Statement of Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas)
The Expanding Cyber Threat

Chairman Smith: Thank you Madam Chair, I look forward to today's hearing on cyber threats, a topic that continues to grow in importance.

In the 60 years since the last major patent reform, America has experienced tremendous technological advancements. Computers the size of a closet have evolved into wireless technology that fits in the palm of our hand.

With technological advances come new methods that foreign countries, cyber criminals and "hacktivists" can use to attack and access our networks.

America is vulnerable and there is an increasing need for technically-trained cybersecurity experts to identify and defend against cyber-attacks. Protecting America's   cyber-systems is critical to our economic and national security. As our reliance on information technology expands, so do our vulnerabilities.

A number of federal agencies guard America's cybersecurity interests. Several are under the jurisdiction of the Science Committee. These include the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), the Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology Directorate, and the Department of Energy.

All of these support critical research and development to promote cybersecurity in hardware, software and our critical infrastructure.

At the beginning of the last Congress, the Science Committee considered two cybersecurity bills, the Cybersecurity Enhancement Act and a bill to reauthorize the Networking and Information Technology Research and Development program. Both bills passed the House in April 2013.

At the end of the last Congress, the House and Senate came to agreement on the Cybersecurity Enhancement Act, which was signed into law in December.

That law improves America's cybersecurity abilities. It strengthens strategic planning for cybersecurity research and development needs across the federal government. It supports NSF scholarships to improve the quality of the cybersecurity workforce. And it improves research, development and public outreach organized by NIST related to cybersecurity.

The Science Committee will continue its efforts to support the research and development essential to fortifying our Nation's cyber defenses.

From the theft of credit card information at retailers like Target and Home Depot, to successful attacks at Sony and on the U.S. Central Command, no further wake-up calls are necessary to understand our call to action.

As America continues to become more advanced, we must better protect our information technology systems from attack. Any real solution should adapt to changing technology and tactics while also protecting private sector companies, public institutions and personal privacy.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today and yield back.