Remarks by Jay M. Cohen
Under Secretary for Science and Technology
U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security
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- Dr. Goldin, thank you so much. It's a great honor and a personal privilege to be part of this STS *forum*. I'd like to thank the government of Japan and all of the participants for this incredible opportunity to discuss the challenges we face together on this small globe called the Earth.

- This morning Minister Kosgei said that health and diseases know no boundaries. And how right she was. Regrettably, in today's world for many the same reasons, terrorism knows no boundaries. That's the bad news. The good news is that the solutions to those terror threats, and to the other issues of our time being discussed here --- also know no boundaries.

- We don't know where good ideas come from. They come from everywhere. And that's one of the reasons we feel so strongly about international engagement and international cooperation. The Sudanese representatives tell me that a significant aquifer exists under the county of Sudan. They say there is plenty of water to support the agriculture to feed the people of Sudan, but in the absence of security above ground, it's not possible to bring the water to the surface.

- And so the inner sanction of security and how we live --- our health and our welfare --- are very well known to this group.

- I was attending a conference in Germany on September 10th --- a day that turned out to be a very interesting. Because on that day, scientists from around the world gathered in a cave on the border of Switzerland and France and were standing by, waiting to discover the God particle. They were looking for creation.

- Yet at the same moment, thousands of kilometers away, other people in the caves of Tora Bora were planning how they might disrupt or destroy modern culture. Ladies and gentlemen, this is the world in which we live. And so I thought I'd take a few minutes to describe to you, why in the United States of America, after the tragic

events of September 11th, 2001, we established the Department of Homeland Security --- and the role it plays in science and technology.

- My experience --- including six years in naval research and over two years in homeland security in the United States --- is in science and technology in defense and security. It is nonpartisan, bipartisan. That's how we do business. And the United States, like many Asian nations, is an incredibly optimistic society.

- In 1960, when President Kennedy said we're going to put a man on the moon in a decade, we didn't know if he could do it. But we believed, we achieved --- that's who we are. That optimism resonates throughout this forum as we talk about the challenges and the solutions and try to balance the implications of both.

- After 9/11, our government established the Department of Homeland Security. You might consider it an incredible experiment in nuclear fusion. We brought 22 very different agencies --- including our Coast Guard, Transportation Security Administration, border Patrol, Secret Service --- into one organization. Why did we do that? We did it to eliminate or minimize seams. We believe that criminals and terrorists will always take advantage of seams. And so anything that eliminates or minimizes that is good for security and bad for the bad guys.

- The Department Homeland Security --- and I must tell you it is an experiment --- is a work in progress. We're five years old. Those of you who have children or grandchildren understand the maturity of a 5-year-old. But all of the vectors are pointed in the right direction. And so the enabling legislation, which is 183 pages in our law, mandates that we are responsible for all threat. Not just man-made terror threats, but also natural disasters such as typhoons, tsunamis, earthquakes, fire, and flooding. And I know those resonate with this group very, very well.

- Of the 183 pages of the Department's enabling legislation, 17 pages are devoted to establishing the Science and Technology Directorate. That shows you the optimism of American society. And that's very good for me because people believe we can achieve anything. It's also very bad for me because they want to achieve it now, at no cost, and distribute it widely. So this is where I live.

- We try and approach the application of our limited resources through a

risk-informed, decision-making process. And I must tell you that this is new science. The psychology of terrorism: Why do terrorists do what they do? Why do people want to do bad things to perfectly good societies, buildings, etc.? I don't know. We're trying to find out. How do you determine what is hostile intent? How do you know when someone is about to do you harm?

- In the democracies of the world, the challenge is: How do you protect public health and safety at the same time protect the rights and liberties that citizens are entitled to under law?

- In my opinion, it is only the federal government today --- and I'm talking about the governments of the world --- that have the resources, tenacity and the staying power to make investments in basic research that are so vitally important to giving us the discoveries and knowledge to solve our problems and change the world.

- Today we find ourselves in a challenge, a conflict of war, of ideas and ideals. And it is now new. History is replete with examples --- it repeats maybe every 500 years. It is the forces of repression vs. the forces of enlightenment, but in the end the human experience tells us that enlightenment wins out. It may not be pretty, it may not happen quickly, but that is who we are. That is our nature.

- And so I look forward very much to your questions and to continuing to learn from this forum. Thank you so much for allowing us to participate today.