

Plans include new security fence, central role in Air Force's cyber blueprint

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Rep. Richard Hanna (NY-24) today met with top-level Air Force officials who underscored the importance of the Air Force Research Laboratory in Rome for national cyber security operations.

Rep. Hanna, who requested the meeting, met this morning in his Washington office with Dr. Steven H. Walker, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Science, Technology and Engineering and Joe Sciabica, Executive Director of the Air Force Research Laboratory.

Rome is the epicenter of the Air Force's cyber operations, Walker and Sciabica said, adding that a long-term plan is being built with Rome remaining a vital component of such operations. They also told Rep. Hanna that a project request is currently pending to construct a security fence to enhance ground security at Rome Lab. Such a fence would allow for the secure expansion of additional projects to be completed in Rome.

The officials also anticipate that the CyberVision 2025 – a plan on how to identify and achieve its vision for the future of the Air Force's cyber operations – is expected to be completed by the end of this year. The plan will be a blueprint for cyber operations and the work done in Rome will play a central role, Walker and Sciabica said.

Within the Department of Defense's proposed Fiscal Year 2013 budget plan, Rome Lab's budget was projected to be cut by \$30 million and vital programs were proposed to be eliminated. Hanna, who has been outspoken in his support to provide fair funding for Rome Lab and its critical research in cyber defense, pressed the officials for their long-term vision for Rome.

"The Air Force assured me today that Rome Lab will continue to have a bright future and its role within the Air Force's cyber security operation will expand – becoming more critical than ever," Rep. Hanna said. "We know that 20 new employees will be hired and a new director will be in place by this summer.

"Today's meeting underscored what we always knew: The Air Force cannot continue to be a leader in cyber research excellence without Rome Lab," Rep. Hanna said. "It is critical. It is necessary. And, we are leading the way nationwide in cyber research, which is more important than ever."

The Air Force officials did say that they're concerned with the impact that "sequestration" – \$500 billion in defense spending cuts – could have on Air Force installations and programs. Rep. Hanna supports a bill that would modify cuts to America's military in an effort to avoid dramatic cuts to the military in 2013.

H.R. 3662, the Down Payment To Protect National Security Act is an effort to pay for the first year of potential sequestration cuts without doing serious harm to the military. It is sponsored by Rep. Howard P. "Buck" McKeon, Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee.