



PRESS RELEASE

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Statement of the Honorable Curt Weldon
Small Business Innovation and Technology

Today, the Tactical Air and Land Forces Subcommittee will receive testimony from a series of small, innovative U.S. companies that are developing leading-edge technologies, and proposing military applications of those technologies that address a variety of defense modernization needs. The work of these companies will demonstrate to members of the subcommittee that small businesses are capable of producing vital defense products rapidly, at potentially lower costs and, in some cases, providing new capabilities. In the new defense era, it has become imperative that small, innovative companies are afforded adequate opportunity to make their innovations available to the defense acquisition system.

The Department of Defense, in light of the events of September 11, 2001, has elevated efforts to transform our armed forces to meet the nation's needs in the century ahead. Many have concluded that this transformation will depend, in large part, on making better use of innovative technologies being generated throughout the private sector, including both defense and non-defense companies.

Meanwhile, the defense industry has experienced its own transformation over the last decade, and one of the unfortunate consequences of the numerous mergers and consolidations is the continued consolidation and disturbing shrinkage of the innovative research and development base within those remaining companies. Our witnesses today will demonstrate that small companies are often capable of producing leading-edge technologies that offer great advantages for defense programs. However, companies not already part of the recognized defense industrial base often experience difficulty penetrating defense markets and dealing with the complex regulations and procedures that are required by the Department of Defense.

Each of you here today have experiences relating to this problem, and we look forward to discussion of your technologies and your suggestions that might make it simpler for non-defense companies to deal with the Department of Defense.

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