

STATEMENT OF SENATOR GEORGE ALLEN
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & SPACE
SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING
ON THE RESPONSE OF THE TECHNOLOGY SECTOR
IN TIMES OF CRISIS
DECEMBER 4, 2001

- Mr. Chairman, I would like to begin today by thanking you for calling this hearing on this important issue. I would also like to thank our witnesses, especially Mr. Allbaugh and Dr. Marburger, for testifying before the Committee this morning.
- The September 11 terrorist attacks were a wake-up call to the United States that we need to be better prepared for future national emergencies. The attacks and the following confusion played havoc with our Nation's telecommunications infrastructure. The collapse of the World Trade Center complex left hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers without either phone or television service. The cellular phone system was overloaded in both Virginia and New York creating problems for communications between emergency services. This communications breakdown created confusion and heightened concerns for many Americans.
- The aftereffects of this disaster hampered the relief efforts of many emergency aid organizations. For example, the American Red Cross reported that its toll free emergency lines were inaccessible to thousands of callers. These obstacles impeded efforts to effectively distribute aid and account for the dead and missing.
- The purpose of today's hearing is to investigate what the Congress can do to prevent this type of communications breakdown and its aftereffects in the future. I was heartened by the stories of companies, such as Intel, Verizon, Winstar, Accenture, and Cingular, that volunteered both staff and equipment to restore communications in New York and Washington. The Nation thanks you for your timely assistance during this emergency.
- However, we have to do a better job in the future. It is important to ensure that our telecommunications network remains functional after an attack. I look forward to hearing how the federal government can better coordinate

with private industry to get a quicker and more efficient response to future emergencies. In addition, we should also examine the telecommunications and Internet networks to make sure that they are designed to remain functional after critical strikes.

- Chairman Wyden has proposed a National Emergency Technology Guard, or NET Guard, that will have the capability to respond to future crises. I look forward to working with him on this issue. I especially like his idea of an all-volunteer force based the best and brightest minds of the national technology workforce. Leaders in the private sector made the United States the world leader in technology, and we should listen to their ideas on this issue. It is also important to make sure that government does not duplicate existing efforts in the private sector, and works within existing federal critical infrastructure protection programs.
- Additionally, I hope that we can continue to support the government efforts to work with private industry to conduct post-attack analysis of the collapse of the World Trade Center and the surrounding infrastructure. This analysis will help to develop new guidelines to assess the vulnerability of the existing system, and improve the future safety and security of major buildings and facilities, including the physical and technological infrastructure. Technology can play a major role in helping to prepare for future crises, and we should ensure that the hi-tech sector is mobilized to help prevent and respond to future crises.
- Again, thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing.