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STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD

for

**BIOSCIENCE AND THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY
(PART II): CLOSING THE GAP**

by

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MAY 4, 2006

before the

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR
AND BIOLOGICAL ATTACKS**

of the

**US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES' COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY**

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Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished Subcommittee members, I am pleased to appear before you today to discuss the steps the National Counterproliferation Center (NCPC) is taking to address some of the recommendations put forward by *The Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction* (WMD) on the biological warfare (BW) topic, thereby enhancing the ability of the Intelligence Community (IC) to meet the threat posed by the proliferation of biological weapons and related technologies.

Let me begin by underscoring what role NCPC plays on issues like bio threats. Expertise in analysis and collection resides in the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the National Security Agency (NSA), and other elements of the Intelligence Community. NCPC's role is to ensure there is an integrated IC effort against key priorities and to promote partnerships among the elements of the IC, non-IC United States (U.S.) government (USG) agencies, and experts outside of government. NCPC's priority-setting and integrating role is critical, as counterproliferation requires a team effort, and nowhere is this more true than in the area of biological threats to U.S. national security.

Today, I will discuss efforts to strengthen the IC's life sciences work force, the creation of a biological science advisory group that NCPC's Senior Bio Advisor will establish and run, and our initiatives to make more effective links between biological experts throughout government and outside the government with the IC. In addition, I would like to take some time to tell you about a few other initiatives NCPC has underway to promote an integrated IC approach to the problem of biological threat agents, increase teamwork, and fill gaps in our knowledge about the biological threats posed from state and non-state actors.

The Challenges Facing Bio Threat Intelligence

A major challenge for the Intelligence Community in dealing with bio-related issues is research and development applications and technology that are completely dual-use—i.e., legitimate research that might (and I emphasize 'might') be misused to cause harm to public health and homeland and national security. The IC has written numerous assessments of the potential impact of existing and emerging technologies related to biological weapons proliferation as these technologies are developed from or applied to the life sciences; a major portion of the 2004 National Intelligence Estimate on worldwide BW programs was devoted to this issue. These assessments have utilized the talented in-house scientific expertise of our analysts and scientists and have drawn on the advice of outside technical experts as well.

Although some believe that we will understand the threats we face from offensive use of biological agents if only we follow technological advances that have the potential to be misused and track who in the world is working in these areas, our experience indicates that this is a strategy of looking for hay in a haystack. The key questions for the Intelligence Community are primarily *not* highly technical in nature.

- We must determine if a state adversary has the intent to establish, maintain, or acquire a BW program, because a country of concern typically will have a dual-use capability. Whether that capability is for legitimate medical purposes, developing defensive countermeasures, or is for offensive BW is closely guarded, non-technical information.
- Some non-state actors, such as al-Qa'ida, have publicly stated that they have the intent to eventually have an offensive biological capability, so the IC must constantly monitor the plans and capabilities of these groups in order to determine who, where, and under what circumstances they will actually use them.

Focusing on technology alone not only does not answer these questions, but it can lead people to speculate on nightmare scenarios that are not grounded in reality.

Another challenge facing the IC is that biological threat agents go beyond man-made substances produced by state programs or terrorist groups. A global pandemic would have dramatically negative consequences for the national security interests of the United States. While such a pandemic would be largely dealt with by those US government agencies concerned with domestic and international public health issues, the Intelligence Community would be looked to for actionable medical intelligence about the spread of pandemic diseases that would not be available publicly or that others might cover up for one reason or another. The IC would also be called upon to provide analysis to support the efforts of U.S. government public health and other agencies. Thus, while the IC would not be a primary actor in dealing with a pandemic situation it needs to be prepared to play an important supporting role.

Expanding Partnerships and Collaboration

NCPC is working with IC agencies to ensure the IC is prepared to succeed in meeting the various bio threat challenges to U.S. national security. In this regard, NCPC works to establish important new partnerships and relationships with the life science and public health communities. The following are some of the steps we are taking.

First, and consistent with the recommendations of the WMD Commission's Report, NCPC has established the position of Senior Advisor for Biological Issues. Dr. Lawrence Kerr has recently assumed this position and is accompanying me today.

Dr. Kerr completed his Ph.D. in Cell Biology from Vanderbilt University and undertook his postdoctoral work at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in San Diego, California. Dr. Kerr has a wealth of expertise pertinent to the mission of the Senior Advisor. He ran a basic science laboratory devoted to the regulation of gene expression as faculty at Vanderbilt School of Medicine and now Georgetown School of Medicine. His political experience has taken him from developing policy and staffing senior officials of the White House (within the Office of Science and Technology Policy and most recently, as Director for Biodefense Policy within the Homeland Security Council) to the Congress

(as a fellow on the Health subunit of the Senate Judiciary Committee). He remains actively engaged with the life science and public health communities writ large. His experience in fostering policy to meet national objectives has brought him the respect of the Federal Departments and Agencies, and individuals and groups from the private sector and academic communities with whom he routinely lectures at the national and international levels and works to coordinate policy and plans.

Dr. Kerr is tasked with promoting greater collaboration among the interagency, academic and private sector to improve intelligence related to biological threats. As part of this effort, Dr. Kerr is working to identify new partnerships that should be developed with entities outside the IC and outside the U.S. Government, to strengthen the IC's counter-BW capabilities.

An important part of Dr. Kerr's partnership building efforts will be working with IC agencies and non-governmental experts to establish the IC's first broadly-focused biological science advisory group. This group will report to the DNI through the Director of NCPC, but it will serve the IC as a whole. While the classified charter for this group is under review, we envision a panel of nationally recognized leaders in the life sciences, engineering, public health and medicine, veterinary medicine, pharmaceutical experts and many other disciplines. NCPC shall convene this group of non-government experts to work with the Intelligence Community on a routine basis.

This advisory group will draw from the best practices of existing IC advisory panels, which will require that the life scientists and associated experts possess security clearances, permitting their exposure to and understanding of our nation's current capabilities in collection, analysis, and the science and technology brought to bear in performing these missions. The group will complement, not duplicate, the work of the Defense Science Board (DSB), the Intelligence Science Board, the National Science Advisory Board on Biosecurity (NSABB), or the Defense Intelligence Agency's Jefferson Project and Biochem 2020 group. The new advisory group we will look across the broad horizon of known and emerging biological threat agents challenges for U.S. intelligence, ranging from man-made substance and state and terrorist programs to naturally occurring pandemics, and thereby support the fundamental mission of the NCPC, fulfill the commitments in the President's Homeland Security and National Security Presidential Directives (HSPD-10/NSPD-33, "Biodefense for the 21st Century") and build on recommendations from the Institute of Medicine's (IOM) recent report and the advise of renowned leaders in the field.

We envision the new bio advisory panel will include a permanent advisory group of leading experts with access to a network of cleared scientists who are able to tap into the scientific and technical experts across the life sciences. We will encourage this group to partner with the existing life science-related committees in and out of the Federal government in order to prevent redundancy and augment on-going projects. NCPC, with input from the IC, will ask the advisory group to identify issue areas and cutting-edge technologies that might pose a future threat to our security.

Enhancing Collaboration through Information Sharing

NCPC has also begun an effort to improve information sharing within the IC as well as with life science experts inside and outside of the USG who can extend the breadth and depth of scientific understanding brought to bear on the issue of biological threat agents. The approach includes determining what types of traditional intelligence and scientifically grounded information the IC needs to better answer the questions posed by senior policymakers and how to ensure it is distributed to all relevant parties within the IC. We envision that existing working groups and policy coordinating committees will be asked to work on strategies to resolve key issues that are identified during this process.

We initiated this effort in early April when we co-hosted with the National Counterterrorism center (NCTC) an IC conference that focused on community building, information sharing, and defining the Intelligence Community's roles against the full spectrum of biological threats, natural to intentional. The conference was well attended, with approximately 85 participants from 14 intelligence agencies (including senior representatives from 4 combatant commands). Participants in the conference were senior analysts, collectors, and science and technology officers. Each organization briefed its mission, goals, and needs. Participants told us these briefings provided valuable insights into the array of bio-related activities ongoing in the IC. In addition, we conducted smaller-group discussions on specific issues, including improving information sharing both within and outside the IC, and defining the IC's role in covering natural disease outbreaks. Feedback from this IC conference has helped us define areas where biological scientists and other experts from the broader USG and outside of government could aid in technical evaluations and has given us insight in ways to improve our intelligence regarding biological threat agents.

In addition, we initiated an internal review of collection efforts associated with biological threat agents. This review, along with the engagement of the IC writ large through the aforementioned conference, will result in recommendations that will address any gaps in our current processes as well as identify ways in which we can better support our IC customer's need for bio-related intelligence.

The ability of our biodefense community to anticipate, eliminate, prepare for, and if necessary, respond to a biological weapons attack on the United States depends on improved intelligence collection, analysis and proper dissemination of that information to the relevant customers. We recognize that numerous non-IC partners must be more fully engaged in these processes for an improved seamless biodefense infrastructure. We are partnering closely with all U.S. government (USG) organizations involved in the biodefense mission, such as the Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS), Homeland Security (DHS), the Department of Defense, the US Department of Agriculture, and others to make sure that all of our customers not only are part of the requirements setting process, but that they are fully aware of our capabilities and limitations – and are recipients of the intelligence analyses they need in order to perform their part of the biodefense mission.

In July we will co-sponsor, with NCTC and DHS, a second bio threats conference to expand awareness, address common concerns and identify ways to share information that is mutually beneficial to the Departments while maintaining their respective mission areas. We will discuss how to better identify, acquire, distribute, integrate, and utilize diverse streams of information within the US government so the threats posed by known and emerging biological agents are more effectively identified, characterized and addressed. If this forum is anything like the first one, it will surely stimulate discussion on issues regarding the biological information most valued and already possessed within the U.S. government and will identify gaps in our current systems of collection and analysis. Our goal will be to ensure that these gaps are closed through strategic planning and implementation of those plans across the Federal government.

In the fall, NCPC will co-host with NCTC and DHS a third conference involving key representatives from academia and the private sector to explore how these sectors might help fill our information gaps. We are already engaging leading experts in certain designated fields who can add technical insight into current and emerging biological threats and we are seeking their counsel on how to most productively engage non-USG life scientists.

Building and Sustaining the Workforce Needed to Meet Bio Threat Challenges

NCPC is in the final stages of preparing a strategic counterproliferation plan for the IC. This plan will, inter alia, identify enhancement of the IC's counter-BW capabilities as a priority goal and will stress the need for the IC to fully integrate and coordinate the efforts it has underway against the BW threat. It will also acknowledge the IC's success in dealing with bio threat challenges is dependent upon having the skilled workforce needed to deal with these complex issues. The plan will promote the recruitment, development, and retention of a highly skilled and specialized workforce needed to sustain success in acquiring and using high value intelligence information against each of the specific WMD threats, including the BW target. The key initiatives will include, inter alia:

- Recruitment – in partnership between the Communities, a workforce mapping and assessment initiative will establish the current baseline; identify any expertise shortages or gaps; and then will work to develop an interagency process to promote candidate sharing and make recommendations for agency recruitment.
- Career Development – an initiative to identify career benchmarks for life science professionals across the Community; review training and improve communications and access to strengthen external linkages with experts; and will work to find new ways to increase the numbers of analysts, collectors and other life science and technology experts.
- Retention – we are reviewing agency retention strategies; communicating best practices; and working to establish a Community Rewards Program recognizing collaborative achievement.
- And finally, partnership is the key – partnering with the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) and other Community members to leverage the best talent and expertise within the private sector.

Conclusion

Bio threats are among the most complex challenges facing the IC. The biological sciences are producing new findings and innovations at a remarkable pace. These innovations hold the promise to advance human health, but those also have the potential to be misused by state weapons programs or terrorists. At the same time, the possibility of naturally occurring pandemics is increasing. We recognize that significant challenges remain for the collection of traditional intelligence and other kinds of information to assist in attack warning, countermeasure development and strategic level policy-making related to biothreats to the U.S. NCPC is working with IC agencies to integrate the IC's work on bio threat challenges. In addition, NCPC is leading an effort to build partnerships for the IC with non-IC U.S. government agencies, as well as with the non-government life science communities. Finally, NCPC is also working with the IC agencies to ensure the IC has the workforce it needs in the future to deal successfully with bio threat challenges. We have much to do to realize our goals, but we have made a good start toward achieving our goals in all these areas.