better decisions and greater end-user involvement so that fiascos like *SBI<sup>net</sup>* become a way of the past. I am therefore pleased with this development.

However, I am concerned about S&T’s use of Other Transaction authority – which is wide open for waste and abuse -- the lack of oversight that has plagued the Department’s acquisition process at S&T and other components, and the difficulty the private sector has when attempting to bring new technological ideas to the Department.