

February 8, 2017

Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee Hearing

“A Look Ahead: Inspector General Recommendations for Improving Federal Agencies”

Senator Roy Blunt (R-Mo) asking questions of The Honorable Calvin L. Scovel III, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Transportation

Hearing video beginning at time 01:15:35

Senator Blunt:

Let's talk about GPS for a minute. In 2015 the Department of Transportation and the Deputy Secretary of Defense announced that they would be working to build an alternative system to GPS in case there is a disruption to the current system. Can you give me an update on that?

Hon. Scovel:

I don't have an update on that, sir. I would need to get back to my office and communicate further with FAA. I do know that part of Next Gen's allure is that it will move from ground based radar up to satellite based GPS...

Senator Blunt:

I'm talking about...OK go ahead...

Hon. Scovel:

Yes, the ADSB system which is a keystone of Next Gen is based upon satellite technology and GPS. However, the department now is exploring ways for a multi-phased array radar which may be the alternative to, or at least a backup, providing some redundancy to GPS satellites. The department or the FAA has a ways to go to be able to integrate this multi-phased array radar technology into air traffic control and the modernization effort. I think that is what you are referring to.

Senator Blunt:

It isn't. My question for the record will be that this commitment made in 2015 concerned about the current dependency that so many people have with GPS is are they moving forward with a backup system if the current GPS system goes down. I don't remember the last time I looked at a road map, but I would hope that I'd have one if the GPS system was no longer there for me to rely on every time I go somewhere new and often when I go somewhere I've been before. Thank you.