



**HOUSE ARMED SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE ON TERRORISM AND
UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS
JIM SAXTON, NEW JERSEY
CHAIRMAN**

PRESS RELEASE

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OPENING STATEMENT OF JIM SAXTON

*Terrorism, Unconventional Threats & Capabilities Subcommittee Hearing on
Information Technology Issues and Defense Transformation*

Washington, D.C. – The subcommittee meets this afternoon to consider Department of Defense (DOD) information technology programs. Information technology, or IT, is one of the subcommittee’s most important responsibilities—the DOD IT budget is substantial—over \$30 billion—and it enables the precise delivery of the essentials of modern war—information, intelligence, and weapons—yet it is one of the difficult areas to get our arms around.

We fully understand and appreciate that modern life, and modern warfare, cannot be waged without integrated sensor, satellite, communications, and computer systems. Yet, understanding how it all fits together and what we really have to have to make the system work is very challenging, and is challenging I submit for our witnesses as well.

For, as difficult as it is to knit together a robust, high speed, high bandwidth, secure, dependable, global internet to support the troops in the field, building it with no one person or organization in charge must be almost impossible. The combatant commanders drive the requirements; the services’ acquisition executives procure the systems; and the Chief Information Officers (our witnesses today) set standards to ensure the resulting mosaic of systems work together. How this arrangement can produce anything at all is a minor miracle.

Again, all those necessary system attributes I listed are not platitudes. The systems must in fact be secure, fast, dependable, robust, and global—because that’s the way we must fight to defeat today’s clever and elusive enemy.

My colleagues and I visit the troops in the operational theaters frequently. Those visits have demonstrated to me that we are far from realizing the promise of a Special Forces soldier early in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan called in precise air strikes from horseback. Yes, it happened, and it was impressive, but it is far from the reality of present day operations. From my perspective, we have a long way to go. I know our witnesses today appreciate the difficulties. I expect them to describe their progress, and I would like to hear it. But I am really more interested in what we have to do to bring the promise of integrated warfighting systems into reality.

On the business side of information technology, our second panel of witnesses will highlight DOD's efforts to bring order to the usual chaos through a new organization, the Business Transformation Agency. We welcome any help in rationalizing DOD's business systems, but will want to ensure that this new agency brings real valued added, and is not just another layer in the bureaucracy. The subcommittee has focused heavily on this subject over the past three years and is interested in any real progress in this area.

IT is a tough, rapidly changing business. Systems are under continuous attack, and IT systems do not provide the military "presence" of a naval warship. Nonetheless, the systems are critical and must be dependable. Lives do indeed depend upon your efforts. We know you oversee critical national security systems.

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