

Statement

of

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before

the

**Subcommittee on Technology, Information Policy,
Intergovernmental Relations and the Census**

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Chairman Putnam, Members of the Committee, my name is Tim Beres, and I serve as the Associate Director of the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP). As you know, the Secretary recently consolidated ODP and the Office of State and Local Government Coordination to establish the Office of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness (SLGCP) to move toward the "one stop shop" that State and local stakeholders have long called for. On behalf of SLGCP, Executive Director C. Suzanne Mencer, and Secretary Ridge, it is my pleasure to appear before you today to discuss the current status of SLGCP and specifically our work on interoperable communications.

On behalf of all of us at DHS, I want to thank all the Members of the Committee for your ongoing support of the Department and for SLGCP. I also want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your foresight and leadership on the issue of interoperable communications, which is a cornerstone of our ability to prevent and respond to acts of terrorism here in the United States.

OFFICE FOR DOMESTIC PREPAREDNESS

As you are all aware, ODP within SLGCP is responsible for preparing our Nation against terrorism by assisting States, local jurisdictions, regional authorities, and tribal governments with building their capacity to prevent, respond to, and recover from acts of terrorism. Through its programs and activities, ODP equips, trains, exercises, and supports State, local, and tribal homeland security

personnel -- our Nation's first responders -- who may be called upon to prevent and respond to terrorist attacks.

Mr. Chairman, ODP has established an outstanding track record of capacity building at the State, local, territorial, and tribal levels, through strong and long-standing ties to the Nation's homeland security community. ODP has worked with Federal agencies and State and local jurisdictions to develop and disseminate information to assist in making more informed preparedness decisions, including capability assessments, preparedness planning and strategies, and choices relating to training, technical assistance, equipment, and exercises.

Since its creation in 1998, ODP has provided assistance to all 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the U.S. territories. Through its programs and initiatives, ODP has trained over 575,000 emergency responders from more than 5,000 jurisdictions and conducted nearly 500 exercises. Since its creation, Homeland Security has provided states and localities with over \$8.2 billion in State Homeland Security Grants for the purchase of specialized equipment to enhance the capability of state and local agencies to prevent and respond to incidents of terrorism involving the use of chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or explosive (CBRNE) weapons; for the protection of critical infrastructure and prevention of terrorist incidents; for the development, conduct and evaluation of state CBRNE exercises and training

programs; and for costs associated with updating and implementing each states' Homeland Security Strategy. Since 2002, ODP has specifically provided \$1.2 billion in grant assistance to States and local jurisdictions to improve interoperability through the purchase of communications equipment.

During Fiscal Year 2004, ODP's record of service to the Nation's first responders continues. All of the 56 States and territories have been awarded their Fiscal Year 2004 funding under the Homeland Security Grant Program. This includes funds to support State-wide preparedness efforts under the State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP), the Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program, and the Citizen Corps Program. These awards represent over \$2.2 Billion in direct assistance.

Further, 50 urban areas designated under the Fiscal Year 2004 Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) have been awarded funding. This represents \$671 Million in support to high-density population centers with identifiable threats and critical infrastructure. In addition, the Department has identified 30 of the Nation's most used urban transit systems and has provided \$49.7 Million to enhance the overall security of these systems.

ODP's two primary sources of assistance to States and local communities, SHSGP and UASI, require States and Urban Areas to assess their risk, capabilities, and need, including requirements relating to interoperable

communications. These assessments and strategies have given us valuable information on the current State of interoperable communications and how various States and localities are addressing this issue. This is in fact the framework that we have been using to provide the technical assistance and training in the area of interoperable communications, which I will address in more detail later in my testimony.

As you will recall Mr. Chairman, on December 17, 2003, the President issued “Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD)-8.” Through HSPD-8, the President tasked Secretary Ridge, in coordination with other Federal departments, as well as State and local jurisdictions, to develop a national preparedness goal to improve the delivery of federal preparedness assistance to State and local jurisdictions, and strengthen the preparedness capabilities of Federal, State, territorial, tribal, and local governments.

Earlier this year, the Secretary delegated to ODP the responsibility for the implementation of HSPD-8. This designation by the Secretary is consistent with ODP’s mission, as provided under Section 430 of Homeland Security Act of 2002, to be the primary Federal agency responsible for the preparedness of the United States for acts of terrorism. And ODP, together with Secretary Ridge, other Department components, Federal agencies, and State and local governments, firmly believe that the successful implementation of HSPD-8 is essential and critical to our Nation’s ability to prevent, respond to, and recover

from acts of terrorism.

Through the work that is being conducted under HSPD-8, the Department will develop a national preparedness goal that will establish measurable readiness priorities and targets that appropriately balance the potential threat and magnitude of terrorist attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies with the resources required to prevent, respond to, and recover from them. This effort will also produce readiness metrics and elements that support the national preparedness goal, including standards for preparedness assessments and strategies, and a system for assessing the Nation's overall preparedness to respond to major events. Among the principle issues to be addressed by these efforts will be interoperable communications.

In our efforts to meet the President's call to improve delivery of Federal preparedness assistance to State and local jurisdictions, ODP has made it a priority to not only provide assistance with preparedness assessments and grant funds to purchase new tools and equipment, but that needed training and technical assistance follows to insure full utilization of assets.

INTEROPERABLE COMMUNICATIONS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (ICTAP)

One of our most important technical assistance efforts to date is the Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (ICTAP) which is

providing State, local, and tribal agencies with the operational support they need to get new interoperability systems up and running.

Section 430 (c)(2) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 granted authority to ODP to serve as the primary agency responsible for "... coordinating, or as appropriate, consolidating communications and systems of communications relating to homeland security at all levels of government...". Under this mandate, ICTAP was initiated in August 2003 as part of Secretary Ridge's "One Stop Shop" to provide streamlined support for State and local preparedness programs. The program is designed to meet the legislative mandate of a direct link with States and urban areas for all homeland security related equipment acquisition, training, and technical assistance in the area of interoperable communications.

ICTAP provides technical assistance at no cost to jurisdictions in conjunction with the implementation of the State and UASI preparedness strategies. This program ensures that the jurisdictions understand the scope of their interoperability needs and how to fully utilize new technology.

The goal of the ICTAP program is to enable public safety agencies to communicate as they prevent or respond to a terrorism attack. ICTAP also leverages and works with other Federal, State, and local interoperability efforts whenever possible to enhance the overall capacity for agencies and individuals to communicate with one another. The ICTAP program is not limited to a set

time period, but focuses on quickly and thoroughly meeting the unique interoperability needs and requirements of jurisdictions across the country. However, it is also important to note that there are no “silver-bullet solutions” that we can drop-off in a region that will resolve its problems. From start to finish, interoperability requires a great deal of work with the key communication stakeholders in that region.

ICTAP – FOUR PHASED APPROACH

The ICTAP technical assistance team works closely with the Urban Area Working Group (UAWG), or its communication designees in the region, to provide on-site operational support from an initial assessment and inventory of what currently exists to live operation of the new system. The process covers four important phases:

Define Requirements: The ICTAP team can help the urban area assess its current communications capabilities and the interoperability gaps that limit communications between agencies at the local, State, Federal and tribal levels. This includes a survey of existing communications technologies and the development of operationally based scenarios to understand how agencies could respond to a terrorist incident and the interoperable communications capability needed to support that response.

Identify Solutions: The ICTAP team assesses a variety of potential solutions that could address the identified needs. Solutions may be short- and/or long-term, integrating other local, State, and Federal initiatives. Working with the input of the UAWG, the ICTAP technical assistance team develops an implementation plan.

Implement Solutions: The ICTAP team helps to implement and integrate the planned approach to interoperable communications, assisting with design of the chosen interoperable communications architecture and with implementation planning. This may include coordinating host site agreements, providing training, and assisting with testing.

Transition Services: The ICTAP team continues to provide technical assistance by assisting with training needs, utilization evaluations, and exercise coordination after the system is up and running.

The ICTAP approach is to provide long-term support which recognizes that each community has unique interoperability issues which require varying solutions. ICTAP's goal is to quickly and efficiently provide interoperability in the communities where we work, but we want to make sure it continues after we leave. ICTAP support will play a valuable role in implementing the HSPD-8 capabilities-based planning approach. HSPD-8 planning emphasizes a regional (mutual aid or assistance compact) approach to identification of required

capabilities, and the provision of expertise to State and local government planning bodies to aid in requirements identification and prioritization.

Program Facts and Figures

ICTAP has received requests for assistance from 32 of the 51 participating urban areas, as well as 8 States and 3 U.S. Territories. To date, the ICTAP program has been allocated \$12.9 million. The current listing of the States, Regions and Territories in which we are working is noted on the next page.

Active UASI ICTAP Sites	Pending UASI ICTAP Sites	State ICTAP Sites		
<p>Atlanta, GA Baton Rouge, LA Charlotte, NC Chicago, IL Denver, CO Fresno, CA Honolulu, HI Houston, TX Jersey City, NJ Kansas City, MO Los Angeles, CA Miami, FL New Orleans, LA New York City, NY Oakland, CA Orlando, FL San Diego, CA San Francisco, CA San Jose, CA Seattle, WA St. Louis, MO Tampa, FL</p>	<p>Buffalo, NY Cincinnati, OH Columbus, OH Dallas, TX Detroit, MI Las Vegas, NV Minneapolis, MN Newark, NJ Phoenix, AZ Santa Ana, CA</p>	<p>Arizona Hawaii Idaho Kentucky Louisiana Missouri New Jersey Washington</p> <tr> <th data-bbox="948 1220 1302 1299">U.S. Territories ICTAP Sites</th> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="948 1306 1302 1768"> <p>Puerto Rico American Samoa Virgin Islands</p> </td> </tr>	U.S. Territories ICTAP Sites	<p>Puerto Rico American Samoa Virgin Islands</p>
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<p>Puerto Rico American Samoa Virgin Islands</p>				

ICTAP PUBLIC SAFETY EXPERTS & ENGINEERS

The ICTAP Program employs approximately 30 former public safety communications experts and technical engineers who have firsthand operational experience with emergency responder interoperability communications services and issues. ICTAP is using some of the best engineers and public safety practitioners in the nation. Our experts include former State and local communications administrators, members and former officers of the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials (APCO), former Statewide interoperability project managers and local public safety directors. To enhance coordination of Federal interoperability efforts, ICTAP also employs the National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics, which is also providing training and technical assistance to the Department of Justice's COPS interoperability grantees. ICTAP technical support is provided by an experienced group of engineers from the Space and Naval Warfare Systems Center, San Diego (SSC-SD) who have successfully implemented interoperability solutions with the military and with State and local jurisdictions. SSC-SD has also been assigned by ICTAP to support the technical needs of the DHS RAPIDCOM 9/30 program.

SPECIFIC SITE INFORMATION

Within each State or region, ICTAP works to establish a steering committee, as well as a technical working group made up of the State, local, and tribal stakeholders who are directly responsible for communications. This work with

dozens of local jurisdictions has clearly demonstrated once again that there is no silver bullet for interoperability. I will discuss below in general terms some examples of ICTAP's work.

In addition, ODP conducted a trends analysis of common issues in communications interoperability resulting from the Fiscal Year 2003 State Homeland Security Assessment and Strategy (SHSAS) process and ODP exercise after action reports.

An analysis of the 56 strategies submitted through the SHSAS process reveals that a total of 54 States and territories address at least one of seven interoperable communications issues in their strategies. These issues are: plans, committees or working groups, assessments, equipment, training, exercises, and general statements regarding interoperable communications.

The results of the exercise trends analysis revealed several observations regarding gaps in communications interoperability, including: a high rate of non-interoperable radio frequency and radio channel usage; the fact that radio communications often are a patchwork of systems rather than an integrated approach to communications interoperability; and that protocols for mutual aid communications rarely exist.

Florida Sites

As an example, South Florida is devoting significant attention to the difficult policy issues of developing standard operating procedures and mutual aid agreements to address incompatible systems in that region's largest jurisdictions. At the same time, in Central Florida, the immediate issue is to document what equipment is in place throughout the region. In both areas, personnel are fully dedicated to communications issues in their own jurisdictions, making it difficult to dedicate the time necessary to complete these vital regional tasks.

To address these needs, ICTAP personnel have conducted face to face interviews with communications personnel in over a dozen jurisdictions in the Miami and Tampa areas to create regional inventories that will help these Urban Areas direct future funding requests for interoperable communications equipment, as well as determine what standard operating procedures (SOPs) and memoranda of understanding (MOUs) are needed. Personnel also were invited to support both the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) meeting in Miami, as well as the annual Gasparilla celebration in Tampa, to see communications systems in operation and prepare an "after-action-report" that was used by the local communication officials.

In the coming weeks, ICTAP will facilitate meetings with each Urban Area to make recommendations on how it can best "fill the gaps" in its communications strategy when Fiscal Year 2005 funding becomes available.

Kansas City Experience

Kansas City, Missouri, a UASI site that began to implement its ICTAP program in early 2004, provides an example of how the program is working with an ongoing interoperability effort. The Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), which has been designated by the State and the participating Urban Area as the Kansas City Urban Area Working Group, is a joint political organization of city and county governments that has been delegated the authority by these jurisdictions and the State to administer funds for the Kansas City metro area UASI program. “The ICTAP program has been a huge resource to the region,” says Matt May, Emergency Services Planner for MARC. “In addition to funding, the ICTAP team has provided technical expertise that would have either severely decimated or eliminated funds allocated to the project, requiring MARC to look to other funding sources to initially implement the project” [Source: “Implementing the Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (ICTAP)”, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness, 2004.].

The proposed interoperability solution, known as the Regional Area Multi-Band Integrated System (RAMBIS) is a multi-band region-wide radio system that will provide interoperability between disparate radio systems (800MHz, VHF, UHF) through simulcast transmission and cross-band repeating. Simulcast transmission allows the same signal to be broadcast from multiple repeater sites to cover a larger geographic area. Cross-band repeat functionality will allow the channels for 800MHz, VHF, and UHF to be interconnected so that a transmission

received on one band will be rebroadcast on all bands, creating interoperability among all three frequency bands. With the Technical Working Group that ICTAP helped establish, efforts are underway to identify frequencies and facilities available for use by the RAMBIS system. In addition to contributing to the development of the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the RAMBIS system, the ICTAP team will assist with evaluation of RFP responses, and will be available to provide technical assistance during system implementation.

State of Idaho

Working with the Idaho Statewide Interoperability Executive Council (SIEC), the ICTAP program has provided technical support for the 700MHz feasibility study. ICTAP personnel have participated in five WMD exercises to collect interoperable communications data. Recognizing the need for documenting information about the current infrastructure throughout the State, ICTAP designed a web-based technical communications questionnaire and data collection tool which is currently being used to collect information. Over the coming months, ICTAP will support a comprehensive study of coverage and compatibility which will require eighty (80) site surveys, assessment of physical condition of existing radio frequency sites, inventory of existing equipment and documentation of tower structures. This support has been enthusiastically welcomed by the SIEC and the Governor's Office.

DHS COORDINATION

As we are all aware, there are a number of different activities both within DHS, as well as in other departments that involve interoperable communications issues.

The range of activities includes research, development and testing of interoperability solutions; defining industry standards; conducting nationwide baseline surveys; designing long term national interoperability strategies; and operational delivery of systems and training and technical assistance. These efforts are closely coordinated. The role of ICTAP is to fulfill the operational communications needs of States and regions.

All requests for ICTAP assistance are coordinated through the States to ensure consistency with State, and, where applicable, Urban Area homeland security strategies. This process streamlines the relationship between the requests for interoperability funding and the need for technical assistance and training to ensure it is used effectively. In the context of ICTAP's work, it is essential that we neither duplicate nor contradict any other Federal, State or local interoperability initiatives. In conjunction with our Federal partners, we have striven to present a coordinated approach. Examples of this coordination include:

Federal Inter Agency Board for Equipment Standardization and

Interoperability (IAB)

ICTAP actively participates in the IAB and is a member of IAB sub-committee for Interoperable Communications and Information Systems (ICIS). Through the IAB, the ODP ICTAP has access to a wide range of technical and subject matter communications interoperability expertise. ICTAP has successfully engaged IAB/ICIS members and enlisted their support as a technical assistance resource

for ICTAP and to help implement interoperable communications solutions. The IAB has been instrumental in documenting communications interoperability roles and relationships at the State and local level throughout the full cycle of a critical incident, and has been a strong advocate for strengthening State and local response operations through better communications.

SAFECOM

While we have focused on local support, ICTAP is well aware of the importance of developing National interoperability policy. For guidance on these issues, ICTAP relies on SAFECOM, which is the Federal government's umbrella office for coordination of public safety interoperability programs, to provide standards and conduct research which can help our jurisdictions develop a better interoperable communications program. As an example, in ODP's Fiscal Year 2004 guidance for the Homeland Security Grant Program and UASI, we adopted the SAFECOM developed "Guidelines for Interoperability" as recommendations for use of funds. In addition, ICTAP is examining how to incorporate the findings from the recently developed SAFECOM Statement of Requirements (SoR) for Wireless Public Safety Communications and Interoperability. The SoR contains interoperability scenarios describing how SAFECOM envisions technology enhancing public safety. In addition, ODP/SLGCP has entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with SAFECOM to codify the areas in which we can work more effectively together. This includes continuation of ODP support for SAFECOM projects like RapidCom, as well as coordinating other

areas of mutual interest such as the dissemination of grant guidance and providing technical assistance in the field.

Federal Interagency Coordination Council (FICC)

ODP, as well as other Federal agencies, is a member of the Federal Interagency Coordination Council (FICC). The FICC, which is chaired by SAFECOM, seeks to avoid duplication, promote best practices and coordinate Federal grants and technical assistance among the Federal agencies supporting public safety interoperable wireless communications improvements.

RAPIDCOM 9/30

The contacts and relationships developed through ICTAP's work with first responders have also proven to be a valuable resource in furthering the initiatives of our fellow agencies. For example, when SAFECOM was tasked with RAPIDCOM 9/30 -- a major initiative announced by Secretary Ridge with the task of ensuring interoperability in America's ten largest cities by September 30, 2004 -- it was the SLGCP developed Urban Area Working Groups that were used as the primary points-of-contact for this effort. Furthermore, ICTAP personnel have participated in meetings with almost all of the RAPIDCOM cities, and when asked, we also provided operational expertise in support of this initiative.

In Miami, Florida, for instance, the ICTAP program had been working with local communications personnel for a number of months when RAPIDCOM 9/30

began. SAFECOM staff was able to take advantage of existing ICTAP relationships and technical information to better focus their efforts. Furthermore, by closely coordinating this work, ICTAP will be able to utilize the work completed by SAFECOM long after September 30th as we continue our training and technical assistance to support Miami's interoperability efforts.

Department of Justice Coordination

Finally, by communicating with the Department of Justice about previous interoperability initiatives, ICTAP personnel have ensured that response agencies have incorporated this work into their homeland security interoperability efforts. For example, ICTAP has worked closely with personnel from the Department of Justice's Integrated Wireless Network and 25 Cities Program to ensure that the work completed to date on that project was properly coordinated and not duplicated by SLGCP.

CONCLUSION

In closing, DHS's mission is critical, its responsibilities are great, and its programs and activities impact communities across the Nation. We will strive to fulfill our mission and meet our responsibilities in an effective and efficient manner. And we will, to the best of our abilities, continue to identify where and how we can improve. Part of our responsibility, part of the Department's responsibility, Mr. Chairman, is the recognition that we can always improve what we do and how we do it. Mr. Chairman, let me restate Secretary Ridge's

commitment to support the Nation's State and local homeland security community, and to ensure that America's emergency responders receive the resources and support they require to do their jobs. This concludes my statement. I am happy to respond to any questions that you and the members of the Committee may have. Thank you.