

**Synopsis of The Department of Homeland Security’s
“Strategic Industry Conversation”
February 25, 2015 – Ronald Reagan Building, Washington D.C.**

Plenary Session:

Jeh Johnson, Secretary of Homeland Security; José Raúl Perales, Assistant Secretary for the Private Sector; Alan Cohn, Assistant Secretary for Strategy, Planning, Analysis, and Risk; Alejandro Mayorkas, Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security; Soraya Correa, Chief Procurement Officer

Secretary Jeh Johnson opened the event by emphasizing how working better with industry leads to improved mission outcomes. Then, Assistant Secretary for the Private Sector, Raúl Perales, affirmed the department’s commitment to being more responsive to the private sector. Next, Assistant Secretary of Strategy, Planning, Analysis, and Risk, Alan Cohn tied themes of the event to the Unity of Effort initiative, explaining how DHS can work more like a corporate decision-making board to improve investment decisions and minimize risk.

After the morning’s speakers finished, participants attended various breakout sessions, all of which featured panels of leaders from industry and the department discussing various topics that affect the homeland security enterprise. After the first round of breakout sessions, Deputy Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas spoke to the larger group about how industry input should permeate the department’s strategic planning and how he sees a “new day” in acquisition. Participants then attended a second round of breakout sessions. Chief Procurement Officer Soraya Correa closed the event by synopsisizing the exciting discussions that occurred during the day’s breakout sessions. A written synopsis of each session follows:

Breakout Sessions:

Biometrics: Current Challenges and Future Trends

Moderator: William Reindollar, MITRE

Panelists: Capt. Christopher Moss, USCG; Kimberly Jackson, NPPD/OBIM; Colleen Manaher, CBP; Arun Vemury, S&T; John Mears, Lockheed Martin; Lars Ericson, Mantech; Troy Potter, L-3

During the Biometrics panel discussion, government panelists expressed that their largest challenges implementing biometrics based infrastructure are environmental challenges, such as working on small boats, timeliness of data, and database management issues. In the future, DHS hopes to use cutting edge technology to change how biographic information is collected, at ports

of entry, for instance. Industry participants explained that their biggest challenge in helping DHS meet its biometric needs is the lack of understanding of what DHS actually does and where DHS experiences “pain points”. Industry hopes that in the future, they will see a biometric test and evaluation system to receive feedback from DHS. Industry also asked about best practices for bringing new technology to DHS. Panelists discussed the use of forums and requests for information.

Big Data: Big Deal for DHS?

Moderator: Gary Shiffman, Giant Oak

Panelists: David Hong, I&A; Stephen Dennis, S&T; Paul Reynolds, OCIO; Robert Wavra, Novetta; Brett McMillan, AWS

The Big Data panel focused on the importance of data collection, retention, and management to DHS and how DHS can continue to improve its data framework. The discussion was opened by DHS’s Chief Information Officer, Luke McCormack, who emphasized that data is a big deal for DHS. The government panelists highlighted the direction DHS is pursuing for its big data needs, including investing in innovative infrastructure, “liberating” the data so it’s available to those who are authorized to use it, and changing the way DHS employees think about data. The industry panelists expressed four challenges for the evolution of the DHS data framework: access control, computing the data, applicable applications, and organizational environments for processing data. Overall, both government and industry panelists agreed that another challenge is data security.

Doing Business with DHS: DHS 101

Moderator: Soraya Correa

Panelists: William Thoreen, OCPO; Kevin Boshears, OSDBU; Michael Smith, SSPO

The goal of this panel was to provide information to businesses new to, or interested in doing business with, DHS. The panelists provided information about the organizational structure of the Office of the Chief Procurement Officer, industry engagement events, and fiscal year 2014 spending. Overall, the panel focused on key elements of the procurement line of business within DHS, as well as answered questions from audience participants. The question and answer segment addressed issues of how DHS handles IT transitioning, how it might establish a Women Owned/Economically Disadvantaged Women Owned small business set-aside strategic sourcing vehicle, and a perceived lack of inclusion through alternate procurement listing databases.

Data and Storage Management: Enterprise and Focused Requirements

Moderator: Adrian Gardner, FEMA

Panelists: Thariq Kara, ICE; Larry DeNayer, USCIS; Stephen Rice, TSA; Michael Conlin, HP; Michael Dillon, Elbit

The focus of this panel was moving data to the cloud and the virtualization of data. The panel was opened by DHS Chief Information Officer, Luke McCormack, who stated “this agency spends \$6 billion annually on the collection of data which is ultimately turned into information to make critical decisions affecting homeland security.” Government panelists focused on consolidating data centers and how contract vehicles must have value, but it is also important to recognize the intrinsic value of the data. Industry panelists highlighted the importance of planning transitions to the cloud based on how the information will be used. The moderator, Mr. Gardner, made a statement that resonates true within DHS: “IT is driving business processes instead of the other way around.”

Research and Development at DHS: How to Drive Innovation

Moderator: David Ihrie, CIT

Panelists: Craig Chambers, S&T; Francis Barros, S&T; Joel Rynes, DNDO; Bert Macesker, USCG; Anne Petera, Harris IT; Richard Robinson, Telos

The discussion focused on barriers to research and development innovation from the perspectives of government and industry and addressed how to determine the criteria for investment. First, the discussion was opened by Dr. Reginald Brothers, Under Secretary for Science and Technology, who addressed the gaps between increased needs for resources and declining availability of resources. Dr. Brothers exhorted that research and development is how DHS can close that gap and emphasized the importance of innovation. Government panelists went on to explain the barriers they face for research and development innovation, including knowledge of DHS operational constraints by industry partners (academia, small, large businesses, etc.), overcoming transition issues with small business partners, information exchange problems, and analyzing the volume of ideas submitted. The industry panelists followed up by explaining the barriers industry partners face in research and development innovation, including cybersecurity intellectual property concerns and cultural understanding of government organizations. The latter was determined to be a solvable issue through increased transparency. Finally, the panel addressed what determines a successful R&D investment.

The Budget of DHS

Allan Blume, Budget Director, Office of the Chief Financial Officer

Mr. Blume opened the discussion by briefing the audience on the budget process and the status of DHS's three-year budget plan. Mr. Blume started by explaining to the audience how the fiscal year (FY) 2015 continuing resolution* puts DHS in "budget paralysis" and makes long term planning very difficult. He continued on to say the FY 2016 budget has been submitted on time and the FY 2017 budget process is just beginning and will be a transparent progression.

**On March 4, 2015 the president signed The Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act of 2015.*

Cybersecurity: Protecting DHS's Information

Moderator: Christian Beckner, GWU

Panelists: Dr. Phyllis Schneck, NPPD; Jeffery Eisensmith, OCIO; Doug Maughan, S&T; Eduardo Cabrera, USSS; Nicole Dean, Raytheon; Drew Morin, TeleCommunication Systems

DHS's Chief Information Officer, Luke McCormick, opened the cybersecurity panel discussion by emphasizing the importance of protecting DHS's information. The discussion highlighted the path of cybersecurity in the future at DHS, stressing the importance of protecting intellectual property and personally identifiable information (PII). Government and industry panelists encouraged the private sector to recruit among the best colleges for new hires and continue to train and educate employees about the changing environment of cybersecurity. Additionally, the topic of studying metrics to measure where breaches occur in the system creates beneficial information for protecting information from future breaches. Ending on the theme of cybersecurity as a department-wide Unity of Effort initiative, Dr. Schneck stated, "Cybersecurity is a big mission, but across the department, it's a bigger mission."

Operational Environments: Tales from the Field

Moderator: Jim Williams, Schambach & Williams Consulting

Panelists: Todd Pardue, DNDO; LaFonda Sutton-Burke, CBP; Eric Beane, TSA

The panel discussion focused on the future of seaports, airports, and industry engagement events that give industry partners the ability to showcase what they have to offer. Government panelists from TSA and CBP began discussing the future of the automated and improved seaport and airport screening processes. Additionally, Todd Pardue from DNDO informed the audience

about shifts in thinking on Key Performance Parameters (KPPs) to High Priority Requirements (HPR), which allow for trade-offs when metrics aren't all met.

Innovative Pricing Strategies: Risk and Opportunities in the Federal Space

Moderator: Jaclyn Smyth

Panelists: Carl DeBernard, TSA; Richard Gunderson, CBP; Mark Hudak, OCPO; Nik Scalise, Key Financial; Paul Damm, Cisco

Panelists begin by discussing how Strategic Sourcing vehicles drive better pricing, but often pricing strategies are met with challenges. These challenges are getting procurement professionals to think outside of the box, allotting enough time for industry engagement during the procurement lifecycle, and procurements being too “reactionary”. Industry panelists expressed concerns about how to voice to procurement professionals new, innovative ideas. They then discussed the openness and transparency of pricing strategies during procurements, especially for lowest price, technically acceptable (LPTA) procurements. Finally, the audience suggested developing better strategies for price reasonableness, which would prevent low priced offers that are not realistic from being considered for award.