

DUNCAN HUNTER
520 DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA
COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY
CHAIRMAN
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
MILITARY PROCUREMENT
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
MILITARY READINESS



U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0552

2266 RAYBURN BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-0552
1202) 225-8672
FAX: (202) 225-0295
366 SOUTH PIERCE STREET
EL CAJON, CA 92020
1819) 579-3001
1181 AIRPORT ROAD, SUITE G
IMPERIAL, CA 92251
1706) 352-5428

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 20, 1999

CONTACT: Maureen Cragin
Ryan Vaart
(202) 225-2539

STATEMENT BY THE HONORABLE DUNCAN HUNTER
CHAIRMAN, MILITARY PROCUREMENT SUBCOMMITTEE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
HEARING ON CHEMICAL-BIOLOGICAL DEFENSE FOR U.S. FORCES

Today, the Subcommittees on Military Procurement and on Military Research and Development meet jointly to gain an understanding of the threat to U.S. military forces posed by the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons, their preparedness to fight on a battlefield under the threat of use of chemical or biological weapons, and the Department of Defense program for improving the chemical-biological defenses of U.S. forces.

The subcommittees have just received a classified briefing from the Intelligence Community that provided an update on foreign chemical and biological weapons programs and the potential threat posed to U.S. forces by the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons technology. In open session, today, we shall hear Dr. Ken Alibek, former Deputy Director of Biopreparat, the civilian arm of the Soviet Union's biological weapon program, discuss the scope of the Soviet Union's biological weapons program, the potential for proliferation of biological weapons technology, and the implications of such proliferation to the U.S. biological defense program.

In meeting the changing and evolving chemical and biological weapons threat, the House Armed Services Committee has repeatedly stated that a strong chemical-biological defense program is an essential part of our national strategy, both for ensuring the capability of U.S. military forces to fight on some future battlefield and as a major element of the U.S. counterproliferation program.

To address the threat, the Congress in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1994 (Public Law 103-160) enacted a number of measures to strengthen the conduct of the chemical and biological defense program within the Department of Defense. In response to this mandate, the Department of Defense has taken a number of management, research, development and acquisition, and training initiatives which over time and with proper emphasis and funding support would be expected to yield significant improvement in the chemical and biological defense preparedness of U.S. armed forces. The results of those initiatives and the increased priority assigned by the Department to the chemical and biological defense program, and the preparedness of our forces in the field to fight in a chemical-biological environment will be discussed by our witnesses today.

Following Dr. Alibek as our first witness, we will hear from Mr. Norman Rabkin of the General Accounting Office, who will discuss the principal direction and findings of the GAO's chemical and biological defense reviews,

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as well as the nature of the work currently underway for the Readiness Subcommittee that will be completed next year. Rear Admiral Richard D. Mayo, Vice Director for Medical Readiness, J-4, and Rear Admiral James D. MacArthur, Deputy Director, Strategy and Policy, J-5, The Joint Staff will discuss the preparedness of our forces in the field today. They will be supported by Major General John Doesburg, Commander, Soldier and Biological Chemical Command in his role as Army member of the Joint Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Defense Board.

In our final panel, Dr. Hans Mark, Director, Defense Research and Engineering, will testify on the direction, process, and management of the DOD chemical-biological defense program, progress in the program since Operation Desert Storm, and the future of the program and the contribution it is making and will make to our forces' capabilities. He will be supported during the question and answer period by Dr. Anna Johnson-Winegar, Deputy Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Chemical and Biological Defense; Dr. Jane Alexander, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency; Mr. Carmen Spencer, Defense Threat Reduction Agency; Mr. Michael Parker, Soldier and Biological Chemical Command; and Brigadier Eddie Cain, Joint Biological Defense Program.

Before our witnesses begin, I want to say that I am deeply concerned about the chemical-biological threat to our forces that are in the field today. To paraphrase the report of the 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review, the threat or use of chemical and biological weapons is a likely condition of future warfare. To meet this challenge, U.S. forces must be properly trained and equipped to operate effectively and decisively in the face of attacks by an enemy equipped with chemical and biological weapons. U.S. armed forces must improve their chemical and biological warfare defense capabilities. Enhancements in technical capabilities alone are not enough, however. Equally important will be adapting U.S. doctrine, operational concepts, training and exercises to take full account of the threat posed by chemical and biological warfare. That's the challenge we face today.

Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome. We look forward to your testimony.

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