Opening Statement of Chairman Brian Babin

Full Committee Hearing
Unleashing the Golden Age of Science: Examining the Priorities of the FY2027 Research and Technology Enterprise
Wednesday, July 22, 2026

Good morning, and welcome to today's hearing on "Unleashing the Golden Age of Science: Examining the Priorities of the FY2027 Research and Technology Enterprise."

Director Kratsios, welcome back. The last time you sat before this Committee, we discussed how Congress could build on President Trump's AI Action Plan, the role of American innovation, and the national security challenges posed by foreign competitors. Six months later, I am glad to say that both the Administration and this Committee have taken meaningful action.

Last year, President Trump asked you to usher in a Golden Age of American Innovation. This is the standard by which this budget should be judged. A Golden Age is not measured by how much government spends, but by whether taxpayer dollars are focused on the right priorities and produce results that strengthen America's leadership in science and technology.

Today's hearing is about priorities. After years in which Washington too often measured success by dollars obligated rather than by results achieved, this Administration has begun to refocus the federal research enterprise on excellence, accountability, and outcomes.

I expect today's discussion will include funding levels, indirect cost policies, Uniform Guidance, and the President's Budget Request. Those are important discussions, but funding alone is not a measurement of success. The real question is whether taxpayer dollars are being invested wisely and deliver results for the American people.

This budget directs taxpayer dollars toward the technologies that will decide the next century—artificial intelligence, quantum, advanced manufacturing, nuclear, and biotechnology—while ensuring the science this government funds meets the highest scientific standards.

The President's Executive Order on Restoring Gold Standard Science reinforces that commitment by requiring federally funded research to be reproducible, transparent, and honest about uncertainty. Agencies will submit their first annual reports under that Executive Order this September, and this Committee will be reading them.

Scientific leadership also requires protecting the research we fund. Congress has strengthened research security on a bipartisan basis, and American taxpayers should never subsidize the transfer of cutting-edge research to our foreign adversaries.

America enters this competition from a position of strength. According to Stanford's AI 2026 Index, private investment in American AI companies reached nearly $286 billion last year—more than twenty-three times China's and more than the rest of the world combined.

But we should be clear-eyed about the competition. The Chinese Communist Party has made artificial intelligence a national priority and is spending accordingly. Chinese frontier models now trail America's by only a few points on leading benchmarks, and Beijing continues targeting our universities and National Laboratories to obtain cutting-edge research.

That is exactly why this budget matters.

The Administration has laid out a strategy to preserve American leadership in critical technologies. Executive Order 14409 hardens our systems against AI-enabled cyberattacks by partnering with American industry rather than regulating it into the ground.

National Security Presidential Memorandum 11 is helping ensure our warfighters have access to reliable and trustworthy AI capabilities, while the Genesis Mission is leveraging our National Laboratories and supercomputing infrastructure to accelerate scientific discovery.

This Committee has done its part. Across several markups this Congress, we have reported out the National Quantum Initiative Reauthorization Act, the NOAA Weather Radio Modernization Act, the NASA Reauthorization Act, the Weather Act Reauthorization Act, and other bipartisan measures to strengthen the American science and technology enterprise.

Last month, we also approved ten bipartisan AI bills, including my AI-Ready Federal Data Guidelines Act, which implements a recommendation in the AI Action Plan to make scientific data AI-ready. We also approved the AI Security and Innovation Act, authorizing the Center for AI Standards and Innovation at NIST to bolster AI evaluation capabilities essential to both national security and American leadership.

Director Kratsios, we look forward to hearing about how this budget advances the Administration's priorities, strengthens OSTP, NSF, and NIST, implements Gold Standard Science, protects the federal research enterprise, and ensures the United States remains the world's leader in science and technology.

I appreciate your being here today, and I welcome your testimony.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.