

STATEMENT BY

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BEFORE THE

**TACTICAL AIR AND LAND FORCES SUBCOMMITTEE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

ON ARMY FORCE PROTECTION PROGRAMS

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COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES**

Chairman Weldon, Ranking Member Abercrombie, and distinguished members of the Committee, on behalf of the Army, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and to update you on how the Army is protecting Soldiers. Thank you, too, for your ceaseless support of the Soldier, in terms of oversight and resources; it has made a vast difference in the protection of the Soldier. However, even considering our collective efforts, we can never lose sight of the fact that the death of even one service member reflects an immeasurable loss to the Nation in terms of that life's potential; and we can never stop or slow our efforts to better protect our Soldiers.

Before I address specific material solutions with which you have expressed interest, let me review the Army's overarching framework for force protection. The Army's number one concern is the protection of the Soldier. The ever-evolving enemy continues to develop increasingly sophisticated, more complex systems to attack our forces. But force protection is about more than equipment; it is a total package, and the Army is dedicated to providing that total package. It includes training in a realistic environment and with required equipment to train at home stations. The first time Soldiers use equipment should not be when they deploy to a combat zone. It includes understanding techniques, tactics and procedures – the TTPs – that are absolutely essential to engaging the enemy, accomplishing the mission, and surviving the battlefield. TTPs enable Soldiers to respond in a moment of hazard with an absolute, immediate response that will save a Soldier's life or that of a buddy or comrade.

And it includes providing commanders' with a menu of equipping options with which to conduct operations and protect their teams. The equipment we have in the field today is the best the Nation has to offer. However, we are working tirelessly to develop and integrate both incremental improvements as well as totally new items . This continuous evolution of protection is absolutely essential, and we can never say that a solution we have today is optimal. It represents our best possible at the moment, and it will be continuously improved as we develop the capability and the means to do so.

Interceptor Body Armor (IBA) remains a centerpiece program for the Army, one that saves lives everyday. IBA is a modular design that provides protection against fragmentation and small arms ammunition and can be tailored to meet mission requirements. The standard system consists of an Outer Tactical Vest (OTV) and a set of ballistic inserts, oftentimes referred to as Small Arms Protective Inserts (SAPI).

Additional protection is provided through the Deltoid Axillary Protector (DAP) which provides protection to the shoulder and armpit regions of the body and Ballistic Side Plates. Total weight of all body armor components and accessories in size medium is 31 lbs.

A brief chronology of the evolution of Interceptor Body Armor:

- In 1999, the Army started fielding the Outer Tactical Vest (OTV) with Small Arms Protective Inserts (SAPI) to Soldiers deployed in Bosnia.
- April 2004 Theater reported 100 percent fill of 201,000 sets of IBA (OTV & SAPI) for every U.S. Army Soldier and Department of Defense (DoD) Civilian in Theater.
- April 2004, Theater requested Deltoid Axillary Protector (DAP) which provides protection to the shoulder and armpit regions of the body. Fielding began in June 2004 and the requirement of 172,860 DAPs was met in Jan 05.
- January 2005, Theater requested Enhanced Small Arms Protective Insert (ESAPI) which provides increased protection for Soldiers. Requirement established at 201,000 sets.
- September 2005, Theater requested Ballistic Side Plates. Expected completion of the 201,000 requirement is December 2006.
- January 2006, Theater ESAPI requirement met.
- Expected completion of ballistic side plate requirement is December 2006.

The following chart shows the Theater and Army wide requirements for the IBA ensemble to include the Theater on hand quantity.

| IBA Item (Numbers in thousands) | Total Army Requirement | Theater Requirement | O/H in Theater | Total # Funded |
|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| OTV | 966,000 | 201,000 | 201,000 | 966,000 |
| ESAPI | 966,000 | 201,000 | 206,000 | 446,000 |
| DAP | 966,000 | 201,000 | 224,000 | 230,000 |
| Side Plates | 966,000 | 201,000 | 21,000 | 230,000 |

In April 2004, Central Command reported that it had enough Body Armor for every Soldier and DoD Civilian deployed in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF in Afghanistan). To date, the Army has fielded over 863,000 sets of body armor worldwide. Our IBA is the best military body armor in the world. As you have heard, the Army has continued to improve its IBA ensemble, consistent with Theater requests and scientific developments. In this regard we have

fielded over 343,000 sets of Enhanced Small Arms Protective Inserts (ESAPI), as well as 224,000 sets of Deltoid Axillary Protection (DAP), which protects the shoulder and sides of the body. The most recent improvement to the body armor ensemble is the Enhanced Side Ballistic Inserts oftentimes referred to as Side Armor Plate. In response to a request from the Theater commanders, the Army designed, tested, and placed on contract a side armor plate and carrier. The Army has fielded over 21,500 Enhanced Side Ballistic Inserts to Theater. Production will ramp up from 25,000 in May 2006 to a steady state of 30,000 this month. The Army will complete Theater requirement 201,000 by Dec 2006. The Army continually monitors the state of industry. Innovation or technology improvements that appear promising are tested and evaluated to see if they meet the Army's stringent requirements for protection. Thus far, we have tested hundreds of products. We are also pursuing a robust science and technology effort to identify promising body armor technologies. We are convinced that our Soldiers are wearing the best possible equipment right now. Commanders in the Theater of operations have the means to give their Soldiers the highest levels of protection known to the Army today.

There is a military proverb: *the best defense is a good offense*. We give our Soldiers more than body armor so that they can engage the enemy effectively. In October 2002, the Army began issuing Soldiers and units new equipment through the Rapid Fielding Initiative (RFI) program. The RFI leverages current programs and commercial-off-the-shelf technology to provide Soldiers, squads, and platoons, with equipment such as squad communications gear and building entry devices to enhance effectiveness in engaging the enemy. These items help Soldiers fight more effectively, reducing exposure to enemy attacks. Since the start of the RFI program, we have equipped over 660,000 Soldiers in 54 brigade combat teams and units supporting those teams. In Fiscal Year 2004 (FY04), the Army equipped over 184,000 National Guard, Reserve, and Regular Army Soldiers, issuing over 3,000,000 pieces of equipment. In FY05, the number of Soldiers fielded increased to over 260,000 Soldiers. Current plans for this fiscal year call for equipping over 296,000 Soldiers, with plans to equip the entire operating Army by the end of September 2007.

A key component of RFI is the fielding of the Advanced Combat Helmet (ACH). Soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan have worn the ACH since October 2005, leveraging four years of development efforts by the Special Operations community, for their

Modular Integrated Communications Helmet. The ACH replaces the Army's Personnel Armor System, Ground Troops (PASGT) helmet or "Kevlar helmet" as it's commonly called, which had been in use since the early 1980s. The ACH provides improved ballistic and impact protection and is compatible with the current body armor system, night vision devices, communications packages, and nuclear, biological and chemical defense equipment. The ACH is a half-pound lighter than the PASGT helmet and is cushioned on the inside to provide more comfort to the Soldier. The ACH's chinstrap retention and pad suspension system provides unsurpassed balance, stability, and comfort which enables proper sizing, fit, and ventilation. Additionally, the ACH pad suspension system provides superior impact protections for all operational scenarios, including airborne operations and meets the Office of the Surgeon General guidelines for peak G-Force transfer of 150 "Gs" to prevent serious head injury as a result of blast or impact. The ACH also enables Soldiers to better aim and fire weapons from the prone position without interference with Interceptor Body Armor ensemble. To date, the Army has fielded 660,000 ACHs worldwide with an Army Procurement Objective of 958,000.

We are bolstering the protection afforded to our Soldiers when they are mounted and traveling the dangerous roads of Iraq and Afghanistan. The Secretary of the Army established an Armor Task Force at the General Officer level to provide increased management to the armoring effort. Weekly meetings of this task force began in December 2004, with the short-term goal of speeding up the armoring of tactical wheeled vehicles and the long-term goal of determining a comprehensive armoring strategy for all Army vehicles. The working group continues today to address emerging armoring and vehicle safety issues.

The issues the Armor Task Force address include enhancing the protection levels of tactical wheeled vehicles in one of two possible ways. The first and optimal solution, Level I, refers to new vehicles with factory integrated armor, ballistic windows, and air conditioning. The second, Level II armored vehicles, have been outfitted with Add-on-Armor kits consisting of Army designed and tested armor plates, ballistic glass, and air conditioning. The Army has extensively tested each of these armoring solutions against a variety of threats and will continue to test all applications submitted by industry and others. The Army met the Theater commander's Level I Armored High Mobility Multi-Purpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV) requirement of 9,727 in July 2005. The

Theater subsequently revised their requirement to include the need to replace most of their Level II HMMWVs as well as incorporating new requirements. We anticipate their revised requirement of 18,669 UAH will be met in March 2007. No un-armored or locally armored (Level III) vehicles may leave Forward Operating Bases, and these vehicles are being phased-out of the Theater.

The tactical wheeled vehicles that have received additional protection include: the HMMWV, the Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck (HEMTT), the Palletized Load System (PLS), the Family of Medium Tactical Vehicles (FMTV), the Heavy Equipment Transport (HET), the 5-ton truck (M900 series), and the M915/916 Line Haul Tractor. The table below provides details of each of these systems with their requirements, funded level, and on hand information.

| VEHICLE SYSTEM | VALIDATED ARMOR REQMT 24 FEB 05 | FUNDED | ARCENT REPORT AS OF 1 Jun 2006 LEVEL I / II | PERCENT OF TOTAL VALIDATED REQMT LEVEL I & II |
|-----------------------|--|---------------|--|--|
| Armored HMMWV | 18,669 | 16,129 | 12,179 / 6,490 | 100% |
| FMTV | 3,335 | 3,879 | 0 / 3,625 | 109% |
| M939+(5 TON) | 2,688 | 3,000 | 0 / 2,722 | 101% |
| HEMTT | 2,430 | 2,705 | 0 / 2,380 | 98% |
| PLS | 914 | 1,275 | 0 / 1,031 | 113% |
| HET | 758 | 796 | 0 / 757 | 100% |
| M915 | 1,877 | 2,125 | 0 / 1,910 | 102% |
| SUBTOTAL | 30,671 | 29,909 | 12,179/18,915 | 101% |

The Up-Armored HMMWV, which includes the M1114, M1151 and M1152 variants, are examples of vehicles with integrated armor (Level I) protection. These Up-Armored variants HMMWV protects against many of the known threats we have experienced in the AOR. Theater commanders deployed with 235 Up-Armored HMMWVs in May 2003. Industry produced 450 Up-Armored HMMWVs in October 2004 and has increased production to almost 1,100 armored variants in June 2006. The United States Central Command currently has over 12,500 Up-Armored HMMWVs in its area of responsibility. The Army continues to test and evaluate improvements to these systems, including ways to protect against the ever evolving threat.

The Army continues to spare no effort in anticipating and solving force protection challenges. For the past four months, at the direction of Army leaders, the Army

Training and Doctrine Command's Futures Center has been leading a Comprehensive Force Protection Initiative. This initiative's team, in conjunction with Materiel Development, Test, and Acquisition communities, is looking across the entire spectrum of doctrine, organizations, training, materiel, logistics, personnel, and facilities to identify OIF/OEF force protection gaps and to develop solutions to significantly enhance Army force protection efforts. As these solutions come forward, the Army has a very disciplined process to provide capability and field equipment. Any equipment that we field to the Soldier is safe, it is suitable, and it is effective. We have standards to make sure that all those particular criteria are met. If, in fact, those criteria are not met, then the equipment is not fielded.

Mr. Chairman, on behalf of our Soldiers, we deeply appreciate the assistance of the Congress and understanding the need to provide stable, predictable funding by supporting the President's Budget and supplemental requests and by engaging in a continual dialogue with us in this critically important area. We have described some successes in force protection above. However, be assured we are well aware that as long as Soldiers are in harm's way we have the sacred responsibility to remain committed to continuing to explore means and methods to improve their protection. Your continued support will directly assist us in giving our Soldiers in combat the best possible protection available. We are an Army at war, relevant and ready—today and tomorrow—and a full member of the Joint and Interagency Team now fighting terror around the world. Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today; we look forward to answering your questions.