

Opening Statement
The Honorable Adrian Smith (R-NE), Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Technology and Innovation
Planning for the Future of Cyber Attack Attribution
Committee on Science and Technology
U.S. House of Representatives
July 15, 2010

Thank you, Chairman Wu, for calling today's hearing on cyber attack attribution. Once again this subcommittee will have the opportunity to hear from an outstanding panel of expert witnesses, and I thank them for taking the time to be with us today.

With the integration of computing technology into nearly every aspect of our professional and private lives – from growing our food to managing our electrical grid to tracking every financial transaction no matter how small – the threat of a catastrophic attack on the networks which manage every sector of our economic and security infrastructure has also grown exponentially.

As we search for effective ways to prevent such an attack, one widely discussed means is deterrence through attribution – ensuring would-be attackers know any activities would be traced back to them with reciprocal action in return.

The work of tracing such attacks, particularly in the United States where the presumption of innocence is sacrosanct and where privacy for the innocent is respected, this is easier said than done. This raises a number of questions I hope we can address in today's hearing:

- What are the best methods for tracing attacks?
- What barriers exist, aside from technological ones, to tracing attacks inside and outside our borders?
- If we can trace attacks, what is an effective deterrent to prevent them?
- And if we can answer the first three questions effectively, what is the role for standards-setting bodies in assisting government and the private sector in reaching those conclusions?

I hope we can also consider the consequences of traceability on the overwhelming majority who use computer systems lawfully and whose privacy we should respect.

Before we move on to hearing from our witness, I would like to briefly note it is my understanding a follow-up hearing in which we hear from NIST, National Science Foundation, and other applicable federal agencies is under consideration, and I would like to offer my support for holding such a hearing.

Thank you again, Chairman Wu and witnesses. I expect we will learn a lot today, and I yield back the balance of my time.