



HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE DUNCAN HUNTER – CHAIRMAN

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CHAIRMAN HUNTER OPENING STATEMENT

Full Committee Hearing on the Army's M1114 Up-Armor HMMWV Distribution Strategy

Washington, D.C. – For the past two years we have had as one of our highest priorities the timely provision of adequately armored tactical vehicles to our men and women in combat. Today we will address a directly related issue having to do with the Army's distribution policy for new production M1114 Up-Armor HMMWV's. The committee must fully understand the rationale behind the Army's tactical vehicle distribution policy that calls for the delivery, beginning in late July, of new production Up-Armor Humvees to the 4th Infantry Division (ID), currently based in Ft. Hood, Texas while there exists an immediate need for these vehicles in the United States Central Command (CENTCOM) Theater of Operations, particularly in Iraq.

This committee established force protection and specifically the adequacy of tactical wheeled vehicle protection as a high priority area of interest and concern. This marks another hearing in a continuing series of hearings and briefings this committee has held on Force Protection issues.

At issue today is whether the best armor solution is being provided to the warfighters who are fully engaged against a ruthless and adaptive enemy. Terrorists continue to employ roughly 30 daily improvised explosive device attacks against our troops in Iraq.

Until we have a better solution, adding armor to our military vehicles and expediting new armored vehicles to theater appears to be our best course of action to protect our troops. Our troops deserve nothing less than the best possible protection. They need to know that not only is the best equipment being provided to them, but that it is being done in a timely manner.

This brings us to the focus of today's hearing. Why is a Division that is still based here in the United States, and not scheduled to complete deployment to theater until the first of next calendar year, receiving 824 new production Up-Armor Humvees while there remains an immediate need in theater for these vehicles for both the Army and the Marine Corps?

I understand the Marines have an Up-Armor Humvee requirement of 2,814 but only have 744 of these vehicles on hand in Iraq -- just over 25 percent of their requirement.

I also understand that the Army has fulfilled its theater requirement for Up-Armor Humvees, yet the 3rd ID, the Division taking most of the Army casualties in Iraq, has less than 20 percent of this total requirement. In addition, the Army is still operating with close to 1,800 Humvees that have only level three protection.

It would appear that there are immediate tactical vehicle armor needs that warrant a more immediate response. Units in theater have indicated a need for a level one armor solution. While we continue to emphasize parallel efforts for rapid development and fielding of systems to counter improvised explosive devices and persistent surveillance solutions, we must maintain a high priority on fielding the Up-Armor Humvee to protect our warfighters. We need to better understand why the Army has a policy that does not appear to be meeting the objective in the timeliest possible manner.

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