COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY
CHAIRMAN LAMAR SMITH

For Immediate Release
May 16, 2013

Media Contacts: Kim Smith Hicks, Zachary Kurz
(202) 225-6371

Statement of Oversight Subcommittee Chairman Paul Broun (R-Ga.)
Hearing on "Espionage Threats at Federal Laboratories: Balancing Scientific Cooperation while Protecting Critical Information"

Chairman Broun: Good afternoon and welcome everyone to this Subcommittee on Oversight hearing titled "Espionage Threats at Federal Laboratories: Balancing Scientific Cooperation while Protecting Critical Information." I would like to extend a particularly warm welcome to our witnesses and thank them all for joining us here today.

Today's hearing focuses on the intersection of two very important issues - ensuring that the United States remains the world leader in scientific research and technical innovation, and protecting our national security.

Finding the appropriate balance between scientific openness and security concerns is not new. But it is critical that we have this type of public discussion regularly, so as to maintain open lines of communication, and if necessary, recalibrate our strategies to respond to new threats.

Science is a global endeavor. International cooperation on science and technology and the open exchange of ideas has led to countless significant breakthroughs that have benefitted all of mankind. Here in the United States, visiting foreign scientists and scholars spark innovation and entrepreneurship, make critical contributions to the economy and learn first-hand about American culture and values. But we can't afford to close our eyes to the reality that there are nefarious actors – scheming insiders, business rivals, criminals, terrorists, and foreign intelligence services – who exploit our free and open society to steal the results of American ingenuity and innovation.

Russia and China have regularly topped the intelligence and law enforcement community's lists of the most aggressive and persistent thieves of sensitive scientific and technical information. Russia views the United States as a strategic competitor and its intelligence services are very capable and just as prolific as ever.

And China continues efforts to gain access to advanced technology to fuel its military modernization program, according to the Pentagon's latest report on the capabilities of the Chinese military. The report says China operates a large, well-organized network of companies and research institutes with both military and civilian R&D functions that enable the Chinese military to access sensitive and dual-use technologies or knowledgeable experts under the guise of legitimate civilian R&D. This raises the question, are American taxpayer dollars subsiding the modernization of China's military? Just last week, Chinese media reported that their military is ready to test-fly an armed, stealth drone which looks remarkably like some American stealth aircraft.

In addition to foreign intelligence services, terrorists could clandestinely acquire the advanced technological information or materials needed to build a nuclear, biological, chemical or radiological weapon. What if the Boston bombers had used their university ties to acquire radiological material to turn their bombs into dirty bombs?

Our goal today is to gain a better understanding of how federal laboratories and their partners in the broader academic and scientific communities balance international scientific cooperation with the need to protect sensitive information. I don't have any prescriptions to put before you, but look instead to our witnesses to identify best security practices and sensible federal policies that don't allow the pendulum to swing too far in either direction.