

Ranking Member Yvette D. Clarke (D-NY) Opening Statement

Committee on Homeland Security's Subcommittee on Cybersecurity,
Infrastructure Protection, and Security Technologies

“Securing Ammonium Nitrate: Using Lessons Learned in Afghanistan to
Protect the Homeland from IED's.”

July 12, 2012 – 10 A.M.

The testimony before the Subcommittee today will allow us to learn about the efforts of the Department of Defense, and the collaborative interagency efforts of DHS and many other U.S. Agencies, to stem the cross-border flow of explosive chemicals in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

I want to thank all of our witnesses for being here, and all of you have personal experience in the issue we are to cover today. However, my preference would have been to take the testimony in public, in unclassified formats. I'm sure we could ask all of our witnesses back to give us classified briefings if needed, but, Mr. Chairman, I will not object to your motion to go into executive session. General Barbero, it was good to meet you yesterday, welcome, and we look forward to your testimony.

This Subcommittee has been very active on the issue of domestic infrastructure protection, and certainly on the protection of our chemical facilities from threats, and the illicit use of ammonium nitrate and other explosive precursors. This is something that every Member here thinks about on a daily basis, and it's our job to develop legislation to address these complicated issues.

As my Ranking Member has mentioned, we have a lot of expertise on this Subcommittee, and we have worked carefully with industry and security experts to balance the needs of our farmers and industrial users, with very challenging and complex security issues.

Balancing domestic concerns in a stable, civil society that facilitates the smooth flow of commerce, and supports the biological processes of our farming operations, can sometimes present more intricate challenges than might exist in other geopolitical settings.

I look forward to learning about the Department of Homeland Security's efforts overseas, how they collaborate with other agencies and countries, and how that experience can inform us in developing more secure approaches to confront the threats posed by the use of explosive chemicals in our nation.