

Testimony of Congressman Paul Cook (CA-08)
Defense Appropriations Subcommittee – April 4, 2014

Good morning, Chairman Frelinghuysen, Ranking Member Visclosky, and members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for providing me the opportunity to present an important issue for the intelligence community and DOD warfighters.

Mapping and geographic data are critical elements in planning and conducting combat mission and making our soldiers aware of their surroundings. Today, this data is provided to our military by the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, or NGA. NGA's products give the most complete data, allowing each service to access the information across a variety of handheld and mobile platforms. In a remote environment, such as the mountains of Afghanistan, an accurate map can be the difference between life and death.

Following the attacks of September 11th, 2001, the intelligence community struggled to distribute information in a timely manner to those responsible for our safety.

The challenge of providing high-quality, accessible mapping data in support of DOD operations was resolved by ceasing our reliance on government to develop a program, instead turning to the commercial sector for advanced mapping software.

Today, cell phones place virtually unlimited information at our fingertips. Our men and women in uniform need similar access to remain safe, but are often without it in an operational environment.

In Fiscal Year 2002, this Committee provided 15 million dollars for the “**Commercial Joint Mapping Toolkit**” which was competitively sourced and provided this information in a cost efficient.

The goal was to provide connectivity and interoperability between the users and the providers of mapping data while minimizing cost for DOD. Ten years later, that goal has been achieved.

Today, the Commercial Joint Mapping Toolkit is used in over 200 DOD programs. Recognizing its value, the NGA is currently extending the program through December 31, 2015.

After 2015, its future is unclear. This is why I appear before you today. I understand the NGA has not yet articulated its plan for a follow-on program to Congress or to DOD. This Committee has a need to know.

I also have serious concerns that the NGA is changing its approach to the mission of providing geospatial data. This creates a potential problem for DOD warfighters for this reason:

The Agency is building an on-line “Map of the World,” **which can only be accessed through a web portal**, called Globe. The Map of the World project is a hub all geospatial intelligence. They tout this program as “tailored for DOD and intelligence senior decision makers.”

This is the core of my concern. **The Agency is not saying, “tailored for warfighters.”** While decision makers have a need for this information, it is never as severe as the need on the battlefield.

I commend the NGA for their modernization efforts and urge this Committee to fully support their budget request. However, senior decision makers are folks here in Washington. I am advocating for the soldiers and Marines deployed to the Middle East and the Asia-Pacific, who often cannot access the Globe web portal. Our combat operations often take place in remote environments. These are placed where accurate mapping data is needed frequently and immediately.

Today, this program is a success because mapping data and toolkit software are accessible to DOD at no charge. However, sequestration and budget constraints make future availability uncertain.

If NGA stops providing this data at no cost, this subcommittee will almost certainly receive larger appropriations requests, as DOD attempts to build its own capability. This may negatively impact performance and interoperability as each service attempt to fill the void individually.

Therefore, I am recommending that this Committee require the Director of the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency and Assistant Secretary of Defense for Networks and Information Integration to submit a joint plan to Congress to describe the next follow-on program. This will ensure that NGA's modernization will not compromise service to those deployed to remote areas.

This plan should meet the needs of both organizations, using data effectively and cost efficiently, as was directed by this Committee. Any follow-on program should be competitive, just as it was a decade ago.

I am asking this subcommittee to again take the lead on this important issue so that our men and women in uniform have the best available tools as they enter harm's way in every corner of the earth to protect us.

Again, I appreciate the opportunity, Mr. Chairman, to bring this important issue to your attention. Further, I appreciate the work that the Members of this subcommittee do to ensure the safety and superiority of our military.

Thank you very much.