



**Subcommittee on National Security,
Emerging Threats and International Relations**

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****MEDIA ADVISORY****

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**Congressman Christopher Shays to Convene June 2 Hearing on
“Following Toxic Clouds:
SCIENCE AND ASSUMPTIONS IN PLUME MODELING ”**

(Washington, DC) -- Congressman Christopher Shays (CT-4), Chairman of the Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats and International Relations will convene an oversight hearing to examine the strengths and weaknesses of current methodologies to model the spread of aerosolized biological, chemical or radiological agents.

“In the Cold War, we plotted the course of ballistic missiles,” Shays said. “In the war against weapons of mass destruction, we need to be able to predict the path of toxic clouds across new battlefields abroad and here at home.”

Due to differences in existing model designs and outputs, there can be confusion how best to inform emergency responders of the risks posed by ambient toxic releases. The Department of Homeland Security encountered delays and uncertainties attempting to predict the radioactive “hot zone” after a dirty bomb explosion in the recent TOPOFF2 exercise in Seattle.

A report by the National Research Council on the use of dispersion models in homeland security operations will be released at the hearing.

“DOD attempts to model the chemical weapons plume at Khamisiyah after the first war in Iraq showed how small changes in design and data inputs can yield dramatic changes in plume predictions,” Shays said. “Better science and better data are needed to improve both military force protection and homeland security preparedness against chemical, biological and radiological releases.”

The Monday, June 2, 2003 hearing will convene at 1:00 p.m. in room 2154 of the Rayburn House Office Building in Washington, D.C.

Committee on Government Reform
Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations
“Following Toxic Clouds: Science and Assumptions in Plume Modeling”
(June 2, 2003)

Witness List

Mr. Keith Rhodes

Chief General Accounting Office Technologist
General Accounting Office

Dr. Anna Johnson-Winegar

Deputy Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Chemical/Biological Defense Programs
Department of Defense

Dr. Donald L. Ermak

Program Leader
National Atmospheric Release Advisory Center (NARAC)
Lawrence Livermore Laboratory

Mr. Bruce Hicks

Director, Air Resources Laboratory
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

Dr. Eric Barron

Chair, Board on Atmospheric Sciences and Climate
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