

# PRESS RELEASE



## House Armed Services Committee Duncan Hunter, Chairman

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **OPENING REMARKS OF CHAIRMAN DUNCAN HUNTER**

*Hearing on Performance of DOD Acquisition Process  
In Support of Force Protection for Combat Forces*

This afternoon we meet to receive testimony on the performance of the acquisition system in fulfilling the urgent force protection needs of our combat forces in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

I would like to welcome our distinguished panel representing the military's acquisition community. Gentlemen, thank you for the service you do for our men and women in uniform.

We are proud of our people currently serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. They are making America – and the world – more secure by helping the Iraqi and Afghan people build democracy in the heart of the Middle East. Whether members of Active Duty, Reserve, National Guard units, or civilians, these heroes embody the best ideals of our nation – serving so that others may be free -- and we thank them and their families for all for the sacrifices they endure.

The trust given to the people in this room by the soldiers and families is that we will provide them with the necessary systems and equipment so that they can be successful in accomplishing their mission at anytime, anywhere in the world. In keeping this trust, we must be honest in our assessment of whether we are doing everything in our power to not only provide the soldiers what they need to accomplish their mission — but when they need it.

Force protection is an essential part of this trust and has two components. The offensive component requires the equipment, systems and tactics to maintain the initiative, to defeat, disrupt, and deny the enemy the ability to attack. The defensive component provides the survivability required to carry out the offense. Improvised Explosive Devices continue to be the weapon of choice employed by those extremists, murders, and thugs who would deny the Iraqi people democracy. Therefore, adding armor to our vehicles in theater must be expediently accomplished.

To help frame the testimony to be given here today, I will present two examples that raise questions about the total acquisition system's ability to rapidly meet our soldier's needs.

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To be fair, there is some good news in this story. Referring to the next chart, TACOM is ahead of its projected schedule. As of yesterday, of the 6,900 kits, 5,675 have been produced and TACOM will finish before April 30th. The Army reports that 3,863 kits have been installed and that although installation appears to be lagging behind, they will complete installation in May. We should acknowledge, International Steel Group, whose leadership, voluntarily set aside their commercial business to exclusively produce the armor plate, and to the men and women of the seven Army Depots and Arsenals that work 7 days a week, 24 hours per day to get these kits to the field.

It is clear, that during combat operations, we must do better. There is room for performance improvement. After 50 years of peacetime acquisition legislation, perhaps we require a legislative provision that streamlines the process for urgent requirements. We look forward to learning the panel's assessment of the acquisition system performance and your suggestions for enhancing the velocity of the system. Our troops deserve nothing less.

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