



### **C/T group in Washington**

Officials from Australia and the United States have met for the first time in Washington 1 June to develop opportunities for their respective research communities to collaborate on counter-terrorism technologies facilitated by two recent agreements. Signed on 17 May by The Secretary of the Prime Minister's Department, Dr Peter Shergold, and the US Assistant Secretary of Defense, Thomas O'Connell, the new Memorandum of Understandings will see joint collaborative activities focusing on developing technologies and capabilities that will help deter, detect and identify terrorists, neutralise their weapons and reduce the probability of terrorist incidents.

The arrangement will be managed in Australia through the National Security Science and Technology Unit within the Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet. The new arrangement is in addition to the Agreement between the Government of Australia and the United States on Cooperation in Science and Technology for Homeland/Domestic Security Matters signed 21 December 2005.

Australian Customs Service (ACS) officers are said at the 1 June meeting to have discussed areas of interest, including "physical security, explosives and weapons detection technology, and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear detection." The ACS has already trialled prototype technology developed by WA-based QR Sciences that assists current screening technology to better detect firearms and firearms parts in the postal environment, and it is expected US interest in such technology will be facilitated by the new agreements.