CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL EQUIPMENT: PREPARING FOR A TOXIC BATTLEFIELD

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY, VETERANS AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

OF THE

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CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL EQUIPMENT: PREPARING FOR A TOXIC BATTLEFIELD

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2002

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY, VETERANS AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:05 a.m., in room 2247, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Christopher Shays (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Shays, Gilman, Platts, Kucinich, Schakowsky, Tierney, Allen, and Watson.

Staff present: Lawrence J. Halloran, staff director and counsel; J. Vincent Chase, chief investigator; Dr. R. Nicholas Palarino, senior policy advisor; Jason M. Chung, clerk; Jarrel Price, intern; David Rapallo, minority counsel; and Earley Green, minority assistant clerk.

Mr. SHAYS. A quorum being present, the Subcommittee on National Security, Veterans Affairs and International Relations hearing entitled Chemical and Biological Equipment: Preparing for a Toxic Battlefield," is called to order.

In the event U.S. forces are called upon to rid the world of the grave and growing threat posed by the current Iraqi regime, it must be assumed those men and women will face chemical and biological weapons.

That prospect compels us to ask, are we ready to fight and prevail on a contaminated battlefield? That question has vexed Pentagon planners and congressional committees since the Persian Gulf war.

According to the Department of Defense, DOD, after-action analyses, shortcomings in the availability, suitability and durability of chemical and biological, CB, defense equipment, particularly protective suits and masks, left combat troops avoidably vulnerable to unconventional attack in Operation Desert Storm.

Despite prolonged and costly efforts to improve CB defense doctrines, tactics and materiel, seemly intractable problems still plague the effort to defend against chemical and biological weapons attacks. Research and development remains unfocused and in some instances duplicative.

Procurements are behind schedule. Due to persistent inventory management weaknesses, DOD does not always know how many CB defense items are available, where they are, or when they will get to the soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines who need them.

Old protective suits are expiring faster than the next generation suits are being produced, pointing to a potential shortage through most of this decade.

Compounding the problem, overall inventory visibility remains so poor, some units have sold new suits on the Internet as excess while other units are forced to delay critical training because they can't get the same suits.

A byzantine management structure wastes time and money and allows the Army, Navy and Air Force to maintain service-specific approaches at the expense of a truly joint effort.

Some of these problems are endemic to any BC defense effort. Protective suits have always been too hot, masks prone to leak, collective protective shelters were deemed inadequate. Decontamination systems required too much water, detectors sounded false alarms too often, and medical antidotes were not trusted.

These old complaints reflect the harshest reality confronted on the modern battlefield: There is no absolute immunity to biological or chemical attack.

Nevertheless, having rightly renounced in-kind retaliation capabilities, the key to CB deterrence is CB defense. U.S. personnel must be the best equipped and best prepared force on Earth to enable them to survive, fight and win on a chemical and biological battlefield.

One important lesson learned in the Gulf war should inform our discussion today. CB defense is a tactical, not a strategic consideration. Contamination avoidance and other force protection capabilities shape how U.S. forces pursue their mission, not whether that mission is in our national interest.

As one Gulf war analyst put it, having looked into the eyes of the dragon in the Iraqi desert, military planners cannot rely on nuclear deterrence or mere luck to avoid CB attack. We must constantly reevaluate the threat and reform our defenses against it.

Two years ago this subcommittee heard testimony from the General Accounting Office, GAO, the DOD Inspector General and key Pentagon officials in the status of the chemical and biological defense program. We told them then that we would invite them back to describe progress and problems meeting their own performance goals.

Whether the threat emanates from Iraq, Iran, North Korea or some national terrorist groups, their answers are of vital importance to our national security.

This open hearing will be followed by a closed session to allow Members to question our witnesses on classified aspects of the CB defense program. While I understand the imperative to protect sensitive material, I have been concerned for some time that excessive classification of information in this area has done unconscionable damage to reform efforts.

Failure to declassify IG reports on gas mask failures in the Gulf war era allowed the problem to fester for years behind a bureaucratic fog. The frankest possible discussion of the challenges we face, short of telegraphing actual vulnerabilities to a potential enemy, is an essential element of an effective CB defense program.

In that spirit, we welcome our very distinguished witnesses. We look forward to their testimony, and we thank them from the bot-

tom of our hearts for their service to our country during these very troubled times.

At this time I would recognize my colleague, the very active member and partner in the work of this committee, the ranking member, Dennis Kucinich.

[The prepared statement of Hon. Christopher Shays follows:]

Statement of Rep. Christopher Shays
October 1, 2002

In the event U.S. forces are called upon to rid the world of the grave and growing threat posed by the current Iraqi regime, it must be assumed those men and women will face chemical and biological weapons. That prospect compels us to ask, "Are we ready to fight, and prevail, on a contaminated battlefield?'

That question has vexed Pentagon planners and congressional committees since the Persian Gulf War. According to Department of Defense (DOD) after-action analyses, shortcomings in the availability, suitability and durability of chemical and biological (CB) defense equipment, particularly protective suits and masks, left American combat troops avoidably vulnerable to unconventional attack in Operation Desert Storm.

What have we learned since then?

Despite prolonged and costly efforts to improve CB defense doctrine, tactics and materiel, seemingly intractable problems still plague the effort to defend against chemical and biological weapons attacks. Research and development remains unfocused, and in some instances duplicative. Procurements are behind schedule.

Due to persistent inventory management weaknesses, DOD does not always know how many CB defense items are available, where they are, or when they will get to the soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines who need them. Old protective suits are expiring faster than next-generations suits are being produced, pointing to potential shortages through most of this decade. Compounding the problem, overall inventory visibility remains so poor some units have sold new suits on the Internet as "excess" while other units are forced to delay critical training because they can't get the same suits.

A byzantine management structure wastes time and money, and allows the Army, Navy and Air Force to maintain service-specific approaches at the expense of a truly joint effort.

Some of these problems are endemic to any CB defense effort. Protective suits have always been too hot; masks prone to leaks. Collective protection shelters were deemed inadequate, decontaminations systems required too much water, detectors sounded false alarms too often, and medical antidotes were not trusted.

These old complaints reflect the harshest reality confronted on the modern battlefield: There is no absolute immunity to biological or chemical attack. Nevertheless, having rightly renounced in-kind retaliatory capabilities, the key to CB deterrence is CB defense. U.S. personnel must be the best equipped and best prepared force on earth to enable them to survive, fight and win on a chemical and biological battlefield.

One important lesson learned in the Gulf War should inform our discussions today: CB defense is a tactical, not a strategic, consideration. Contamination avoidance and other force protection capabilities shape *how* U.S. forces pursue their mission, not *whether* that mission is in our national interest. As one Gulf war analyst put it, "having looked into the eyes of the dragon" in the Iraqi desert, military planners cannot rely on nuclear deterrence or mere luck to avoid CB attack. We must constantly reevaluate the threat and reform our defenses against it.

Two years ago, this Subcommittee heard testimony from the General Accounting Office (GAO), the DOD Inspector General and key Pentagon officials on the status of the Chemical and Biological Defense Program. We told them then we would invite them back to describe progress, and problems, meeting their own performance goals. Whether the threat emanates from Iraq, Iran, North Korea or sub-national terrorist groups, their answers are of vital importance to our national security.

This open hearing will be followed by a closed session to allow Members to question our witnesses on classified aspects of the CB defense program. While I understand the imperative to protect sensitive material, I have been concerned for some time that excessive classification of information in this area has done unconscionable damage to reform efforts. Failure to declassify IG reports on gas mask failures in the Gulf War era allowed the problem to fester for years behind a bureaucratic fog. The frankest possible discussion of the challenges we face, short of telegraphing actual vulnerabilities to a potential enemy, is an essential element of an effective CB defense program.

In that spirit, we welcome our distinguished witnesses and we look forward to their testimony.

Mr. KUCINICH. I want to thank the Chair for calling this hearing, and to indicate my willingness to work with you on these issues that are so important to our national security.

On September 18th, General Myers, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, testified before the Armed Services Committee. He was asked, under oath, whether the Pentagon was prepared to handle a chemical or biological attack by Iraq.

In response he made the following assertion, "Obviously our forces prepare for that, they train for that, and they would be ready to deal with that type of environment."

Today the Inspector General of the Department of Defense and the U.S. General Accounting Office are issuing independent reports detailing a host of new and disturbing findings about the inability of the Department of Defense to protect service members against chemical and biological attacks.

These reports are not peripheral. They strike at the core of our servicemen and servicewomen's ability to carry out their mission, and these reports were written by two agencies charged with providing independent and unbiased assessments. They also directly contradict the Department of Defense's public assertion of confidence.

Now, unfortunately, the American public will never see these reports. The country will not understand the true scope of these problems because the Department of Defense has classified those reports. Now, I can understand on one hand the rationale for classification, not wanting to reveal sensitive vulnerabilities to adversaries, not wanting to place the lives of service members at risk. Those are important considerations.

But, under the circumstances, in order to protect our servicemen and servicewomen, we have to look at the flip side of that argument. By denying the American people information that is critical to the safety of our sons and daughters who serve in the field, the Department of Defense may be placing servicemen and servicewomen at even greater risk. There are a great number of American families of servicemen and servicewomen who served this country during the last war in the Persian Gulf, and they understand, based on the experience that their loved ones have had with what is called Gulf War Syndrome.

There are many different circumstances and reasons why people could have developed the sensitivities that they did. One speculation is that U.S. bombs hit ammunition dumps, which then exploded certain biologicals and chemicals that may have occasioned contact with our service personnel.

Another is the possibility that such weapons were dispersed. But, in any event, we know that American servicemen and servicewomen were adversely affected and that they weren't protected, and that the Department of Defense has not protected the people who served during the Gulf war, and there are families that have been devastated by this.

So we have to come back to the moment and ask what will we do to protect the servicemen and servicewomen of this country before we get into such a conflict. The American people deserve to know the true dangers which their sons and daughters could face.

And up to now, up to now the Department of Defense has downplayed those dangers. The Department of Defense wants it both ways. On one hand it claims that we must take urgent, even unilateral action against Iraq, because we are told by some, although not conclusively confirmed by the CIA, that Iraq possesses chemical and biological weapons.

Yet, contrary to the last decade in which Iraq refrained from using chemical or biological weapons, there is a consensus that if the United States goes into Iraq with the purpose of regime change, Saddam Hussein will have nothing to lose by using whatever weapons he may have.

Now, obviously, in this case inspections become of urgent concern. On the other hand, when it comes to the actual dangers our Armed Forces face, the Department of Defense has not been forthcoming. Administration officials say they are confident they have enough working protective gear to ensure the safety of our service members. Well, today the myth is exposed.

The classified reports need to be unclassified. The American people have a right to know the dangers that our young men and women could face. The American people have a right to know the preparedness of our military on matters of biological and chemical weapons conflict. The American people have a right to know whether or not there are serious deficiencies in equipment and inadequate and deficient training.

Now, I am forbidden from discussing the details of classified reports, but I will mention one unclassified example. We know that many protective suits that would be worn by our men and women who would serve in combat, many of those protective suits currently are in the field and these suits are defective.

Suits have holes in them. They have tears in the seams. They cannot protect against a chemical or biological attack. They would leave vulnerable the men and women out in the field.

Now, although the suit manufacturer is now in prison, hundreds of thousands of these suits went out into the field. They were given to service members throughout the world. They were provided to soldiers in Bosnia, and as of last year the Pentagon, and this is on the record, this is already known, this is not classified, as of last year the Pentagon could not account for a quarter of a million of such suits.

It is public knowledge. The Department of Defense was unable to recall these suits, because its inventory systems are very poor. The General Accounting Office reported that several military suits—several military units were selling brand new protective suits which cost $200 apiece over the Internet for $3 each.

As a result, there is a real possibility that in the near future a young man or woman in the Persian Gulf may slip on one of these protective suits with a false promise of protection.

Now, I am sure that we will hear from the Department of Defense that systems are now in place to avoid such mistakes. However, this is the same department which has dragged its feet in first identifying the defective suits, the same department that refused to test all of the suits because of cost concerns, and the same department that refused to separate its inventories when suits in fact proved defective.

I want to thank the chairman for holding this hearing, because this hearing is about national security. But it is also about whether we care about our servicemen and servicewomen, and the conditions that we would put them in. I am not going to have any servicemen and servicewomen serving this country, put them in harm's way and not make sure that they have every piece of equipment they need to protect them and to make sure that they can serve this country.

I thank the Chair.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank the gentleman. We have Mr. Tierney. Mr. Tierney, thank you for being here. You have been a very active participant on this issue, and have taken a keen interest in this particular hearing. Thank you for coming.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I hope whatever it is that you have for a cold gets better soon. Sounds like tough going there.

Mr. Chairman, I think you know from correspondence that I have had with you and discussions that I have great concern about the preparedness and the readiness of our troops to engage in the type of a conflict that may well be met in the Middle East.

And one of the concerns that I think many of us have about a unilateral preemptive strike without first going through the international bodies and having our allies work with us to try to accomplish the ends of inspections and disarmament and then moving only as a last resort to a military engagement, a lot of that stems from recent reports on the Millennium Challenge 2002, which was warfare simulation exercises that I wrote you about and which were reported in a recent column in the New York Times, not very favorably, and they raised great concern.

And I am somewhat concerned also that much of the information we are going to hear today about relevant factors presumably are going to come in a classified section of this hearing, and I think that when we are having a public discussion about what the future of this country is going to be in terms of going to war or not going to war and engaging the young men and women of our services, the public ought to have all of the pertinent information that isn't truly in need of classification.

I oftentimes question just why we classify much of the information, because once we get into those classified hearings it seems the public well should have much of those facts. But the reports of this simulation, simulated exercise indicate that clearly any action we have against Iraq wouldn't be a cake walk, for sure.

The report, and I hope we get to the bottom of this, says that the war games were fiddled with in ways that raise questions about whether the government is returning to a Vietnam style over optimism and myopia.

In fact Paul Van Riper, who is a retired Marine Lieutenant General, who played the enemy's military commander during these exercises, was quoted as saying, there is an unfortunate culture developing in the American military that maybe should make you nervous. I don't see the rich intellectual discussion that we had after Vietnam, I see mostly slogans, cliches and unreadable materials.

And then General Van Riper said the mood reminded him of the mindset in Vietnam, excessive faith in technology, inadequate appreciation of the fog of war, lack of understanding of the enemy, and simple hubris. I don't think we can afford hubris, Mr. Chairman. I think that we have to be absolutely certain that our troops are prepared, that all of the equipment that we give them to go into any situation is going to be effective beyond question, and that we have to make sure that we are ready.

These reported exercises again indicate to us that before the 13,500 people participating in it, before the American forces in these games even arrived on the scene they were sunk. Much of the American fleet was sunk. So in order to have the exercise go forward, they just resurrected them and started again. They also indicated that they took away many of the options that we could expect Saddam Hussein to use and didn't make them available to the enemy.

And I understand, as this article indicated, that these are war games, war simulations, and obviously you want to learn as much as you can. I think what we need to find out today is are we learning, are we learning from whatever happened in there that was not good news, and are we going to take whatever action is necessary to make sure that our troops are properly equipped and well protected, and that we go in a sequence in which we would go in moving forward on these issues of such import, and that we are thoroughly prepared.

So with those comments, Mr. Chairman, I look forward to the hearing and our witnesses and the testimony.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you. If my colleagues would just permit me to say that when we had the debate on whether or not to go into the Persian Gulf war, it was a debate in which all Members stated their views. We tried to get as much information as possible, and we were very respectful of each other's positions.

And I appreciate you raising the questions you have. Obviously it is a bit awkward to have an open hearing and then a declassified one and then a classified one.

But we decided to go with the open first and push as hard as we can to know what can be on the record, and then we will leave the rest for the classified. In other words, we have reversed the order that we usually do.

And I just want to say that I would have to believe that everyone cares about obviously making sure our troops are protected. But there are questions about frankly how well they were protected in the Persian Gulf as this committee and you all have, both of you have clearly pointed out.

We have two panels. We have Mr. Joseph Schmitz, Inspector General, Office of the Inspector General, Department of Defense, accompanied by Donald A. Bloomer, Program Director, Readiness Division, Office of the Inspector General, and David K. Steensma, Deputy Assistant Inspector General, Office of the Inspector General, Department of Defense.

Mr. Schmitz will testify. And then we have, from the GAO, Mr. Raymond J. Decker, Director of Defense Capabilities and Management, U.S. General Accounting Office, accompanied by Mr. William

W. Cawood, Assistant Director of Defense Capabilities and Management, U.S. General Accounting Office.

We will follow this process. You will see the 5-minute light. We allow you to go on another 5 minutes, but we are not trying to encourage you to fill the full 10 minutes. We would like you to stop clearly before then.

But if you deem it necessary, the issue is too important, and my colleagues and I understand that and would want you to be able to make your points as you need to make them. But we would prefer that they be 5 minutes, and then roll over 5, but clearly not to 10 total.

At this time, let me just take care of some housekeeping. I ask unanimous consent that all members of the subcommittee be permitted to place an opening statement in the record and that the record remain open for 3 days for that purpose. Without objection, so ordered.

[The prepared statement of Hon. Diane E. Watson follows:]

Hon Diane E. Watson

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for holding this hearing. Since I came to Washington a year and a half ago, I've learned about many of the high-tech combat systems employed by the U.S. military to keep America safe. One of the most impressive is the Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System, also known as "J-STARS." J-Stars is a long-range, air-to-ground surveillance system designed to locate, classify and track ground targets in all weather conditions. According to the U.S. Air Force, J-Stars can locate and track on the ground threats to American soldiers over a 120-degree field of view covering nearly 19,305 square miles.

Which could come in handy for the Department of Defense. In April of last year, the GAO reported that as many as a quarter of a million defective suits for protecting our soldiers from chemical and biological weapons were floating around U.S. inventory without any way to track them. Let me repeat that — A quarter of a MILLION. Since then, the Pentagon claims all these defective suits have been located and replaced. But the D-O-D Inspector General disagrees, saying that D-O-D tracking systems are so poor that there are still units with defective suits.

Given an impending conflict in Iraq, and given

Saddam Hussein's demonstrated willingness to use chemical weapons, the presence of these defective suits in U.S. inventories is as dangerous to our troops as any bomb or bullet. And so perhaps this begs a new mission for J-Stars—identifying threats to American soldiers within their own closets. Perhaps I'm being a bit glib. But I find it appalling that the same military that can develop and deploy twenty-first century information technology to defeat our enemies can't employ simple TWENTIETH century technology to protect our own men and women in uniform.

The Pentagon's inventory and accounting systems

are broken, and I believe that the example of these quarter of a million defective protective suits demonstrates that fixing those systems is an imperative as great or greater than war in Iraq. I hope that from this hearing, we will hear what the Pentagon is doing to fix this problem, and what Secretary Rumsfeld is doing to make sure it is fixed.

Mr. SHAYS. I ask further unanimous consent that all witnesses be permitted to include their written statements in the record. Without objection, so ordered.

At this time, I would ask the gentlemen who are testifying and the accompanying testifiers to stand up. If there is anyone else that may be responding to questions, I would like them to stand up in this first panel. Are we pretty complete with the 5 of us here?

[Witnesses sworn.]

Mr. SHAYS. Note for the record our witnesses have responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Schmitz, we are going to start you off, and then we are going to go to Mr. Kucinich for the first round of questions, then I will go and then Mr. Tierney, unless there is another of my colleagues who comes.

Mr. Schmitz.

STATEMENTS OF JOSEPH E. SCHMITZ, INSPECTOR GENERAL, OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, ACCOMPANIED BY DONALD A. BLOOMER, PROGRAM DIRECTOR, READINESS DIVISION, OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE; AND DAVID K. STEENSMA, DEPUTY ASSISTANT INSPECTOR GENERAL, OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE; AND RAYMOND J. DECKER, DIRECTOR, DEFENSE CAPABILITIES AND MANAGEMENT, U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE, ACCOMPANIED BY WILLIAM W. CAWOOD, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, DEFENSE CAPABILITIES AND MANAGEMENT, U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

Mr. SCHMITZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SHAYS. I am going to make another request. I am sorry to interrupt you before you just said one word. For some reason, we don't have a very good cooling system. I think it is getting a little better. But our amplification is not so terrific. The silver mic is what amplifies, the black mic is what is part of C–SPAN, obviously both are important. Just want you to speak fairly loudly.

Mr. SCHMITZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Kucinich, Mr. Tierney.

This is the second opportunity I have had to appear before this committee, this subcommittee, and I am grateful for the previous and this opportunity to address your questions regarding the status of individual protective equipment intended to protect our Armed Forces from chemical and biological attack.

I share your concerns with respect to the Department's inventories, quality controls and serviceability of individual protective equipment.

In our open session I want to present our observations related to the need for an inventory management tool at the unit level that contains the essential elements needed for chemical and biological defense materiel, improvement in readiness reporting and training challenges.

Let me thank, at the onset, whoever brought this World War I era Army poster here to the hearing, because it reminds me of the fact that my own grandfather was gassed by the Germans on a battlefield in France during World War I.

I am told—I don't know for sure whether it was because of a defective gas mask or whether he even had a gas mask, but I am told that he ultimately died from residual effects of this gas.

This is a vital issue, and I sincerely hope that the audits my office has conducted in this area meaningfully assist this committee, the Congress, and the warfighters in improving our readiness.

The Department has a very comprehensive program to provide world class chemical and biological defense capabilities. These capabilities allow the Armed Forces of the United States to survive and successfully complete their operational missions across the spectrum of conflicts.

Our Armed Forces must be prepared to execute their missions in all types of environments, including those that are chemically and biologically contaminated. The Department must maintain an active, viable chemical and biological defense program in order to protect its forces.

In his annual report to the President and to Congress, the Secretary of Defense stated that, "the proliferation of NBC technology, materiel and expertise has provided potential adversaries with the means to challenge directly the safety and security of the United States and its allies and friends."

As a result of various reviews, my office has made efforts to address the availability and serviceability of the chemical and biological defense materiel issued to the Armed Forces. Since the last appearance before this subcommittee in June 2000, the Office of the Inspector General has continued its efforts to ensure that the chemical and biological defense equipment issued to the Armed Forces has been adequately maintained and stored and that all personnel requiring chemical and biological defense equipment have it and are properly trained to use it.

Two audits we have conducted address issues your invitation letter specifically requested me to discuss, Mr. Chairman. Because the results of the two audits are classified I will discuss them in closed session.

Since February 2000, we have visited 287 units in 31 States, one U.S. territory and nine countries under the command of two unified commands, eight active duty component commands, four reserve component commands and the Army and Air National Guard to review their management of chemical and biological defense resources.

The results of our work are based on what we have seen in the military units most likely to encounter a chemical and biological attack. The problems that we identified in those unit visits can be corrected. The issues are not insurmountable. Solving the problem will require a concerted effort at all levels of command in each of the Services, and in the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Some commands such as the U.S. Naval Forces, Central Command, have established vigorous programs to protect personnel from chemical and biological weapons. Other organizations have less robust programs that need to be improved. I will discuss those programs in greater detail later in the closed session.

Limited visibility of chemical and biological defense items as assets remains a problem at the installation or user level because of the lack of automated inventory tracking systems at that level.

Each of the Services maintain their own inventory management tool. These tools are often augmented at the local installation level with other tools, usually locally developed or produced that provide a detailed view of the stocks of chemical and biological defense equipment.

The tools are systems that should contain, at a minimum, information such as stock number, size, contract number, lot number, date of manufacture, date of expiration, date of inspection, the individual issued the item, and any service bulletins or recall notices.

There should not be a need to develop inventory management tools at the installation level. For example, one Navy activity reported to us that they spent $15,000 to develop an Excel spreadsheet, while another Navy activity identified an expenditure of roughly $100,000 to develop and field their chemical and biological defense equipment inventory tool.

Although these expenditures might seem small on an individual basis the fact that commanders identified a need to develop their own tools should highlight the need for a departmentwide standardized inventory tool.

The Department has worked to standardize other issues related to chemical and biological defense, and it can do so here as well.

Standardizing an automated inventory management tool would provide departmentwide benefits. This would not even require developing a new inventory tool, because some of the tools already in use could be adapted to the other services. For example, the mobility inventory and control accountability system currently used throughout the Air Force provides a level of detail that units in each of the Services have identified would aid them in managing their inventories.

This system is used to maintain control of inventory and can be used to identify materials on hand that would have been flagged for inspection because of the service notices or product recalls, such as the one for defective overgarments.

The system also assists in managing on-hand stocks with an identified shelf life by tracking lot numbers or dates of manufacture. The question then becomes one of who should be the one to enforce standardization. We believe the Office of the Deputy Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Chemical and Biological Defense should provide the oversight departmentwide, and should be responsible for initiatives such as this.

We have recommended that the Deputy Assistant develop and field a DOD standardized inventory management system for all items of chemical and biological defense. In response to our recommendation, the Deputy Assistant agreed that the Services and the Defense Logistics Agency have numerous inventory management systems with limited ability to share information.

The Deputy Assistant pointed out the DOD has established a single focus point for gathering and disseminating data for the New Joint Service Lightweight Integrated Suit Technology ensembles, and that the Defense Logistics Agency is actively involved in replacing legacy systems with one that will interface with the Services' systems beginning in 2005.

We have conveyed to the Deputy Assistant that 2005 is too long to wait. A standard inventory tool at the installation level for

chemical and biological defense equipment is needed now for the units to effectively manage their equipment.

The Army can enhance the preparedness of our forces relative to chemical and biological——

Mr. SHAYS. You need to start thinking about wrapping up here.

Mr. SCHMITZ. I am very close to my conclusions.

Through an improved unit readiness reporting system, the Army attempted to provide better information on chemical and biological defense preparedness when they revised their readiness reporting instruction in November 2001. But additional improvements can still be made.

As a result of our work with the Army National Guard and Army Reserve, we recommended the Army revise their instruction for reporting readiness and include reporting of chemical and biological defense materiel for all Army units. The Army agreed to our recommendation.

Improved reporting of chemical and biological defense readiness will aid in creating a climate at all Army levels where training and equipping forces for chemical and biological defense receive higher levels of attention and resources. I will go into greater detail on the issue we identified in the units we visited in my testimony for the closed session.

For this session, I would like to state that each of the Services has a comprehensive training program that they believe will prepare their personnel to survive and operate in a chemically and biologically contaminated environment.

I believe that they have put in place the foundation on which programs can be built that will provide for the protection and survivability of their personnel.

The Marine Corps and Air Force training were more robust than the Army and the Navy programs. Each of the Services ensures that all personnel receive chemical and biological defense training when they enter the service.

Mr. SHAYS. I am sorry, I need to have you stop.

Mr. SCHMITZ. That is fine.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Schmitz follows:]

Hold for Release
Expected at 10:00 a.m
October 1, 2002

Statement of

Honorable Joseph E. Schmitz

Inspector General
of the
Department of Defense

before the

Subcommittee on National Security,
Veterans Affairs, and International Relations

House Committee on Government Reform

on

"Chemical and Biological Equipment: Preparing for a Toxic

Battlefield"

October 1, 2002

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before your Committee today and address your questions regarding the status of individual protective equipment intended to protect our Armed Forces from chemical and biological attack. I share your concerns with respect to the Department's inventories, quality controls, and serviceability of individual protective equipment. In our open session I want to present our observations related to the need for an inventory management tool at the unit level that contains the essential elements needed for chemical and biological defense materiel, improvements in readiness reporting, training challenges, and defective chemical and biological defense equipment that is still being identified in the inventory. The best chemical and biological defense materiels cannot protect the forces if they are not adequately maintained, stored, or if the forces are not sufficiently trained in how to maintain and use the equipment. Much has changed in the Department and the world since 1994 when we began focusing on chemical and biological individual protective equipment.

The Department has a very comprehensive program to provide world-class chemical and biological defense capabilities. These capabilities allow the Armed Forces of the United States to survive and successfully complete their operational missions across the spectrum of conflicts. The April 2002 Annual Report to Congress on the Department's Chemical and Biological Defense Program shows the quality of the Department's research, development, management, equipment, and training initiatives. The overall program is an example of how the Department can aggressively react to ensure that the military members are protected against the growing challenges of chemical and biological attacks. The research and development programs are extremely impressive and have enabled the Department to develop some of the best individual protective equipment in the world.

The events of the past year have demonstrated that the threats facing the United States and its Armed Forces can be diverse and asymmetrical as well as conventional in nature. The United States has well-defined national security interests in regions where known or suspected chemical and biological weapons programs are conducted by countries of concern. For these reasons, our Armed Forces must be prepared to execute their missions in all types of environments, including those that are chemically and biologically contaminated. The Department must maintain an active, viable chemical and biological defense program for the protection of its forces. In his annual report to the President and Congress, the Secretary stated that "the proliferation of NBC [Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical] technology, materiel, and expertise has provided potential adversaries with the means to challenge directly the safety and security of the United States and its allies and friends."

As the result of various reviews, my office has made efforts to address the availability and serviceability of the chemical and biological defense materiel issued to the Armed Forces. Since the last appearance before this Subcommittee in June 2000, the Office of the Inspector General has continued its efforts to ensure that the chemical and biological defense equipment issued to the Armed Forces has been adequately maintained and stored, and that all personnel requiring chemical and biological defense equipment have it and are properly trained to use it. Two audits we have conducted address issues your invitation letter specifically requested me to discuss. Because the results of the two audits are classified, I will discuss them in closed session.

Units Visited

Since February 2000, we have visited 287 units in 31 states, 1 U.S. territory, and 9 countries under the command of 2 unified commands, 8 active duty Component commands, 4 Reserve Component commands, and the Army and Air National Guard to review their management of chemical and biological defense resources. The results of our work is based on what we have seen in the military units most likely to encounter a chemical and biological attack. The Services have each undertaken several efforts to improve the oversight of chemical and biological defense equipment. The problems that we identified in those unit visits can be corrected; the issues are not insurmountable. Solving the problems will require a concerted effort at all levels of command in each of the Services and the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Some commands, such as the U.S. Naval Forces, Central Command, have established vigorous programs to protect personnel from chemical and biological weapons. Other organizations have less robust programs that need to be improved. I will discuss those programs in greater detail later in closed session.

Inventory Management

Limited visibility of chemical and biological defense items as assets remains a problem at the installation or user level because of the lack of automated inventory tracking systems at that level. Each of the Services maintains their own inventory management tool. These tools are often augmented at the local installation level with other tools, usually locally developed or procured, that provide a detailed view of the stocks of chemical and biological defense equipment. The tools are systems that should contain, at a minimum, information such as stock number, size, contract number, lot number, date of manufacture, date of expiration, date of inspection, the individual issued the item, and any service bulletins or recall notices.

There should not be a need to develop inventory management tools at the installation level. For example, one Navy activity reported to us that they spent

$15,000 to develop an Excel spreadsheet, while another Navy activity identified an expenditure of roughly $100,000 to develop and field their chemical and biological defense equipment inventory tool. Although these expenditures might seem small on an individual basis, the fact that commanders identified a need to develop their own tools should highlight the need for a Department-wide standardized inventory tool.

The Department has worked to standardize other issues related to chemical and biological defense, and it can do so here as well. For example, the Services are moving to common masks, one for aircrew personnel and one for ground personnel. This standardization will greatly enhance not only the protection of the individual service members but also interoperability and joint warfighting.

This example demonstrates that when needed, the Department can work to unify areas that benefit all, and standardizing an automated inventory management tool would provide Department-wide benefits. This would not even require developing a new inventory tool because some of the tools already in use could be adapted by the other Services. For example, the Mobility Inventory and Control Accountability System currently used throughout the Air Force provides a level of detail that units in each of the Services have identified would aid them in managing their inventories. This system is used to maintain control of inventory and can be used to identify materiels on hand that have been flagged for inspection because of service notices or product recalls, such as the one for defective overgarments. The system also assists in managing on-hand stocks with an identified shelf-life by tracking lot numbers or dates of manufacture.

The question then becomes one of, who should be the one to enforce standardization? We believe that the Office of the Deputy Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Chemical and Biological Defense should provide the oversight Department-wide and should be responsible for initiatives such as this. We have recommended that the Deputy Assistant develop and field a DoD-standardized inventory management system for all items of chemical and biological defense. In response to our recommendation, the Deputy Assistant agreed that the Services and the Defense Logistics Agency have numerous inventory management systems with limited ability to share information. The Deputy Assistant pointed out that DoD has established a single focal point for gathering and disseminating data for the new Joint Service Lightweight Integrated Suit Technology (JSLIST) ensembles and that the Defense Logistics Agency is actively involved in replacing legacy systems with one that will interface with the Services' systems beginning in 2005.

We have conveyed to the Deputy Assistant that 2005 is too long to wait. A standard inventory tool at the installation level for chemical and biological defense equipment is needed now for the units to effectively manage their equipment.

Readiness Reporting

The Army can enhance the preparedness of our forces relative to chemical and biological defense through an improved unit readiness reporting system. The Army attempted to provide better information on chemical and biological defense preparedness when they revised their readiness reporting instruction in November 2001, but additional improvements can still be made. As a result of our work with the Army National Guard and Army Reserve, we recommended that the Army revise their instruction for reporting readiness and include reporting of chemical and biological defense materiels for all Army units. The Army agreed to our recommendation. A unit's chemical and biological defense readiness does not affect its overall readiness rating because it is not a required factor in determining that rating. As a result of our work overseas, we recommended that the Army include the chemical and biological defense readiness of a unit in determining the readiness rating of the unit. We are awaiting comments from the Army. Mandatory inclusion of a unit's chemical and biological defense preparedness in the calculation of a unit's readiness rating would provide commanders at all levels with a more comprehensive level of their actual readiness.

Training

Improved reporting of chemical and biological defense readiness will aid in creating a climate at all Army levels where training and equipping forces for chemical and biological defense receive higher levels of attention and resources. I will go into greater detail on the issues we identified in the units we visited in my testimony for the closed session. For this session, I would like to state that each of the Services has a comprehensive training program that they believe will prepare their personnel to survive and operate in a chemically or biologically contaminated environment. I believe that they have put in place the foundation on which programs can be built that will provide for the protection and survivability of their personnel. The Marine Corps and Air Force training were more robust than the Army and Navy programs.

Each of the Services ensures that all personnel receive chemical and biological defense training when they enter the Service. Any subsequent training is based on the Service and the mission of the unit that the personnel are assigned to. The Army has established a policy that allows the local commanders the flexibility to determine their training frequency. Although this provides commanders with the flexibility they require, the result is that some units had limited training or did not train at all. For example, one Army National Guard Air Defense Artillery unit we visited had limited training on chemical and biological defense equipment. When an Army team assessed chemical and biological defense training for a unit of 86 personnel, the team only assessed 2 personnel and only on 1 of 6 chemical and

biological defense skills. This provides an incomplete picture of the readiness of the unit to operate and survive in a contaminated environment. As a result of our recommendations, the Army has agreed to enhance training for chemical and biological defense.

We have also recommended that the Navy ensure compliance with its existing guidance for chemical and biological defense training. In response, the Navy is updating its Navy Technical Training Plan to contain a new chemical and biological defense reporting field that includes chemical and biological defense equipment and training standards. These are conditions that can be corrected by having a directed, forward-leaning program that will provide for the protection of all Service members.

Management Actions Taken

I would like to take this opportunity to update some of the actions that the Department has undertaken since our last appearance before this Subcommittee in June 2000. Improvements have occurred in many areas, yet areas of concern still exist. One of the topics previously discussed at length before this Committee was the presence of defective battle dress overgarments in the DoD inventory. As you recall, these overgarments were manufactured by the Isratex Corporation and sold to the Department even though they were defective. Another issue before this Committee was the inaccuracy of inventory records for chemical suits. One of our earlier audit reports identified the inaccuracy of inventory records for chemical battle dress overgarments at the Defense Depot at Albany, Georgia. As of October 12, 2000, the overgarments had been inventoried, the inventory records corrected, and messages issued about the defective overgarments.

In October 2001 we requested the Defense Logistics Agency to provide an update of their actions to locate the approximately 250,000 defective Isratex overgarments that DoD could not account for. The Defense Logistics Agency reported to us that they believed that the 250,000 unaccounted-for overgarments were issued, worn, and disposed of. The Defense Logistics Agency also stated that based on repeated messages and advisories, and through incentives to their customers, the Defense Logistics Agency believed that any remaining overgarments were identified and pulled out of serviceable inventories. The Department has worked vigorously to identify and segregate the defective overgarments; however, not all units have received this information from their higher headquarters. Once segregated, the defective overgarments were to be used solely for training. As recently as April 2002, we continued to identify units that had not segregated those defective overgarments in their inventories. It is important to note that when the defective overgarments are identified, the Services and the Defense Logistics Agency have taken quick corrective action to remove the defective items and to provide the units with serviceable replacements.

Summary

Standardizing and improving installation level logistics tools, readiness reporting, and training are positive steps needed to help ensure that our Service members are adequately prepared for the potential horrors of chemical and biological attacks. Chemical and biological defense has been a primary focus of the Inspector General of the Department of Defense audits over the past few years. Given the importance of fully addressing the management challenges in this difficult area, we have attempted to maintain continuous coverage despite severe resource constraints and other requirements. Currently we are auditing the maintenance of individual protective equipment in the U.S. Pacific Command, the security over select biological agents, emergency preparedness of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the management of decontamination resources.

Thank you for considering the views of the Office of the Inspector General on these critical issues. This concludes my testimony.

Mr. SHAYS. Let me just clarify for the purposes of our questioning before we get on to Mr. Decker. You didn't touch on a number of points that I think are even more significant than what you talked about, such as the risk factors and so on.

When we start asking questions about your public document, are you going to be saying to us that some of that information will have to be behind closed doors?

Mr. SCHMITZ. No. If it is in the public document——

Mr. SHAYS. There are questions about analysis, if A and B equals something, and C equals B, I just want to make sure that we can sure pursue those points.

Mr. SCHMITZ. That is precisely why I have two technical experts sitting on either side of me.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Decker. I would love it if you could be a little more vivacious. This is going to be a long day. I need some variation in the voice, a little excitement. OK?

Mr. DECKER. I will try, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SHAYS. All right.

Mr. DECKER. Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee. I am joined today by Mr. Cawood, my expert Assistant Director on these issues. We are pleased to be here today to discuss the Department of Defense's continuing efforts to protect U.S. forces against chemical and biological attack.

DOD believes that it is increasingly likely that an adversary will use a chemical or biological weapons against U.S. forces to degrade our super U.S. conventional warfare capabilities, placing service members' lives and effective military operations at risk.

Currently more than 20 states or non-state groups either have or have an interest in acquiring chemical weapons, and approximately 12 countries are believed to have biological warfare programs. Terrorist groups are known to be interested in these weapons.

Therefore, U.S. forces need to be properly trained and equipped to operate in a chemically and biologically contaminated environment. And, as we have reported, when the threat of chemical and biological weapons use occurred during the Gulf war, deploying U.S. forces encountered a wide array of problems, including unsuitable and inadequate supplies of protective equipment, poor training, and unsatisfactory chemical and biological detectors. During the past 7 years, at the request of Congress, especially this subcommittee, we have examined this important issue and produced over 30 reports and statements.

While we found that DOD has made some improvements in equipment training and readiness reporting, we are continuing to have concerns in each of these areas. In 1996, we issued a major report that discussed the overall capability of the U.S. forces to fight and survive in a contaminated environment. We reported that DOD was slow in responding to lessons learned during the Gulf war of 1990/1991.

Specifically, early deploying units lacked required equipment such as chemical detector paper, decontamination kits in sufficient quantities and protective equipment.

Army and Marine Corps forces remained inadequately trained for effective chemical and biological defense. Joint exercises included little or no chemical and biological defense training. Armey medical

units often lacked chemical and biological defense equipment and training. Research and development was slower than planned, and unit reporting on these issues and readiness was unsatisfactory.

We concluded that these issues were persistent and if not addressed will likely result in needless casualties and degradation of U.S. warfighting capability. We noted that despite DOD's increased emphasis on chemical and biological defense, it continued to receive a lower priority than traditional mission tasks at all levels of command.

Many field commanders told us that they accepted a level of chemical and biological defense unpreparedness as they tried to balance priorities and budgets.

In 2000 we looked at this issue again, at the early deploying forces, and we saw a better picture. We reviewed three Army divisions, two Air Force fighter wings and one Marine Corps expeditionary force and found that most of these units had the required individual protective equipment necessary, and most detection decontamination equipment. This is a positive.

Officials at the units, however, said that had they shortages, that the shortages would be filled from stocks held later for later deployers, were from war reserves, and had not determined whether this solution would satisfy their needs,Nor would it have an impact, a negative impact on the future deployment and our war reserves.

Training continues to be a problem. 1996, the commanders were not integrating chemical and biological defense in the unit exercises, and the training was not realistic.

For example, Marine Core commanders did not fully integrate chemical and biological defense in the unit exercises as required by Marine Corps policy because operating in the protective equipment is difficult, it is time consuming, it decreases the numbers of essential tasks that can be performed during an exercise, and limits the offensive capability during these operations.

Officials stated that the chemical and biological defense training is still being adversely impacted by the shortage of specialists in these units. We also reported that DOD's monitoring of the chemical-biological defense readiness in our 1996 report had improved. By 2000, based on our recommendation, the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed changes to the status of reports training systems, SORTS, that will require units to report more clearly on the quantity of chemical-biological equipment on hand and training readiness.

However, we noted that the changes do not require that units report on the condition of the chemical gear; thus, the reports could indicate that the unit has the equipment, but it may not be serviceable.

Sir, allow me to focus on a major issue of this hearing; that is the protective suits that—we have a chart we are going to put up. Individual protection is a critically important component to overall chemical and biological defense.

This is the last line of defense for our service members. Like the DOD IG, we have concluded several recent reviews on this topic. If I may direct your attention to this chart, which is on my right, and also on page 10 of the prepared statement, it depicts the number in millions of older BDO suits, dark, and the newer joint serv-

ice lightweight integrated suit technology, the JSLIST suits in white, from 2001 to 2007. The dotted lines represent different requirements.

For instance, the horizontal dashed line is the number of suits required for two major theater wars, and the dashed line is for 150 percent of one major theater war. Although DOD seems to be moving from the 2 MTW to the 1½ MTW, suit shortages are projected to escalate in the next few years because the majority of the suits in the current inventory will end their shelf life and expire by 2007.

And the new suits coming in, the JSLIST, are not entering the inventory quickly enough to cover the degrading older suits. As a result, in August 2002, DOD had procured about 1.5 million JSLIST suits, which had been issued to the military services. This with the older suits equals about 4.5 million suits. This level is now barely sufficient to meet the new requirement of 150 percent of one major theater war.

If the new suit funding and the production do not increase sufficiently to replace the expiring suits, the inventory will drop each year all of the way out to 2007.

We have testified, and this was covered again by Mr. Kucinich earlier, about serious deficiencies in inventory management. DOD IG has done the same. The point that I would make here is that 250,000 suits that were defective are still unaccounted for. We have not seen evidence that they have been found.

Over the last 7 years, we have highlighted a serious gap between the priority given chemical and biological defense and the actual implementation of the program. The Quadrennial Defense Reviews of 1997 and 2001 identified chem and bio defense as key priorities. Although the program overall is clearly improved, many of the problems in the previous report are still unresolved.

Let me focus on the budget. DOD has requested almost $1.4 billion for the chemical and biological defense program 2003. However, it should be noted $400 million of that is for the Office of Homeland Security bio defense efforts. Despite the emphasis placed on this program by the Quadrennial Defense Review and statements about the threat of weapons of mass destruction by senior officials, the program has consistently had difficulty competing against other service priorities, such as those associated with traditional mission tasks.

Spending on the chem-bio defense program represents one-third of 1 percent of the defense, the entire defense budget.

In summary, DOD has made many improvements over the years to defend against and sustain operations in a chemical environment. These gains have been primarily in the areas of equipment, training and readiness reporting.

DOD has concurred or partially concurred with 36 of our 37 recommendations in our reports. DOD recognizes that management and organization of the program must improve and has recently proposed organization and other changes designed to address those shortcomings. However, a real gap exists between the priority and emphasis given chemical and biological defense by DOD and the actual implementation of the program.

We are concerned that without leadership commitment of the Department to address long-term conditions we have identified, survival of our service members operating in a contaminated environment and the success of our operations are at risk. We would be pleased to answer any questions the committee may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Decker follows:]

United States General Accounting Office

GAO

Testimony

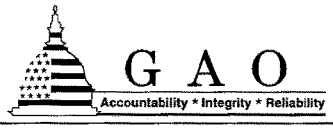
Before the Subcommittee on National Security, Veterans Affairs, and International Relations, Committee on Government Reform, House of Representatives

For Release on Delivery
Expected at 10:00 a.m.,
Tuesday, October 1, 2002

CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL DEFENSE

Observations on DOD's Risk Assessment of Defense Capabilities

Statement of Raymond J. Decker, Director,
Defense Capabilities and Management



GAO-03-137T

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

We are pleased to be here today to discuss the Department of Defense's (DOD) continuing efforts to protect U.S. military forces against chemical and biological attack. DOD believes it is increasingly likely that an adversary will use chemical or biological weapons against U.S. forces to degrade superior U.S. conventional warfare capabilities, placing service members' lives and effective military operations at risk. Currently, more than 20 states or non-state groups either have, or have an interest in acquiring, chemical weapons. Also, about 12 countries are believed to have biological warfare programs, and terrorist groups are known to be interested in these weapons.

Potential adversaries, especially in the Middle East and Northeast Asia, have chemical and biological weapons stocks and the means to deliver them. U.S. forces therefore need to be properly trained and equipped to operate in a chemically or biologically contaminated environment. As we have reported, when the threat of chemical and biological weapons use occurred during the Gulf War, deploying U.S. forces encountered a wide array of problems, including unsuitable and inadequate supplies of protective equipment, inadequate training in its use, and unsatisfactory chemical and biological detectors.

Summary

During the past 6 years, we have identified many problems in DOD's capabilities to defend against chemical and biological weapons and sustain operations in the midst of their use. While we have found that DOD has made some improvements — in equipment, training, and reporting, and in the coordination of research and development activities — we have continuing concerns in each of these areas. One particular issue is the supply of chemical protective clothing and the way associated risk is assessed. Due to the upcoming expiration of existing protective suits, the slower rate at which new suits are entering the inventory, and DOD's method of assessing risk for individual items rather than complete protective ensembles, we believe that the risk for protective clothing shortages may increase dramatically from now through at least 2007. We also are concerned that certain management weaknesses, such as program organizational complexity and prolonged vacancies in key leadership positions, may have sent a message throughout the department about the relative priority and importance of the Chemical and Biological Defense Program.

Today, as requested, we will: (1) briefly discuss the shortcomings we identified in previous work with regard to DOD's protection of its forces against chemical and biological warfare and the steps DOD has taken to date to address them; (2) discuss the status of DOD's current and projected inventory of chemical and biological protective suits, and (3) present our observations on the management of DOD's Chemical and Biological Defense Program. We will furnish an additional statement for the closed session this afternoon.

Chemical and Biological Defense Has Improved, but Problems Persist

Since 1995, GAO has focused on the chemical and biological defense area, which has resulted in a series of reports and testimonies before Congress on DOD's efforts to prepare troops to survive and operate in a chemically and biologically contaminated environment. Major problem areas have included shortfalls in equipment, training, and reporting and weaknesses in coordinating program research and development activities. Although DOD has taken significant actions to improve the program and has increased its funding, serious problems still persist.

Shortfalls in Equipment, Training, and Reporting

Our first major report, issued in March 1996, discussed the overall capability of U.S. forces to fight and survive chemical and biological warfare and is the centerpiece for much of the work we have performed since then.[1] We reported that DOD was slow in responding to the lessons learned during the Gulf War. Specifically,

- early deploying units lacked required equipment such as chemical detector paper, decontamination kits, and sufficient quantities of protective clothing;
- Army and Marine forces remained inadequately trained for effective chemical and biological defense;
- joint exercises included little chemical or biological defense training;
- Army medical units often lacked chemical and biological defense equipment and training;

[1] U.S. General Accounting Office, *Chemical and Biological Defense: Emphasis Remains Insufficient to Resolve Continuing Problems*, GAO/NSIAD-96-103 (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 29, 1996).

- biological agent vaccine stocks and immunization plans remained inadequate; and
- research and development progress was slower than planned.

We also reported that the Joint Chiefs of Staff's Status of Resources and Training System (SORTS) — DOD's system for reporting the overall readiness of units — was of limited value in determining the readiness of units to operate in a chemically or biologically contaminated environment. The system was established to provide the current status of specific elements considered essential to readiness assessments, such as personnel and equipment on hand, equipment condition, and training. However, we found that this system allowed commanders to report their unit's overall readiness subjectively regardless of the unit's actual readiness to operate in a chemically or biologically contaminated environment.

We concluded that chemical and biological defense equipment, training, and medical problems were persisting and, if not addressed, were likely to result in needless casualties and a degradation of U.S. war fighting capability. We noted that despite DOD's increased emphasis on chemical and biological defense, it continued to receive a lower priority than traditional mission tasks at all levels of command. Many field commanders accepted a level of chemical and biological defense unpreparedness and told us that the resources devoted to that area were appropriate, given other threat concerns and budgetary constraints.

Unit Equipment Levels Have Improved, but Shortages Remain in Key Areas

When we looked again in 2000 at the readiness of early deploying U.S. forces to operate in a chemically or biologically contaminated environment, we found the situation generally improved.[2] Units we reviewed included three Army divisions, two Air Force fighter wings, and one Marine Corps expeditionary force. Military units are generally expected to have at least 70 percent of their equipment requirements on hand.

The units we visited had all their required individual protective equipment (such as suits, boots, and gloves) and most chemical and biological

[2] U.S. General Accounting Office, *Chemical and Biological Defense: Units Better Equipped, but Training and Readiness Reporting Problems Remain*, GAO-01-27 (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 14, 2000).

medical supplies and detection and decontamination equipment needed to operate in a chemically or biologically contaminated environment. In the medical arena, the Army divisions had all their needed medical supplies. The Air Force wings had most of their medical supplies, but we noted shortages of some critical items. For example, one wing had only 25 percent of the protective masks required to treat contaminated patients and only 48 percent of required patient decontamination kits. The units we visited had shortages in detection and decontamination equipment, but these shortages varied both across and within the services. For example, one Marine Corps unit and one Air Force unit had 31 percent and 50 percent, respectively, of their chemical agent monitors, whereas the other Air Force unit had 100 percent of its monitors. The three Army units we reviewed had between 88 and 103 percent of their requirements for the same item. Officials at the units with shortages of equipment said that when the units deploy, the shortages would be filled from stocks held by later deployers or from war reserves. However, the units had not determined whether this solution would meet their equipment requirements or what impact this action might have on the later deploying units' capabilities or on war reserves. The medical readiness of some units to conduct operations in a contaminated environment therefore remained questionable.

Training Deficiencies Persist

Chemical and biological defense training continues to be a problem area. We reported in 1996 that commanders were not integrating chemical and biological defense into unit exercises and that the training was not always realistic in terms of how units would operate in wartime. For example, Marine Corps commanders did not fully integrate chemical and biological defense into unit exercises, as required by Marine Corps policies, because operating in protective equipment is difficult and time consuming and this (1) decreases the number of combat essential tasks that can be performed during an exercise and (2) limits offensive combat operations. Officials stated that chemical and biological defense training is still being adversely impacted by (1) a shortage of chemical and biological defense specialists and (2) the fact that these specialists are often assigned multiple responsibilities unrelated to their specialties. For example, Army units we reviewed had from 76 to 102 percent of their authorized enlisted chemical personnel and from 75 to 88 percent of their chemical officers. The Marine Corps unit we visited had 84 percent of its authorized enlisted chemical specialists and 80 percent of its chemical officers.

Reporting Has Improved, but Changes are Incomplete

We also reported that DOD's monitoring of chemical and biological defense readiness has improved since our 1996 report. In April 2000, the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed changes to the Status of Resources and Training System that would require units to report more clearly on the quantity of chemical and biological equipment on hand and on training readiness. However, we noted the changes do not require that units report on the condition of their chemical and biological defense equipment. Thus, these reports could indicate that a unit had its chemical and biological equipment, but they would not show whether this equipment was serviceable.

Continuing Problems Confront DOD's Coordination of Research and Development Programs

We have issued a series of reports that address DOD's coordination of chemical and biological defense research and development programs. For example, in September 1998 we reported on DOD's approach to addressing U.S. troop exposures to low levels of chemical warfare agents.[3] Low-level exposure is a concern because it may potentially cause or contribute to health problems that may not become evident for years after exposure. Specifically, we reported that:

- DOD did not have an integrated strategy to address exposure to low levels of chemical warfare agents.
- Past research by DOD and others indicated that single and repeated low- level exposures to some chemical warfare agents could result in adverse psychological, physiological, behavioral, and performance effects that may have military implications. We also highlighted limitations of the current research.
- DOD had allocated nearly $10 million (about 1.5 percent) of its chemical and biological defense research, development, testing, and evaluation program to fund projects on low-level chemical warfare agent exposures.

In August 1999 we reported on the coordination of federal research and development efforts to develop nonmedical technology related to chemical and biological defense, an issue that DOD has not addressed

[3] U.S. General Accounting Office, *Chemical Weapons: DOD Does Not Have a Strategy to Address Low-Level Exposures* GAO/NSIAD-98-228 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 23, 1998).

until recently.[4] We identified four programs engaged in activities ranging from applied research to prototype development: two of these programs developed technologies primarily for military war fighting applications, and two others developed technologies primarily to assist civilians responding to terrorist incidents. We concluded that the formal and informal program coordination mechanisms may not ensure that potential overlaps, gaps, and opportunities for collaboration would be addressed. We highlighted that agency officials were aware of the deficiencies in the existing coordination mechanisms and that some had initiated additional informal contacts.

We are currently reviewing the effectiveness of DOD's research and testing activities in providing the scientific information needed to address doctrinal, policy, and procedural shortcomings affecting DOD's ability to operate in a chemically contaminated environment, as well as DOD's approach to ensure the survivability of mission-essential systems in the case of a chemical or biological attack. DOD's work in this area is crucial for developing the means to assure the restoration of operations in the event of chemical and biological attacks on U.S. forces at critical overseas depots, ports, and airfields.

Concerns Remain Regarding DOD's Inventory of Protective Clothing

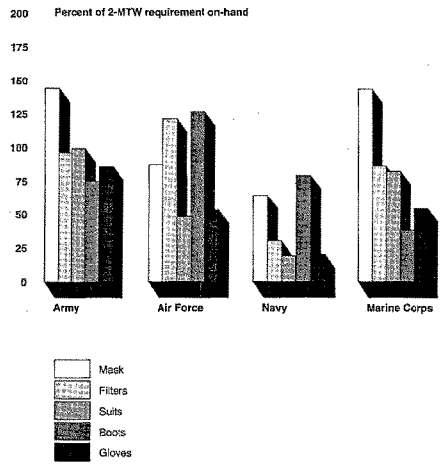
Individual protection is a critically important component of the overall chemical and biological defense program. DOD has recognized that military service members may not be able to avoid exposure to chemical and biological agents and has consequently provided U.S. forces with individual protective equipment, including clothing ensembles. We have conducted several recent reviews on this subject and are continuing to focus on DOD's acquisition and management of this equipment because of the potential for increased risks in this area. Specifically, our primary concerns involve DOD's (1) process for assessing the risk of wartime protective equipment shortages, (2) plans for addressing projected suit shortages due to the expiration by 2007 of most of the existing inventory, and (3) related inventory management and business practices. After updating equipment status and trends, we will discuss our recent reports and ongoing work in this area.

[4] U.S. General Accounting Office, *Chemical and Biological Defense: Coordination of Nonmedical Chemical and Biological R&D Programs* GAO/NSIAD-99-160 (Washington, D.C.: Aug. 16, 1999).

Current Inventory Status and Trends

Until recently, DOD calculated its chemical and biological defense equipment needs in one of two ways: by assessing either how much would be needed to prevail in two nearly simultaneous major theater wars (often referred to as the "2-MTW" requirement), or how much would be needed to fight two MTWs as well as maintaining supplies for peacetime and training use, the "total service requirement." In its most recent Annual Report to Congress, for example, DOD reported both inventory and these requirements for each item as of the end of fiscal year 2001. The report shows that several items, particularly in Navy stocks, qualify as "high-risk;" that is, less than 70 percent of needed equipment is on hand. Other items, such as masks, are "low-risk;" that is, the services have more than 85 percent of the needed equipment on hand. (We have been able to update some of the data, in which we generally found only modest changes from the data we show here.) Figure 1 shows these inventory levels, by service, for key components of the protective clothing ensemble.

Figure 1: Individual Protective Clothing Inventory, End of Fiscal Year 2001



Source: Chemical and Biological Defense Program Report to Congress, April 2002.

Process for Assessing Risk is Flawed

We found, though, that the raw data may understate the real risk because the method that DOD has used to calculate risk may be flawed. In September 2001, we reported that DOD's criteria for assessing the risk of wartime shortages for protective clothing are unreliable. At that time we found that DOD had inaccurately reported the risk in most cases as "low." We reported that the process for determining risk is fundamentally flawed because (1) DOD determines requirements by individual pieces of protective equipment — suits, masks, breathing filters, gloves, boots, and hoods — rather than by the number of complete protective ensembles that can be provided to deploying service members, and (2) the process for determining risk combines individual service requirements and reported inventory data into general categories, masking specific critical shortages that affect individual service readiness. Had DOD assessed the risk on the

basis of the number of complete ensembles it had available, by service, the risk would have risen to "high" for all of the services.

Suit Inventory May be Insufficient to Meet Requirements

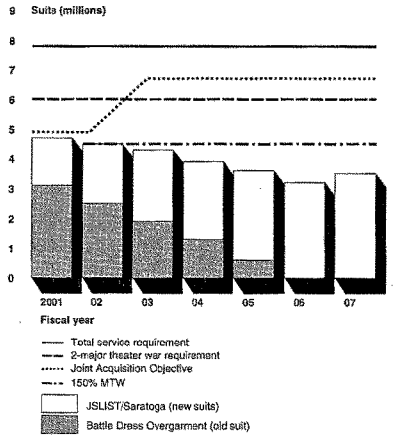
As a result of the September 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review, DOD has begun to reexamine its requirements. At present, there are several requirements levels against which inventory is measured. Official reports have commonly used the "2 Major Theater War" and the "Total Service Requirement" standards. New interim guidance indicates that DOD should be able to fully meet conflict equipment needs in one theater, while meeting only partial requirements in another. This requirement, which is expected to be finalized when DOD publishes the Illustrative Planning Scenario annex to its Defense Planning Guidance, is referred to as the "150 percent of an MTW" option.

Whatever the official requirement, the risk to U.S. forces may be increasing for two reasons. First, DOD has not yet revised its risk assessment process to consider ensemble needs and service imbalances. Second, suit shortages are projected to escalate in the next few years because (1) the majority of suits in the current inventory will reach the end of their useful life and expire by 2007, and (2) new Joint Service Lightweight Integrated Suit Technology (JSLIST) suits, along with other new generation protective ensemble components such as gloves and boots, are not entering the inventory as quickly as originally planned. Consequently, the old suits are expiring faster than they are being replaced.

We are concerned that some ensemble components, particularly suits, may not be available in adequate numbers to meet near-term minimum requirements. As of August 30, 2002, DOD had procured about 1.5 million of the new JSLIST suits, of which the majority were issued to the military services. (Others are held in Defense Logistics Agency reserves, provided to foreign governments under the Foreign Military Sales program, or allocated to domestic uses.) Together with the existing inventory of earlier-generation suits, we estimate that DOD has a total of 4.5 million suits. This level is now barely sufficient to meet the new requirement to supply 150 percent of an MTW. It is far below the Army-chaired Joint Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Defense Board requirement, called the Joint Acquisition Objective, which combines elements of DOD and service calculations. If new suit funding and production does not increase sufficiently to replace the expiring suits, the inventory will even drop below minimal needs for the 150 percent of an MTW requirement until at

least 2007. The risk for protective clothing shortages may therefore increase dramatically during this period. Figure 2 illustrates this trend.

Figure 2. Trends in Suit Procurement and Requirements



Note: The Joint Acquisition Objective increased in 2002. This estimate assumes that none of the suits counted as available in FY 2002 has already expired or is defective.

Sources: DOD Chemical and Biological Defense Research, Development and Acquisition Plan, April 2002; Program Strategy Guidance; GAO data analysis.

Inventory Management Practices Prevent Accurate Risk Assessment

Inadequate management of inventory is an additional risk factor because readiness can be compromised by DOD's inventory management practices, which prevent an accurate accounting of availability or adequacy of DOD's protective equipment. The practices we identified regarding inventories of chemical and biological equipment contribute to the development of erroneous inventory data that in turn affect the accuracy of the risk assessment. Specifically, we reported the following:

- DOD could not monitor the status of the entire inventory of protective equipment because the services and the Defense Logistics Agency use

at least nine different systems of inventory management with differing data fields to manage suit inventories. The systems' records contain data that cannot be easily linked.

- DOD could not determine whether its older suits would adequately protect service members because some of the systems' records omit essential data on suit expiration.
- DOD could not easily identify, track, and locate defective suits because inventory records do not always include contract and lot numbers. In May 2000, DOD directed units and depots to locate 778,924 defective suits produced by a single manufacturer; as of July 2002, as many as 250,000 of these suits remained unaccounted for.
- DOD counted new suits as on hand before they had been delivered and consequently overstated the actual inventory. In response to one of our report recommendations, DOD now reports "on hand" and "due-in" suits separately in its Annual Program Report to the Congress.

DOD's Business Processes Remain Inefficient

We have also testified before this Committee as part of our work on the need for DOD to reform its business operations.[5] We noted that inventory management procedures related to JSLIST suits, systems, and processes result in DOD, the military services, and military units not knowing how many items they have and where they are located.

DOD's business processes for procuring, controlling, and paying for JSLIST suits rely on manual data transmission and entry into nonintegrated data systems. We identified 128 processing steps performed by 11 DOD components, such as the Defense Logistics Agency, Defense Finance and Accounting Service, and the military services. Of the 128 steps, 100 steps, or 78 percent, involved manual entry or re-entry of data into one or more of the 13 nonintegrated data systems supporting the JSLIST processes. However, the complex, nonintegrated, error-prone process precludes DOD from being able to quickly and accurately identify the suits' location and condition.

[5] U.S. General Accounting Office, *DOD Management: Examples of Inefficient and Ineffective Business Processes*, GAO-02-873T (Washington, D.C.: June 25, 2002).

Further, at the military units that GAO visited, the methods used to control and maintain visibility over JSLIST suits issued to them ranged from automated information systems, to spreadsheet applications, to paper, to dry eraser board, to none. The data maintained also varied. Some units maintained specific data, including manufacturer, manufacture date, and production lot number, while other units maintained little or no data. DOD is now taking steps to correct this problem and improve asset visibility at all levels. As recently as 2000 there was no single office that tracked all JSLIST suit production and fielding DOD-wide, for example, and the annual report to Congress was compiled by data calls to each individual service and major command within the services. Now there is such an office: the Marine Corps, in its role as commodity area manager for individual protection, can report new production of JSLIST ensemble items (suits, boots, and gloves) and the services to which they have been fielded. Our work to date has found that the Marine Corps program office has established an effective system for managing this information.

Program Review Underway

We are currently reviewing factors related to JSLIST production and the implications of the removal of the expiring suits from the inventory. Our work will (1) evaluate whether DOD's requirements and activities for acquiring and sustaining chemical protective equipment provide the military with sufficient usable chemical and biological protective clothing ensembles; (2) assess DOD's current risk assessment, testing, development, and production procedures; and (3) evaluate the effectiveness of DOD's actions to mitigate any shortfalls. We plan to report our results early next year.

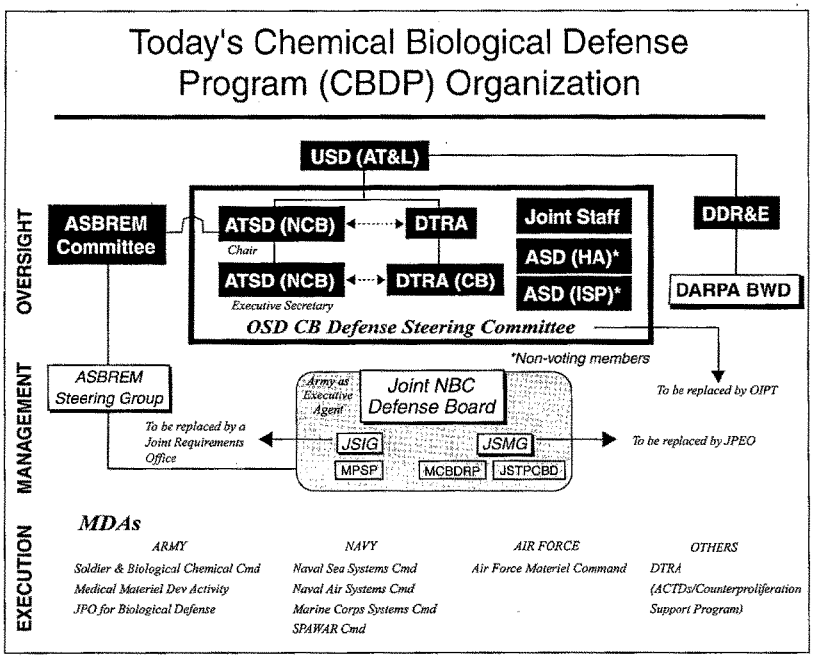
Observations on Program Management

Our body of work over 7 years highlights a serious gap between the priority given chemical and biological defense by DOD and the actual implementation of the program. Both the 1997 and 2001 Quadrennial Defense Reviews identified chemical and biological defense as key priorities of the Department of Defense. Although the program overall is clearly improved and better funded since 1995, many of the problems we previously reported still have not been resolved. We are concerned that DOD's efforts to implement this program are not consistent with the emphasis given to it in overall department guidance. Organization complexity, vacancies in key positions, and priority conflicts are all factors that have contributed to program difficulties and, if not resolved, will continue to weaken DOD's management of this program.

Program Organizational Complexity

The management of the Chemical and Biological Defense program is diffuse, with numerous offices and activities responsible for separate aspects, notwithstanding the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1994's (P.L. 103-160) attempt to bring oversight under one organizational authority. Concurrence on program direction is therefore sometimes difficult to achieve. This act required the Secretary of Defense to assign responsibility for overall coordination and integration of the Chemical and Biological Defense program to a single office within the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), and to designate the Army as executive agent to coordinate and integrate the chemical and biological research, development, test and evaluation, and acquisition requirements of the military departments. Although this office was established shortly thereafter, many aspects of DOD's management of chemical and biological defense remain spread between this office, the military services, and other DOD organizations. Furthermore, each individual service also has numerous offices devoted to various aspects of chemical and biological defense, including planning, logistics, and acquisition. The services purchase their own consumable items such as protective suit replacements under their role of managing their own operations and maintenance funds; a process over which OSD has limited visibility. Figure 3 depicts the current organization for DOD's management of its Chemical and Biological Defense Program (CBDP), as well as some of the changes now being implemented or under consideration.

Figure 3. Current CBDP Organization and Potential Changes



Source: DOD.

The OSD office at the Assistant Secretary level that is charged with overall coordination of the Chemical and Biological Defense Program also went through upheaval during the latter part of the 1990s. The position was initially slated for elimination under the terms of the 1997 Defense Reform Initiative (DRI). As a result of the DRI, OSD oversight functions were

transferred to a different staff office within the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Director, Defense Research and Engineering), while management and most staffing of the program were transferred to a directorate within the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA). This directorate, in turn, has had five directors in less than 4 years.

Vacancies in Key OSD Positions

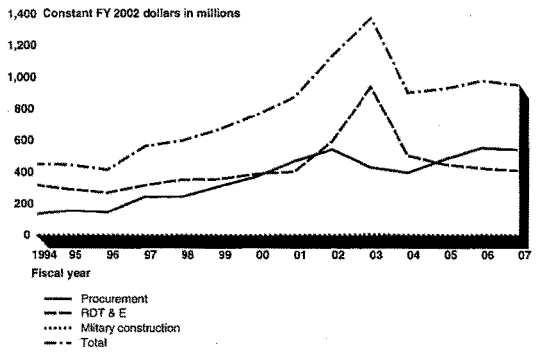
We also believe that the emphasis DOD placed on the Chemical and Biological Defense Program was adversely affected by the absence of leadership at the Assistant Secretary level for nearly 4 years. In accordance with P.L. 103-160, the Secretary designated the Assistant to the Secretary for Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological Defense (ATSD) as the principal officer responsible for oversight and coordination of the program. However, this position was vacant from 1998 through late 2001. The Deputy ATSD, who exercises day-to-day oversight over the program, was also vacant for more than a year during that period. We believe these OSD vacancies adversely affected the high-level attention received by the program as well as its ability to compete for funding against other defense needs, thereby sending a message throughout the Department about the relative priority and importance attached to the program.

Competing Priorities

DOD has requested almost $1.4 billion for the Chemical and Biological Defense Program in fiscal year 2003 — more than three times the fiscal year 1994 amount. Nevertheless, the program has consistently had difficulty competing against other service priorities, such as those associated with traditional mission tasks. Despite the emphasis placed on this program by the Quadrennial Defense Review, spending on chemical and biological defense represents about a third of a percent of the entire $369 billion DOD budget request.

DOD officials and field commanders alike have repeatedly stressed that they must balance chemical and biological defense requirements against all other defense needs, and do so within a constrained budget environment. For example, as we reported in 1996, officers have cited other-than-war deployments, quality of life considerations, and peacetime medical care as higher priorities than chemical and biological defense. We have previously recommended that chemical and biological defense needed direct representation by a general officer on the Joint Staff in order to receive the appropriate program emphasis and support. DOD has recently implemented this change. It remains to be seen what the effect of this change will be. Figure 4 shows the growth in Chemical and Biological Defense Program funding since fiscal year 1994.

Figure 4. Funding for Chemical and Biological Defense Program



Note: FY 2002 includes $0.7 million for military construction and FY 2003 includes $5.0 million for military construction. The peak in FY 2003 is caused by inclusion in the CBDP budget of $420 million to support Office of Homeland Security biodefense projects and $56 million for installation force protection.

Source: DOD.

There is also competition within the program between the main categories of research and development and procurement.[6] At present, some components of the clothing ensemble, such as the JSLIST glove and next-generation mask, are in the developmental phase; others, like the JSLIST suit, are in procurement. In deciding how much money to allocate to each of the various categories and specific projects, DOD relies on the Joint Priority List, which integrates and rank-orders the preferences of combatant commanders for all chemical and biological equipment needs. On this year's Joint Priority List, for example, the JSLIST suit ranked 35 out of 72 items. Biodetection capabilities occupied the first spaces on that list. In fiscal year 2003, $96 million is earmarked for the procurement of JSLIST suits. Conflicts over internal program priorities thus can also affect issues such as shortages of JSLIST suits.

[6] Small sums are also spent on military construction projects.

Conclusion

DOD has made improvements over the years to defend against and sustain operations in the midst of chemical and biological weapons use. These gains have been primarily in the areas of equipment, training, and readiness reporting. During the past 6 years, DOD has concurred or partially concurred with 36 of the 37 recommendations contained in the GAO reports referred to in this testimony, and initiated or completed action on many of these. DOD recognizes that the management and organization of the program needs improvement and has recently proposed organizational and other changes designed to address many of the shortcomings we identified in prior reports. In particular, DOD recently approved the establishment of a Joint Requirements office within the Joint Staff and named a general officer as its director.

However, a real gap remains between the priority and emphasis given chemical and biological defense by DOD and the actual implementation of the program. Many needed improvements remain to be realized. Furthermore, we are concerned that without the leadership and commitment of the department to address the long term conditions we have identified, the service members of our country may be at risk in a contaminated environment. I would be pleased to respond to any questions that you have.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you. Before calling on Mr. Kucinich, I just mentioned to Mr. Kucinich that I just wanted to make a few points. We, after the Gulf war, which I supported, we had men and women who came back convinced that they were negatively impacted by their service to our country in the Gulf war and that they were ill.

Eventually we identified about 70,000 men and women who came home ill, and I became chairman of the Human Resource Committee in 1995, where we had jurisdiction of the Department of Veterans Affairs. We began intense hearings, where Mr. Tierney and Mr. Kucinich also became involved during the course of the years that followed.

I want to say on the record that when we talk about this issue, it is a very sensitive issue, not just in terms of national security, but it is sensitive to me because I have felt that we have never really, until recently, had honest answers from the Department of Defense.

For instance, there were questions of whether our troops were exposed to chemical weapons. The Department of Defense would say they were not exposed to offensive chemical weapons. We never picked up the word, until we had a gentleman who came and testified before our committee and came with a video as they blew up Kamisiyah, and he had pictures of—videos of blowing up of Kamisiyah, but also some of the canisters of chemicals and the shelves of chemicals and the rockets that had chemicals in them which we blew up.

We announced that we were going to have a hearing on Tuesday the week before, and DOD announced at 12 o'clock they were going to have a press conference at 4 o'clock in which they then had a press conference announcing our troops were exposed to defensive use of chemicals.

Frankly, we didn't see much of a difference, but I guess offensive and defensive was the way that DOD was able to be technically correct in the answer to our questions. So it made us realize that we had to dig deeper. During the course of these hearings as well, we learned that some protective headgear, masks, did not meet the manufacturer's specs, they didn't—35 of one mask didn't and 45 of another, approximately 45, were defective brand new in terms of meeting the level.

It took us about 8 or 9 years to have that report declassified, and what was troubling to me was that I knew that our troops, during the course of this time, would potentially be engaged in other combat missions. I knew that there was a real debate in the DOD about whether these masks would really do the jobs that they required.

Now, I understand that DOD was taking issue with the Inspector General. I think it was the Inspector General's report about the viability of these masks. But I just put on the record that every Member up here has to decide whether or not to send our troops to war, and we have to live with it.

And for me it becomes particularly sensitive, because I was in the Peace Corps and a conscientious objector and wasn't in Vietnam and now I am being asked to decide whether people risk their lives. And I will say for the record, just so I can get past that point, I determined during the Gulf war that I had to know what our mis-

sion was, that I had to know what our strategy was, that I had to know that we would use all of the fire power necessary.

I first had to know what our national interest was, what our mission, what our strategy, and then know that we would use whatever firepower was necessary to guarantee the success of our mission and also in the end know whether exit policy was total victory or whether it was something less, and that we would then leave.

I merely mention this because this is a very sensitive issue, and my colleagues in the part of asking you questions are really trying to determine, I think, not just whether we should confront Saddam Hussein, but if we do, what are we asking our military personnel to do?

And I will just say in conclusion that I hope and pray that if in fact there are some vulnerabilities to our troops, and they are still required to go in, that they at least are told their vulnerabilities, that they are at least told them. Maybe not the general public, maybe not the enemy, but at least our own people will have no illusions.

I thank my colleagues for the opportunity to just make that point.

Mr. Kucinich, you have the floor for 10 minutes. And then I will go to either one of my colleagues, then I will go, and then we will go back.

Mr. KUCINICH. You know, I think that the Chair is well taken in his prefatory remarks here. I want to express my appreciation for them. Because, for me, it gets to the issue of, you know, would the American people support action against Iraq which could put their sons and daughters in harm's way if they knew that there was a distinct possibility that their sons and daughters could go into combat with defective gear, with biological and chemical weapon suits that are supposed to protect them that don't work, that have holes in them, that have holes in the seams.

I wonder if this isn't one of the reasons why the Department of Defense is classifying the information? And as we proceed here with the questions, Mr. Chairman, I want to say, as the ranking Democrat on this subcommittee that has oversight over national security, that I am very concerned about the reasons for classification of information relating to the safety of this protective gear and to the inability of the Department of Defense to determine where those quarter of a million, 250,000, defective suits happen to be.

Now, Mr. Chairman, you probably are familiar that yesterday something remarkable happened at the Pentagon's briefing room. Because what they did was to—for years, the media covering the Pentagon has been asking to see footage of engagements in Iraq's Northern and Southern no-fly zones. For years these requests were denied.

Well, Pentagon officials had said that showing such films would comprise intelligence, provide the enemy with valuable information about tactics and technology, worst of all endanger the pilots.

Well, yesterday what happened? The Pentagon showed several of these films, engagements with Iraqi surface-to-air missiles and other anti-aircraft. Tapes were suddenly declassified. I am just wondering if we are not getting here into the politics of classification. There is another element here, too.

Now I remember how proud this country was to see the Challenger lift off the pad, and then how horrified we were when it blew up. And then in the subsequent investigations I remember distinctly a discussion about concerns that were expressed in circles about these O-rings, about whether there was sufficient protection and whether the O-rings were ready for the launch.

And we know what happened. So are we about to launch a war against Iraq where our troops are not protected? Now, and one final note before I get into the questions, Mr. Chairman. You know, if the Department of Defense is unwilling to be forthcoming on something so elementary as the safety of protective suits, suits that would protect our men and women, our sons and daughters, from a biological or chemical weapons attack, what other areas, what other areas are we not knowing about? Is this one of the reasons why some of our most esteemed generals are saying, don't go there, we are not ready?

Mr. Schmitz, General Myers testified 2 weeks ago that the military is prepared to fight in a chemical and biological weapons environment, trained for it and ready to deal with it. I would like to ask you about that.

Based on your investigations, are there specific military units that are essentially completely unprotected against a potential chemical or biological attack?

Mr. SCHMITZ. I think my best answer, and I will defer to my technical experts here, because I have only been on the job for 4 months and most of the audits occurred before I took office, but my best answer is that we have not concluded in our audit that there are any completely unprotected units.

There is no such thing as complete protection in these type of issues. We have identified areas of improvement. But I guess the straight answer to your question is, no, I think is the way you phrase it. If you phrased it, are there any completely unprotected units?

Mr. KUCINICH. Are there any completely unprotected units?

Mr. SCHMITZ. I don't believe we have identified any such.

Mr. KUCINICH. And did you find specific military units that do not currently have sufficient protective equipment to meet the minimum requirements established by the services to protect against a chemical or biological weapons attack?

Mr. SCHMITZ. I think that question gets into the classified discussion. I'll be perfectly glad to discuss that in detail.

Mr. KUCINICH. Let me ask you again. I want to ask it again, just it case—you said you think it does, just in case you think it doesn't.

Did you find specific military units that do not currently have sufficient protective equipment to meet even minimum requirements to protect against a chemical or biological attack?

Mr. SCHMITZ. I think that question, with all respect, is better for the closed session.

Mr. KUCINICH. So you're saying it's classified and you can't discuss it?

Mr. SCHMITZ. Yes, sir.

Let me also just clarify one thing. The misuse of the classification system is a serious issue in my view. And I would like to just say on the record that I classified this report. And the allegation

that the DOD is using the classification process—I mean, we go by the guidelines set by the DOD. This is a very, very serious issue about protecting the lives of our members of the Armed Forces. But if you——

Mr. KUCINICH. That's very interesting. So are you telling me that we should—are you ready to tell the American people that their sons and daughters who may go into combat are going to be perfectly safe with the biological and chemical weapons suits that they'll be wearing? Are you ready to say that?

Mr. SCHMITZ. What I said is that——

Mr. KUCINICH. Can you answer that question, Mr. Schmitz?

Mr. SCHMITZ. The answer is no, because there is no such thing as perfect safety in warfare.

Mr. KUCINICH. You gave a no answer to my question. I thank you for being honest.

Mr. SHAYS. Can I just—the issue is sensitive. I do think a Member should be able to define what—define what no means; otherwise, we would have a distortion.

Mr. KUCINICH. If he wants to say what no means. We're in a city where no doesn't always mean no, and yes doesn't always mean yes. So what does your no mean?

Mr. SCHMITZ. I'll defer to the closed session, and I'll be glad to get—be perfectly forthright and allow my technical experts to answer every single question you have, because I believe the American people are entitled to know. But I also take very, very seriously the proper utilization of classification. And if you have, Mr. Ranking—if you have an a serious allegation that somebody in the Department of Defense is misusing the classification process——

Mr. KUCINICH. Wait a minute.

Mr. Chairman, this is inappropriate. I didn't make any allegations.

I'm making statements based on your testimony and you just told me that you can't answer the question. And the chairman came back and said, we want to know what no means. You just told me and anybody watching that you can't say what no means——

Mr. SHAYS. If the gentleman would—no, I don't think he was saying, if you had that impression, you wanted a yes or no answer. He was just qualifying his no answer just so we put it in perspective. That's all I'm saying.

I would not want to be up where these gentleman are and have a no or yes answer. I would want to be able to say yes or no and be able to explain why.

I'd also like to say, if I could, that there is so much information that is valuable and important on the record, I just want to make sure we don't lose the opportunity of getting what can be on the record on the record, besides also disclosing what can't be on the record.

I'm not taking it from the gentleman's time. I want to say that I hope that we put on—as much information on the record as we can. And it's substantial.

Mr. KUCINICH. I might add, Mr. Chairman, and with the greatest respect for the Chair, they're in a difficult position?

You're in a difficult position?

If there's a single American serviceman or servicewoman who is out in the field with a defective suit, I think they're the ones who are in a difficult position. When you have a quarter million suits that haven't been located that are defective, they're the ones that could be in a difficult position.

Mr. Schmitz, again, are there specific military units that currently do not meet minimum required levels of training to protect against a chemical or biological attack?

Mr. SCHMITZ. Mr. Ranking, let me just clarify one thing. I didn't mean to provoke an argument. I was actually making an offer——

Mr. KUCINICH. There is no argument here. We're all hire for America.

Mr. SCHMITZ. I agree 100 percent. I'm making an offer to you that if you have a specific allegation about the Department of Defense misusing the classification system, my office is empowered by statute to look into that as an allegation.

I'm saying I would be glad to consider such an allegation and look into it. That was a sincere offer to you, Mr. Kucinich, to actually be of service.

Mr. KUCINICH. I take that as an effort—I appreciate your assertion of sincerity. I'm sincerely interested in finding out if there are any unsafe suits out there that are going to be worn by American servicemen and women.

Mr. SCHMITZ. That is an issue I'd like to get into, any details you'd like to get into, in the classified session.

Mr. KUCINICH. See, this is wrong. I just want to say this.

I really find this, Mr. Chairman—that this is wrong. That information that the American people need to know if their sons and daughters are going to be sent into battle with defective suits, that ought to be public knowledge. Should we find out after it happens?

Mr. SCHMITZ. Let me say, and I believe this is proper to say in an open session, our studies, our audits, have found deficiencies. So the answer to your question generally is yes; the specifics are what I'm not prepared to get into in an open session because that essentially exposes vulnerabilities. That's exactly why we have classification.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate you giving me this opportunity to ask the questions. And it is a matter of record that we had a yes answer. And it's also a matter of record that information that is classified could bear on the safety of our men and women in the field.

Mr. SHAYS. Let me say to all the panelists before calling on either Mr. Tierney—or I can go, if you're ready, Mr. Gilman, I could go with you, but I'd be happy to have you wait a little longer if you could wait.

Mr. GILMAN. I'd like to make a statement and one question.

Mr. SHAYS. We'll allow that.

It's going to be a long day today. I want to assure all our witnesses that I don't want you to leave that table until you make sure the record is clear as to your position, and you will be allowed to make sure that whatever you need to put on the record will be put on the record. I do not want this open hearing to not put on as much information as possible.

So make notes of things that need to be classified, so defined and so on. I'd be happy to go to you, Mr. Gilman.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SHAYS. You're not going to be asking questions, right, yet?

Mr. GILMAN. I have one question.

Mr. SHAYS. You have 10 minutes. Statement and question. You have 10 minutes.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for conducting this important hearing. And you've been conducting a number of important hearings with regard to our readiness and our ability to respond to any crisis out there.

This is a timely and appropriate hearing to examine the status of our Department of Defense chemical and biological defense programs. It takes on special importance, given that it now appears inevitable that we're going to undertake some major military operations against Iraq in the near future.

The last time American forces went into action against Iraq during the Gulf war in 1991, they faced a battlefield that could be best described as a toxic soup of chemical and biological hazards. And while Saddam did not actively use chemical or biological agents against coalition forces, such weapons that were forward deployed in a number of cases were destroyed by allied bombardment.

It was several years later that our subcommittee learned that through the subsequent destruction of these chemical stockpiles that thousands of coalition troops were exposed to low levels of resident agents. Moreover, when combined with the haphazard and disorganized vaccine effort, smoke from the numerous oil well fires, from natural biological hazards indigenous to the region and exposure to depleted uranium, it was no wonder that thousands of soldiers later found themselves suffering from various ailments and conditions related to that kind of exposure. I hope we've learned from that lesson.

My concern today is the hazards facing our service members should we force a confrontation with Saddam Hussein and his military. Facing removal from power, I fear he will have every incentive to use all of the various chemical and biological weapons at his disposal. While respectful of the effort made by the U.N. weapons inspectors, I'm in no way confident that they were able to account for all of Saddam's weapons before they were forced out in 1998.

Moreover, Saddam Hussein has clearly been busy in building his weapon armaments in the past 4 years. If this administration decides to commit the necessary force and treasure to overthrow the present Government of Iraq, a decision that I would fully support, then it needs to ensure that those forces are prepared to face any contingency, including a desperate enemy with a history that's deployed chemical weapons in military operations in the past.

I look forward to hearing additional testimony from our witnesses with regard to these concerns, but let me pose a question for the panel.

What has the Department of Defense done to improve the availability, the durability and suitability of CB defense equipment since the 1991 Gulf war?

And, second, what has the Department of Defense done to ensure deployed U.S. forces will not experience shortages in CB defense equipment?

Mr. Schmitz, panel?

Mr. SCHMITZ. Yes. Thank you, Mr. Gilman.

Our audits indicate that each of the services has, in fact, initiated a number of measures both in inventory control and training in order to improve and to learn on the lessons of the Gulf war.

Mr. GILMAN. Is that your full answer?

Mr. SCHMITZ. Well, I have much more detail in both my classified and unclassified reports.

Mr. GILMAN. Tell us some more about your unclassified.

Mr. SCHMITZ. If I could, Mr. Gilman, I'd like to defer to the person that actually wrote the report.

Mr. GILMAN. That may be——

Mr. SHAYS. There's no problem if you ever need one of the experts to respond. You just do it.

Mr. SCHMITZ. OK. Mr. Bloomer, I'd like him to actually address the question directly. He's in a much better position.

Mr. BLOOMER. We found that——

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Bloomer, we want that mic a little closer to you. Let me just say we want the people who know the answer to the question to answer the question, whoever that is.

Mr. BLOOMER. We found that the services had begun implementing more vigorous training programs. There are still improvements that can be made, don't misunderstand me, but where we stand today versus where we stood at the conclusion of the Gulf war is much better in terms of the training programs that are in existence right now.

In terms of equipment availability, they've made great strides in providing equipment.

But, again, there are improvements that can still be made.

Mr. GILMAN. What kind of improvements are still needed?

Mr. BLOOMER. I would defer to the afternoon session, if I may, for the classified discussion.

Mr. GILMAN. Are you satisfied that the improvements that are being made are significant? Or are there some pretty serious needs to be fulfilled?

Mr. BLOOMER. They've made significant improvements, but there are still some needs that need to be fulfilled.

Mr. GILMAN. When did they start making the improvements that you're referring to?

Mr. BLOOMER. Well, we've been working in this area since 1994, and we've seen them progress each year as we've gone through the process. So it's been a continuous improvement.

Mr. GILMAN. So working since 1994, you still find that there are major improvements that have to be made; is that correct?

Mr. BLOOMER. Yes.

Mr. GILMAN. Does anyone else want to comment on my question?

Mr. STEENSMA. Let me say this, sir. One of the things that we would—is needed, and it's needed not for just this area, but almost every area in DOD is, they need constant emphasis at all levels of command, from the lowest level up to the Secretary of Defense, that this is going to be the highest priority. And it's hard for every

commander—he has different priorities he has to address every day, he has different levels of funding that he has available, and he makes tradeoffs every day.

But those commanders we've seen that have taken this on, such as the naval commander in Bahrain there, gave it the highest level of emphasis. That's where we've seen the greatest improvements.

Mr. GILMAN. What about other commanders besides the commander at Bahrain? Are they fulfilling your needs?

Mr. STEENSMA. The Central Commander, he wrote us a letter; Mr. Schmitz mentions in his testimony, he is tremendously interested in this area. He thanked us for the work we've done. He put heavy emphasis on his commanders to improve any areas we found weaknesses in, and to address it at, I believe he also said, at all levels of command.

Mr. GILMAN. So were other commanders following that kind of advice? Are other commanders following that?

Or you pointed out two commanders. What about throughout the armed services?

Mr. BLOOMER. I would say that throughout the armed services we've seen it receive increased emphasis again as we've gone through the process. Is it at the level that we believe it should be? There's still room for improvement. But that has increased emphasis.

Mr. GILMAN. Does that indicate that there are commanders who are not fulfilling that request? Would any of the panelists answer that.

Mr. SCHMITZ. Let me just say this is a leadership issue. We have identified—and frankly, this subcommittee's hearings have helped us in bringing this issue to the attention of the leadership in the Pentagon from the very top to the field commanders. It is one of those issues that you just continuously have to remind people of because, as Mr. Steensma said, the commanders are always balancing priorities.

So we are very—we in the IG business are very appreciative to this subcommittee for holding this hearing.

Mr. GILMAN. I appreciate your support of our hearings, but I'm asking you a question.

Are there other field commanders out there who are not abiding by the request of the Department?

Mr. SCHMITZ. I would best describe it, Mr. Gilman, as a sliding scale. We have identified two very stellar commanders who have taken our——

Mr. GILMAN. I've heard about that. What about the other commanders?

Mr. SCHMITZ. There are a myriad of them. We've looked at hundreds.

Mr. GILMAN. I realize you've got many out there. Are they abiding by the request of the Department to fulfill their preparedness in this—in the event of any chemical or biological attack?

Mr. SCHMITZ. As we said, many have room for improvement. I mean, there are some that have done it to better degrees than others. We are continuously focusing the attention of the leadership of the Pentagon on this subject. We're grateful because this hearing helps us do that.

Mr. GILMAN. That's why we're here. That's why I'm pressing these questions upon you, so that we can find out where the lack of attention is being expressed.

What about the shortages in CB defense equipment?

Mr. SCHMITZ. There is a—there's actually a good explanation for that.

Mr. GILMAN. What is that explanation?

Mr. SCHMITZ. It has to do with shelf life and not wanting to have everything expire at once.

But I will defer again to Mr. Bloomer as the technical expert, let him explain that to you.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Bloomer, what about the shortages in CB defense equipment?

Mr. BLOOMER. If I can talk about the new overgarments.

Mr. GILMAN. First, answer my question. Is there a shortage of CB defense equipment at the present time?

Mr. BLOOMER. Yes, we have found some items are in shortage.

Mr. GILMAN. What items?

Mr. BLOOMER. If I may, I'd like to answer that this afternoon.

Mr. GILMAN. All right. But there are important items of equipment that are in shortage at the present time?

Mr. BLOOMER. There are items that are in shortage.

Mr. GILMAN. What's being done to correct that?

Mr. BLOOMER. Services have implemented a number of programs to find, for example, additional vendors who can produce the items. We're trying to cycle the procurement of items, so they don't all expire at once, so we don't have shortages.

Mr. GILMAN. Are those shortages being made up at the present time?

Mr. BLOOMER. The services are working to resolve those shortages.

Mr. GILMAN. But there are still shortages?

Mr. BLOOMER. You—yes.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you.

I would just like to ask if the very back row in this room, if people are hear how the questions are being answered. I'm seeing nodding of heads.

Mr. Tierney, thank you for letting Mr. Gilman run over his 10 minutes.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think we're all looking to get some answers here, so I don't have any difficulty with the time constraints on that.

Mr. Schmitz, if I might, during your written testimony you indicated that you wanted to state that each of the services has a comprehensive training program that they believe—they believe will prepare their personnel to survive and operate in a chemically or biologically contaminated environment.

I believe—that's you speaking—you believe that they have put in place the foundation on which programs can be built that will provide for the protection and survivability of their personnel.

I'm led to believe by the phraseology there that they are not yet beyond the foundational level, and there's much more work to be

done in order for them to put in place some system to protect the survivability of their personnel. Am I right; they're a long way between the origins of a plan and the implementation?

Mr. SCHMITZ. As I mentioned, some of the services are more along that track.

Mr. TIERNEY. The Marine Corps and Air Force are further along than the Army and the Navy, according to your report. That's the next sentence here. How much further along?

Mr. SCHMITZ. I'm going to defer to Dave Steensma.

Mr. STEENSMA. They all have good programs. The Air Force and Marine Corps, they have definitely put a lot more emphasis onto it from the leadership level all the way down. And we've seen greater strengths to the way they've trained their people, both individually and selectively.

And I think the General Accounting Office mentioned, there's challenges doing the collective training which is trying to see how well somebody can do their job in a chemical environment—because the suits are hot, it restricts their movements, and things like that.

But I'll conclude my answer with that, sir.

Mr. TIERNEY. Does it concern you—it ought to concern you—that during the recent war games the Millennium Challenge 2002 they didn't get into the kind of exercises that deal with chemical or biological systems of usage?

Mr. STEENSMA. That would be of concern. I'm not familiar with those games, sir.

Mr. TIERNEY. Well, this report—and I haven't heard it contradicted yet—that we recently had those games, and as part of them, they withdrew from allowing the so-called enemy or the mock enemy forces from using chemical or biological agents on that.

Should that concern us that we're not even prepared to go through the exercises in an atmosphere that will simulate one that we might find in Iraq?

Mr. STEENSMA. That would be of concern to me, sir. I do not know why they didn't use the chemical and biological—attempt to use it during the exercise to see what happened in the scenarios they were running.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Decker, what do you say to that?

Mr. DECKER. Sir, I've not evaluated the Millennium 2002 in detail. But it would seem to be—if that is, in fact, true, that they did not employ chemical/biological as part of that war game—consistent with the comments that we heard from the field in our previous reports, that this is a very difficult issue to incorporate into your training.

It's time-consuming, you have to break out gear and use it, which means you may violate the integrity of the gear, putting it back into storage. This is something commanders do not typically like to do in the field.

Mr. TIERNEY. Well, can either—either of you gentlemen address the idea of how much we are lacking in the training of our troops to deal with this kind of a confrontation? Where are we on that?

I know, Mr. Schmitz, you indicated that you thought they'd be there by 2005 or something on that basis. I think we may be there a lot sooner than that in reality. So where are we in terms of training our troops?

Mr. SCHMITZ. I think it's fair to say that the senior-most levels of the Pentagon are focusing each of the services to accelerate their training so that we are prepared and ready, as best we can be, earlier than when my office got involved. We have made recommendations that they get, you know, their programs in place earlier, and we believe they're addressing and accepting our recommendations.

Mr. TIERNEY. Right. So my question to you is, when are—are they early enough? If this President decides to unilaterally and preemptively go in within the next matter of months, we're going to all of a sudden have all the training you need, where you left off at your report to where we need to be?

Mr. SCHMITZ. Let me say our reports are a snapshot in history. Based on our reports and the work that went into our reports, I don't have any real reason to doubt what General Myers said on the 1st, with the caveat that our troops are never going to be 100 percent protected or protectable from these type of threats.

Mr. TIERNEY. How about trained?

I'm very concerned that you left some shortages. Here you indicate that they've got the foundation on which programs can be built, but they're a long distance from actually getting it completed to the level of protection and survivability of the personnel. And then we find out they have Millennium Challenge 2002 games recently and don't even explore that area.

Mr. SCHMITZ. Let me just say this. We didn't look at Millennium Challenge 2002, but I know that we've had a training exercise in the Pentagon involving chemical/biological attacks and—I know that.

Mr. TIERNEY. But it brings me back to Mr. Decker's point that they're telling us, during those training exercises, they have great difficulties doing what they want to do in the training. They don't want to break the integrity of the units, which I understand.

So can the two of you together give us some idea of where we're at in terms of their having some training exercises, which you label as the foundation, but they're not apparently having them to the extent that everybody is testifying is comfortable, because they have a lot of reservations and a lot of things that impede their full-blown training exercises.

Mr. Decker.

Mr. DECKER. I would say that we're better prepared today than we were in 1990–91 against a chemical/biological attack. However, based on the interviews that we did with the units in the field, I am not convinced that the realism and the degree of training that has to happen at the unit level all the way up through higher echelons takes place on a regular basis so that, if we go into war, it will be very easy to do.

Mr. TIERNEY. What about the requirements of the standard set by each of the military forces themselves in terms of training? Have they even met those?

Mr. DECKER. We reported several years ago that was not the case.

Mr. TIERNEY. OK.

Now, Mr. Decker, in your testimony, both written and oral, you talked at least in passing about those 250,000 suits, protective

gear. It's still a situation where you say we can cannot locate where those 250,000 defective pieces are; is that accurate?

Mr. DECKER. I won't speak for the Department of Defense, but we have received no evidence that they have found, clearly found and identified, located, destroyed those 250,000 suits.

Mr. TIERNEY. So is it possible that some of them are, in fact, in line to be deployed where we might need them next?

Mr. DECKER. I think that's possible.

Mr. TIERNEY. Do you know how many of those 250,000; could be zero, could be 250,000?

Mr. DECKER. Yes, sir.

Mr. TIERNEY. You talked in your report about the process for assessing risk in the services, and you said that it was flawed. Would you go into that in a little bit more detail for us?

How are these services assessing the risk that's involved here, and why aren't we getting a clearer picture?

Mr. DECKER. Sir, allow me to refer to one of the diagrams in the report. Our record for—statement for the record, it would be page—individual pieces of gear, page 8. When we identified this risk issue, you have to assume that when a serviceman goes into combat in a contaminated environment, he's going to need a complete ensemble to be able to be safe.

Mr. TIERNEY. You mean the mask?

Mr. DECKER. Mask, overgarment, trousers, and boots primarily.

What we noticed in the Department of Defense annual report to Congress is that they were reporting at relatively low risk, that there were adequate supplies in the inventory of the individual items. But when we looked at those items and where they were in what services it was clear, if you look at page 8, that some services had a huge inventory of a particular item and not of another item; and that if you tried to do the ensemble issue, you'd start realizing that many of these areas become higher risk.

So we recommended to the Department of Defense, really you should go back and look at this process, this methodology. If you want to assess accurately what the risk is to your servicemen, meaning, will every serviceman and woman have a complete set of gear, you need to relook at how you calculate that. And initially there was resistance, but after some discussions, they have accepted that methodology.

Mr. TIERNEY. And what more would have to be done to make sure that each man or woman has the full, entire ensemble, that the ensemble was, in fact, in good shape?

Mr. DECKER. There's actually two issues, sir—serviceability, but also size. You know, you can use a garment that's one size too large, but one size too small probably is not going to work on the battlefield.

And the issue would be the inventory management system which—a hearing before this committee in June identified how horrific that process is, that there is not one integrated system throughout DOD to know where things are, so that the right gear gets to the right people at the right time. It does not happen. So you may find in one unit all extra larges, and you may find in another unit no trousers, and you may find masks of different sizes,

perhaps not regularly available to fit all of the members of the right size.

I mean, that is an issue.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Chairman, might I have two more questions to followup on this?

Mr. Decker, you had a chart up there a little while earlier where you were showing the number, the amount of gear that was coming out of service, being retired, wasn't quite being kept up to with the amount of gear that was coming on line.

Mr. DECKER. Correct.

Mr. TIERNEY. Are we remedying that situation?

Mr. SHAYS. Could someone put that up.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you very much. Now, you indicated it would be 2 major theaters and 1½ major theaters. I assume that the line between 4 and 5 is where it would be for one major conflict; am I right?

Mr. DECKER. Actually, the Pentagon uses a 1.5 requirement.

Mr. TIERNEY. But that's in the 6, right, the No. 6 on the chart?

Mr. DECKER. No, sir that would be a 2. Two major theater wars would be at the 6; that's a solid dash line. At the 4.5 would be dash dot; that would be slightly more than one theater war requirement, but less than two, 1.5.

Mr. TIERNEY. OK.

Mr. DECKER. That's where the migration is and that's based upon, I assume some, you know, derivation of a new requirement—instead of two wars, fight one war, but then have a cushion of 0.5.

What we're showing there, though, is exactly what you said, sir; the old suits are coming down quicker than the new suits are coming in. We have no information at this time that DOD is going to remedy that with increased funding and additional suit procurement so that you don't have this train wreck in the next 5 years.

Mr. TIERNEY. Let me ask each of you gentlemen, how long—if we expedited all the training that was necessary and put in place all of the inventory systems that were necessary and procured all of the equipment, protective gear, etc., that was necessary, how long would it be before we should be comfortable that our men and women sent into a conflict where biological and chemical agents were used would be reasonably safe, or as safe as possible under those conditions?

Mr. SCHMITZ. Would they at least have the equipment they should have?

Mr. TIERNEY. Exactly.

Mr. SCHMITZ. That's a good question.

Mr. TIERNEY. It deserves a good answer.

Mr. SCHMITZ. I'll try to give my best answer, sir.

I think it's fair to say that generally the units that are currently in position, the most likely ones to be sent into harm's way, are the best trained and best equipped right now.

Mr. TIERNEY. How many numbers are we talking about there?

Mr. SCHMITZ. You know, we didn't look at every unit. We didn't—our audit method is not to look at every single unit.

Mr. TIERNEY. The ones you looked at that are in that category are, in your estimate, ready?

Mr. SCHMITZ. What percentage or—what percentage?

Mr. TIERNEY. I was trying to get to the point of—I'll let you finish your answer rather than take you off track. Go ahead.

Mr. SCHMITZ. I'm going to defer to the people that actually did the audit here.

Mr. STEENSMA. I think I know we answered that question specifically in the classified session, sir.

Mr. TIERNEY. It's general enough that I would think the American public would be able to get that answer.

Mr. STEENSMA. I would have to go back to what Mr. Schmitz said, that overseas we found a lot greater attention to the training, the equipage of the troops and so on.

Mr. TIERNEY. And? How long would it take for us to assure that all of the men and women that might be put into a conflict of the nature that we're anticipating would be fully protected and fully trained?

Mr. STEENSMA. I don't think I could answer that, sir. I would have to defer to the Department, because they're the ones who put priorities on equipping things, buying things and training people. So I don't think I could give a specific date.

Mr. TIERNEY. But it's clear we're not there at the moment; is that correct?

Mr. SCHMITZ. Let me answer that question. I think—that was the——

Mr. TIERNEY. The expert no longer wants to answer the question.

Mr. SCHMITZ. I'll let Mr. Steensma say what he wants to say. That was exactly—the premise of your question is, we're not currently ready?

Mr. TIERNEY. Are we currently ready is the premise of the question. In your estimation, Mr. Schmitz?

Mr. SCHMITZ. We're never going to be perfectly ready, OK?

Mr. TIERNEY. I understand that. My question is, are we ready, understanding we'll never be perfectly ready. You can't be in any——

Mr. SCHMITZ. Could we be more ready now? Yes.

Mr. TIERNEY. Do you have an estimate of how long it would take to be ready to the degree that you would feel comfortable?

Mr. SCHMITZ. You know, there's an old military adage, if you wait for the perfect war, you will lose every battle.

Mr. TIERNEY. I'm not talking about waiting for the perfect war. I don't think anybody expects the war to be perfect.

One of the problems is, we know it isn't going to be to be. We know there are all sorts of unforeseen consequences. But the ones we can foresee, such as the use of chemical and biological agents against our men and women, are they trained sufficiently and are they ready in terms of preparedness of whatever protective gear they might have at this moment, or should we have it in better shape?

Mr. SCHMITZ. But you're asking, with all respect, an operational question to an independent office that does audits and investigations, and that question is better addressed to the operational commanders.

Mr. TIERNEY. OK.

Mr. SCHMITZ. I mean, it essentially involves an operational weighing of risks against——

Mr. TIERNEY. All right. I accept that. I wanted to ask you.

Mr. Steensma, do you want to answer that with any more specificity?

Mr. STEENSMA. No, I wouldn't, sir.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Decker.

Mr. DECKER. Mr. Tierney, I'm unable to quantify exactly when we would be ready. But in closed session, I will discuss two specific issues that shade my optimism.

Mr. TIERNEY. That shape it or shade it?

Mr. DECKER. Shade.

Mr. TIERNEY. S-H-A-D-E?

Mr. DECKER. Yes, sir, shade my optimism.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SHAYS. Ms. Watson, you have the floor for 10 minutes plus.

Ms. WATSON. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to submit my opening statement for the record.

Mr. Chairman, I think what we probably have is the wrong panel here. We have their testimony in writing. I've gone through their written testimony to the extent that it's accurate, I think that our questions are answered. And I'll just repeat very quickly some of the statements that caught my eye. "We have continuing concerns in each of these areas in the supply of chemical protective clothing and the way it is associated is assessed." "We believe that the risk of protective clothing shortages may increase dramatically from now through at least 2007." "Serious problems still persist." And, "We concluded that chemical and biological defense equipment training and medical problems were persisting, and if not addressed, were likely to result in needless casualties and a degradation of U.S. warfighting capabilities." "The medical readiness of some units to conduct operations in a contaminated environment, therefore remains questionable." And, "Military service members may not be able to avoid exposure to chemical and biological agents and has consequently provided U.S. forces with individual protective equipment."

And they go on to conclude, "But the bottom line is, there are many needed improvements that still remain to be realized." "The service members of our country may be at risk in a contaminated environment." These are your reports, and I'm just repeating for the public what you have said in conclusion.

I would think, Mr. Chair, that we need to have the operational managers in here and find out what is really going on. I appreciate the testimony from these gentlemen, but I find the way they're answering these questions nonconclusive, and maybe they don't have the information we need.

So I would suggest that we dispense with this hearing and wait to get into the classified hearing so that when I go back to my constituents, I can give them the truth.

What is very, very bothersome to me is that we're rushing—every single day we hear the administration saying, we need to rush into an attack on Iraq, for we know Saddam Hussein has biological weapons that he has not been afraid to use and has used them.

Are we exposing our men and women at this point to contamination and, subsequently, their children knowing that we cannot protect them?

Now, don't come back at me with perfection. I'm not asking about perfection; I'm asking about some risk assessment and are we ready.

Apparently, you gentlemen cannot answer that question for me exactly. So my suggestion would be, let's not waste any more time. Let's get operational managers here, and let's go into the classified session, and I will take back the truth to my people.

I am not going to support going blindly into warfare in an environment that can cause great bodily harm and our death not only to this generation, but to subsequent generations. And I don't need an answer; it's just a statement.

Thank you.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you. I appreciate the gentlelady's comments.

I think that you all, both the GAO, the Inspectors General are providing a tremendous opportunity for us to know at least what we can state on the public record and then the questions that we need to ask behind closed doors. We would not even be anywhere along as well as we are with the issue of protective gear had it not been for the work of your predecessors in the Inspector General's Office and the GAO. And I'll give you an example before I get into questions.

But what I did when I met with the British and the French and the Israelis to discuss protective gear in the early 1990's they didn't want American equipment; they wanted their own or they wanted another country's.

When I speak with them today, they want our equipment. So we know we have good equipment. We know—we certainly know it's better than what other countries have. And I say that with no reluctance. I think that is, in part, the work that this committee and you all have done to just keep pushing and pushing and pushing.

But I also feel that both of you have—both the GAO and the Inspectors General have put on the record some very important information that says, we may be ready in certain instances and we may not be ready in other instances.

I can't imagine, for instance, that we would be able to amass 700,000 troops and think that they would be protected. It tells me that given the type of warfare that we may encounter, which would be potentially chemical or biological, that it's going to have to be a different strategy, in part because of the limitations that we have with our equipment, but also in part because we're not going to give Saddam Hussein such a large and tempting target.

But obviously we will also have some dialog with our second panel in open forum.

Let me ask anyone on the panel, first, to be willing to give me a little bit of an education as you would define "readiness versus risk." I understand from the GAO that your primary focus would be on risk. Is that correct, Mr. Decker, your contribution to this panel?

Mr. DECKER. Yes, sir. I think in past reports we——

Mr. SHAYS. When we look at risk, we're looking at availability, suitability, and durability, correct?

Mr. DECKER. Those would be some of the factors if you talk about gear.

Mr. SHAYS. One of the contributions that you're making is that when we look at whether there's a high risk or a low risk, when we just take a certain part of the equipment and isolate it and not put it as part of the package, that we get a distorted view; is that correct?

Mr. DECKER. Yes, sir.

Mr. SHAYS. But what I'm also understanding is that it's not like we add it all together, and we put it in one chain and we say, whatever is the weakest link is potentially—if something is a high risk, then everything is—let me just say a risk, not a high risk. It's possible you could put together one part that is a moderate risk and another part that is a risk, and that can add up to be high risk, collectively?

Mr. DECKER. Yes, sir. I'll give you an example.

If you talk about a mask and outer garment, boots, and gloves, if you had no gloves, you would be at high risk even though you have four out of the five components.

Mr. SHAYS. Right.

Mr. DECKER. So all of the other ones would be adequately supplied, but if you didn't have gloves, you're still at risk, high risk.

Mr. SHAYS. I'm getting at something a little more subtle. That, to me, is putting it all in a row. You've got a weak link, you don't have the gloves and the rest is meaningless.

But it's my information that, in a sense, it's almost like four chains down, and maybe if you—if one is pretty vulnerable, the other three chains can pull you up, but if the other one has a moderate risk or even is a moderate risk, the two together can add up to be something greater than either one of them individually. Is that correct?

Mr. DECKER. Yes, sir.

Mr. SHAYS. And so your testimony before this committee is that the Department of Defense has accepted making sure we look at the full package as a risk and not isolate it. And so that's good news.

But when was that decided?

Mr. DECKER. Sir, since the report that was released in September.

Mr. SHAYS. So this a new process. So we have to go back to the drawing board, correct?

Mr. DECKER. Correct.

Mr. SHAYS. We have to look at risk again as now under the definition and the process that you've defined, correct?

Mr. DECKER. Yes, sir.

Mr. SHAYS. Do we have a sense, when that's going to be done?

Mr. DECKER. I think the next panel will be able to address that.

Mr. SHAYS. We'll make sure we ask the next panel.

In terms of readiness, someone speak to the concept of readiness. I happen to think that if you've got risks, you're not ready; so I'm mixing the two. You need to give me a little bit of a lesson here. Who wants to do it?

I'm going to have you put the mic nice and close. Now, is the smile of frustration that I may not get it, or that you're not sure you'll be able to explain it?

Mr. BLOOMER. I'll attempt.

Mr. SHAYS. If you would put the mic a little closer.

This is my understanding of—I am just trying to appreciate the concept of readiness. And if you need a little more time to think of your answer, let me just go to another question.

But before I leave this panel, I want you all to define the concept of readiness to me. I'm sure the military will. But I'd like to have some confidence that you can define it.

Do you want to answer the question?

Mr. BLOOMER. Yeah.

I would say that, in attempting to define readiness, it would go to the core of, is the unit or force able to conduct its mission as it was intended and planned to be done? Is it in alignment with how they envision executing their plan?

Now, a lot of factors go into that. Do you have enough people of the right skill and are they trained?

Mr. SHAYS. Connect it as it relates to the whole issue of chemical and biological warfare.

Mr. BLOOMER. Another element that would go into it is equipment level. Do have you sufficient quantities of equipment to conduct your mission in any kind of environment, be it chemical or biological or pristine environment?

Mr. SHAYS. It would go to the issue, for instance, if you're properly trained and so on?

Mr. BLOOMER. Yes.

Mr. SHAYS. I felt that the Inspector General was speaking more to the issue of readiness, as opposed to the issue of risk. In other words, you could have all your equipment perform well—it's available, it's—the suitability is fine, the durability is good—but if you don't have enough of it, you're not ready, correct?

Mr. BLOOMER. I would agree. Yes.

Mr. SHAYS. If you haven't been properly trained, you're not ready, correct?

Mr. BLOOMER. Or as ready as you could be.

Mr. SHAYS. Right.

If you don't know how to put it on, the equipment that may work very well, if improperly put on, is not going to work, so you are therefore not ready, correct?

Mr. BLOOMER. Correct.

Mr. SHAYS. If—when we look at chemical/biological defense, we want to look at contamination avoidance. In other words, if we don't have to go into the area, we want to be able to—so we have to—we might want to avoid it, we need to detect it, we need to identify it, and we need to locate it, correct?

Mr. BLOOMER. That's correct.

Mr. SHAYS. In terms of protection, we are concerned about protecting not just the individual, but maybe a facility like a hospital. And so there's more than just chemical protection dealing with a mask and a suit, but also to make sure that we can secure an area so, for instance, nurses and doctors can work without having to wear masks; is that correct?

Mr. BLOOMER. Yes.

Mr. SHAYS. And in a decontamination setting we need to be able to decontaminate equipment that has been exposed to chemicals or biological agents, and in some cases, the people that have been exposed as well; is that correct?

Mr. BLOOMER. Yes.

Mr. SHAYS. So these are very—these are a lot of significant efforts here.

In other words, if you don't have the detection equipment, you may have to force yourself to wear equipment that will inhibit your mission. And it would be a lot easier to know if could you detect it before you had to put it on; is that correct?

Mr. BLOOMER. Yes, it would be.

Mr. SHAYS. OK.

Let me just go to the DOD—basically, the IG has talked about the Defense Logistics Agency, and you believe that 250,000 unaccounted suits that are not properly—are defective were issued, worn and disposed of, correct?

Mr. SCHMITZ. Yes, sir.

Mr. SHAYS. The question is, what is the task required to know where—in other words, right now, it seems to me, we have to assume that the 250—we're being asked to assume that the 250 is no longer in the system, that it was—we used it for training and we've disposed of it.

Tell me how we can get an answer to that question.

And if we can't get an answer to the question, do we have to make the assumption that somewhere between zero and 250 suits are out in on the loose and that it's kind of like what I would call Russian roulette, you've got one bullet in the barrel and you know you just have to hope that when you pull the trigger, that bullet isn't the one—the bullet isn't in the chamber when you pull the trigger.

Is it that kind of problem, or is there a logical way to get at and be assured that there is no defective equipment in the system?

Mr. SCHMITZ. Let me just say this: This is an age-old problem and inspectors general have been looking at this problem since the Revolutionary War. You know——

Mr. KUCINICH. Apparently they haven't solved it.

Mr. SCHMITZ. Some have been more successful than others.

Mr. SHAYS. And the blame is not on the Inspector General and the GAO. The issue is, we have known for decades that even during World War I, the DOD had the opportunity to grow and to learn from its biological potential and chemical warfare opportunities, and we have not learned much. Reports that were done, we can't find. So we can go on and on.

The fact that you're telling me this has been an age-old problem is significant in one sense, but meaningless in another, because we are in the day and age when chemical and biological weapons will be used. So there can be no excuse.

What I'm asking is, you've heard the other Members ask the question about the 250,000 pieces of defective equipment. We can make an assumption that some are not in the system, but we can't make the assumption that all aren't in the system; is that correct?

Mr. SCHMITZ. That's right. These are unaccounted for.

Mr. SHAYS. OK. So we're being asked on good faith and on some logic that some of it would have been used. The question I'm asking is, in a sense—we are asking, have we identified all 250,000 of them? I think the answer is——

Mr. SCHMITZ. No.

Mr. SHAYS. No.

Now the next question is, is there a way to identify them? And GAO, Mr. Decker, is there a way to identify? What would it take to identify?

Mr. DECKER. Based on our experience in trying to do an inventory review of protective equipment, we actually got into boxes to look at contract numbers, lot numbers, because there was no system device, nothing in the inventory management system that would provide us that accurate information, and nowhere in the system that would say exactly where these things were located.

Mr. SHAYS. We don't know where they're located, but if we locate them, can we identify them as bad?

Mr. DECKER. Once have you a contract number and a lot number, and if it's identified as defective.

Mr. SHAYS. I appreciate my colleagues. So if we don't do that, is it not a fact that we are then telling some members of our military force that they may have the shell in the chamber?

Mr. CAWOOD. Sir, the military forces have attempted to locate these sites by a variety of means.

Mr. SHAYS. I'm going to have you tell me that, but I'm just saying right now, if we haven't identified them and we don't seem to be having a program to identify every one of them, isn't it a fact that, in essence, some members of the military will be issued faulty equipment?

Mr. CAWOOD. It is a possibility. It's not a certainty. Because we don't know whether some of those suits may have been used, for example, in training and that there's no means to account for which ones were used in that fashion.

Mr. SHAYS. But now the IG's testimony was, as recently as April 2002, "We continued to identify units that had not segregated those defective garments in their inventories."

The bottom line to my question: Is there a way—I'm not saying that it won't be expensive, I'm not saying it won't require a lot of work, but is there a way to identify every faulty piece of equipment that was part of that particular manufacturer's product?

Mr. DECKER. Sir, not without a lot of labor.

Mr. SHAYS. But with labor, it would be possible?

Mr. DECKER. Obviously, if you sighted each suit, which would be extremely labor intensive, you could probably get to the bottom line.

Mr. SHAYS. Does anyone from the Inspector General's Office disagree with that answer?

Mr. STEENSMA. No, we agree with that. It would be labor intensive, because they would have to open numerous boxes, go through them with the lot numbers and identify them and pull them out.

Mr. SHAYS. Numerous boxes would be?

Mr. STEENSMA. I don't know how many hundreds of thousands are out there.

Mr. SHAYS. Millions of boxes?

Mr. STEENSMA. I don't know if it's millions.

Mr. SHAYS. So the end result is, we are going to be asking some member of the military, unless they are issued totally new equipment, who go into Iraq—if that happens, we're going to be asking them to take a chance that, you know, one chamber has a bullet. When they pull the trigger you know, they're the—they'll pay the negative result.

So, I guess—let me go to——

Mr. TIERNEY. Just to followup on that, I sense that we're going to be told in the next panel that—not to worry about this, that they've accounted for all the suits because they've had this training and they've worn them. Is that even remotely possible, that's the case?

Mr. DECKER. Sir, I think it's possible, but I would ask for the evidence.

Mr. TIERNEY. Not verifiable?

Mr. DECKER. No, sir.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you.

Ms. WATSON. May I followup? I had written a question to Mr. Kucinich that I'll ask now.

I'm listening very carefully to you gentlemen. I appreciate you trying to give us frank answers. What I'm surmising from this to believe is that, no, we do not have protection for every single service personnel that would be required to go into an area that could be potentially deadly for them.

As in the Vietnam War and the Gulf war, many of our military personnel came back and stated that they had health conditions that were strange and alien to them.

Are you gentlemen recommending that as a result of going into Iraq, our veterans then be given full benefits and care for whatever might happen to them as a result of biological and chemical warfare? Would that be a recommendation from you, or would that be a recommendation from the operational managers, or whoever would be recommending?

Because it seemed like there was some denial that Agent Orange had an effect on the veterans of Vietnam. It seems that veterans have struggled for decades to get some recognition of the problems they faced because of chemical and biological agents.

Mr. SCHMITZ. I think it is a very important question, Ms. Watson.

Ms. WATSON. Whom should I ask?

Mr. SCHMITZ. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense. And, hopefully, our audits and our reports will be useful in them reaching that decision.

Ms. WATSON. Thank you. I appreciate that, because I am trying to get to the right personnel to answer the questions. And listening to all of you, you have prepared these reports, but you can't give us the details, because apparently it is classified.

So in trying to get to the truth and have some accuracy, I appreciate your response.

Mr. SCHMITZ. Thank you.

Mr. BURTON. Let me—Mr. Gilman.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SHAYS. Then we will try to get to the next panel.

Mr. GILMAN. I am concerned. You are telling us that the defective equipment has not been located, but through additional manpower, we may be able to detect where that defective equipment is.

If that is possible, then what are we doing to undertake that kind of a procedure?

Mr. STEENSMA. I think you need to ask the next panel and the Defense Logistics Agency and the services what they are going to do. I know after the last hearing they put out several messages.

They've tried to identify these in the past. The problem we run into when we are in the field is the word doesn't always get down to each individual unit, which could be in the United States or overseas here.

And it would take a coordinated program by the Department's logistics people to try to get out and identify and make sure all of them are pulled.

Mr. GILMAN. Well, Mr. Steensma, why have some units not received the advisories regarding these defective pieces of equipment?

Mr. STEENSMA. Don——

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Bloomer.

Mr. BLOOMER. I guess the easiest way to explain it would be that not every unit has a person as part of the unit who is designated as a chemical and biological professional.

Mr. GILMAN. Wouldn't that be the responsibility of the commander of the unit?

Mr. BLOOMER. It would be. But a lot of the service notices and recall notices that come down, come down through the chemical and biological community. And it filters down that way or it filters down through supply channels. They don't always send them to commanders of the unit.

Mr. GILMAN. So what you are telling us, Mr. Bloomer, is that there may be some commander or some units that have not received advisories about this defective equipment; is that correct?

Mr. BLOOMER. Yes.

Mr. GILMAN. And, Mr. Schmitz, one of you on the panel has said, if we utilize more manpower, we can find out where the defective equipment is. Am I correct?

Mr. SCHMITZ. Mr. Steensma said that. I agree.

Mr. GILMAN. Is that being employed, that method?

Mr. STEENSMA. Not at this time. You would have to ask the next panel, because they are the ones that have the resources they could devote to an enterprise such as this.

Mr. GILMAN. So the defective equipment can be detected by utilizing more manpower in order to make certain that our troops, when they go out on the battlefield are not going to use defective equipment. Am I correct?

Mr. STEENSMA. I would have to agree with that, sir.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you.

Mr. Kucinich, you have more questions?

Mr. KUCINICH. To Mr. Decker: The—the Defense Logistics Agency has said that they believe the 250,000 unaccounted-for overgarments that were issued that are in question here, the ones that are defective, that they were worn and disposed of.

Now, how—how is it that they were able to come to this conclusion? And is this conclusion supported by the facts?

Mr. DECKER. Sir, again, I think Mr. Parker from DLA will be able to address that more precisely.

But if you recall, back in May 2000——

Mr. KUCINICH. I just want to ask you, is that conclusion supported by the facts? They are asserting that all defective protective suits have been disposed of. Is that statement supported by the facts?

Mr. DECKER. Sir, we have not seen evidence that the 250,000 defective suits have been found and disposed of properly.

Mr. KUCINICH. OK. That—I just wanted to make sure that was on the record.

Now, the Defense Department has agreed that they understated the risk related to all of the components of the protective suits. Is that correct?

Mr. DECKER. Yes, sir.

Mr. KUCINICH. This is why they agreed to go back and change the way they examined these questions. Is that correct?

Mr. DECKER. Yes, sir.

Mr. KUCINICH. Now, my question is this: Does the Defense Department also agree with your conclusion on pages 8 and 9 of your report, that, in fact, service members are at high risk, not low risk? That was pages 8 and 9 of the report.

Does the Defense Department also agree with your conclusion that, in fact, service members are at high risk, not low risk?

Mr. DECKER. Sir, that was our conclusion. We have not served specific response on that particular point. As to whether they agree with that, I think that question would be better deferred to them.

However, they did agree that the method of calculating the risk would be better done if it were done by the entire ensemble rather than the individual pieces.

Mr. KUCINICH. By the entire ensemble. I quoted General Myers at the beginning of this hearing, who said the military is prepared. Based on what you know, Mr. Decker, on what you provided to this committee, do you agree with that statement?

Mr. DECKER. General Myers' statement, sir?

Mr. KUCINICH. Do you think there are concerns that ought to be——

Mr. DECKER. Sir, based on the work that we have done, the reports over the last couple of years about this issue of individual protective equipment and the deficiencies, the problems, locations, and—I would have reservations that everything is exactly the way it should be for any future conflict.

Mr. KUCINICH. Has the military met the basic minimum requirements? Can the military fail to meet the basic military requirements and still protect the troops?

Mr. DECKER. Sir, going back to my chart, you can see where there are some serious dips below what the requirement is and what we have on hand today.

Mr. KUCINICH. And if they don't meet the basic minimum requirements, how are our troops protected at all?

Mr. DECKER. Well, the individual protective equipment, as I indicated, is your last line of defense. If each serviceman and woman

who is in a contaminated environment does not have the proper serviceable gear, than they are at risk.

Mr. KUCINICH. Now, you have in your testimony here, that—you mentioned the individual pieces, the suit, the mask, the breathing filters, gloves, boots and hoods, and that there are questions about the supply, the inventory—could even be questions about safety in the question of suits.

Then when you look at the ensemble, you get into the possibility that, you know, this may not all come together. I mean—and here is what I was thinking. For the moment, let's not talk about what is a very grim matter here, preparation of our servicemen and women for battle.

Let's say we were talking for a moment about a professional football team that was getting ready for the Super Bowl. And let's say that the uniforms provided for this team, to protect them when they are on the field of play, let's say players had the wrong sizes. Some had knee pads, some didn't. Some had shoulder pads, some didn't. Some had hip pads, some didn't. Some had shoes with cleats, some didn't. Some had helmets, and some didn't, or some had helmets that were the wrong size.

Now, the team really wouldn't be ready to play. People would be asking, well, how could you—you are a Super Bowl team; how in the world could you be in a condition where you don't have the right equipment? You are not ready. How could that be?

Well, let's say we have the best military in the world. Are they ready to play in the Super Bowl in the Persian Gulf?

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you. Anyone else before we go to the next panel? Mr. Decker.

And let me just say this. I want any of you to speak out on anything that you think the record is not clear on, or any question you wished we had asked that we didn't ask. I want it on the record. So if there is anything you want to put on the record, please do it. If there is any need to clarify the record, let's do it and do it now, OK?

Mr. Decker, do you have something?

Mr. DECKER. Yes, Chairman Shays. I want to mention that GAO does not have classification authority, that is received by the executive branch agencies that review our work. And I have to note that in the area of chem/bio defense and force protection, we were experiencing lengthy classification reviews by the Department of Defense.

In many cases, our final draft products which we send to the Department for comment, using unclassified material and sources, are becoming classified.

Like the DOD IG, I believe it is critical that we protect our products and prevent exposure of vulnerabilities, and there is a way that can be done, which is called sanitization, meaning taking specific details out.

However, we are experiencing, in some cases, up to 2 months' delay in issuing a report while it goes through this very uncertain classification review process. And I would like to see the Department of Defense address that issue, to be able to provide a speedy

classification review so that we can provide the information that the Congress needs.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you. Any other comment from our panel?

I would like to put one comment on the table here. This was, when we had a hearing on June 19th—excuse me, when we had a hearing in April 1997, we had Air Force Major Michael Donnelly, testify before our committee. He suffered from the progressive debilitating effects of ALS, or what we call Lou Gehrig's Disease. Major Donnelly recounted a now all-too-familiar litany of official refusals to connect his illness with his military service.

He was a once-robust fighter pilot, sat before us in a wheelchair, his body racked by the effects of the disease, but he spoke with arching eloquence from a heart undamaged by his plight, declaring, "I am not the enemy." This veteran of 44 combat missions in the Gulf war described the shock and disappointment of having to confront a fatal disease and his own government's cold incuriosity about the cause of his illness.

Now, he believed that ALS was triggered or accelerated by wartime exposures, including organic phosphate pesticides; and for many years that possibility was dismissed or ignored. Recently, the Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs have acknowledged that he, in fact, may have suffered this illness because of his duty and service.

But this is the key point. When asked if he would go to war again, knowing what would befall him, Michael Donnelly did not hesitate 1 second before saying yes. And so I want it on the record.

I believe that most men and women in the force, even if they knew about their vulnerabilities, would still choose to serve our country and engage whatever enemy in battle. We would just like to make sure that, one, first, that it is never a fair fight, that they always have the advantage; and two, that they never have any illusions about what can defend them or not. And Mr. Donnelly, I think, stands as a memorable moment for this committee.

I am prepared to go on to the next panel. I thank you. I thank sincerely the work of the IG and all of your people, the work of the Inspector General and GAO. It is—you do a wonderful service for the men and women in uniform and for the eventual success of whatever undertaking we choose. So thank you very much, and we will get to our next panel.

I appreciate this Panel Two, its patience and its listening to Panel One. We have Dr. Anna Johnson-Winegar, Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for CBD, Department of Defense; General Stephen Goldfein, Deputy Director, Joint Warfare Capability Analysis, JCS, Department of Defense; Major General William L. Bond, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army, Department of Defense; Mr. Michael A Parker, Deputy to the Commander U.S. Army Soldier and Biological Chemical Command; and Mr. George Allen, Deputy Director, Defense Supply Center-Philadelphia, Defense Logistics Agency, Department of Defense.

If they would come, and we will swear you in, so you might want to stay standing. Sorry it is such a cramped table there.

Is there any one else who may testify, as well, that might assist you? If there is the possibility, I would just as soon have them sworn so you—if you think that anyone else may want to. Anyone?

OK, seeing none, if you would just raise your hands.

[Witnesses sworn.]

Mr. SHAYS. Note for the record our witnesses have responded in the affirmative.

And I would also like to note for the record that all of you are accomplished people in your field of work, you have served, you are serving our country well, you have served our country well; and we consider it an honor to have you before the committee.

We obviously have some questions that we would like to ask you. And I think you know the spirit in which we ask those questions. So we are going to go to the 5-minute, if you make your statement, Dr. Winegar—I apologize for not saying your name correctly. Thank you for your patience in that regard.

We will go with Dr. Winegar, General Goldfein, General Bond, Mr. Parker and then Mr. Allen. We will go in that order, OK? And we have a 5-minute trip-over. We prefer that you don't take the full 10 minutes, but whatever you think that you need.

STATEMENTS OF DR. ANNA JOHNSON-WINEGAR, ASSISTANT TO SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR CBD; GENERAL STEPHEN GOLDFEIN, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, JOINT WARFIGHTING CAPABILITY ANALYSIS JCS; MAJOR GENERAL WILLIAM L. BOND, OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY (ALT); MICHAEL A. PARKER, DEPUTY TO THE COMMANDER, U.S. ARMY SOLDIER AND BIOLOGICAL CHEMICAL COMMAND [SBCCOM]; AND GEORGE ALLEN, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, DEFENSE SUPPLY CENTER-PHILADELPHIA, DEFENSE LOGISTICS AGENCY, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Ms. JOHNSON-WINEGAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and distinguished committee members. I am honored to appear before you again to address some of your concerns about the Department's chemical and biological defense program.

I am Anna Johnson-Winegar. I serve as the Deputy Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Chemical and Biological Defense. I would like to focus my remarks today on improvements to the management and oversight process for the Department's Chemical and Biological Defense Program.

As a result of several initiatives subsequent to my last testimony, the Department has made progress in improving areas that are of interest to your subcommittee; and we will continue to see improvements as recent decisions are implemented over the next few months. Along with me today are other representatives from DOD who will speak to their particular area of expertise.

In order to address some of the problems related to the acquisition of chemical and biological defense systems identified during Operation Desert Storm, the Department's Chemical and Biological Defense Program was established in 1994. This law mandates, as you know, the coordination and integration of all Department of Defense chemical and biological programs under the oversight of a single office. Under this program, the individual services submit their budget requests under one defense-wide account, separate from their service accounts. In addition, we submit an annual report to the Congress concerning all aspects of the Chemical and Biological Defense Program.

Following the Defense reform initiative in 1997, the position of Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Nuclear Chemical and Biological Defense was left vacant, and my office was placed under the Director of Defense Research and Engineering.

In November 2001, the Senate confirmed Dr. Dale Klein to fill the position of ATSD NCB, and subsequently, my office was moved from DDR&E and now reports to Dr. Klein. This reorganization, I believe, has increased the priority and emphasis of chem/bio defense within the Department.

This increased attention also led to the increase in size of my office staff from only two to now nine permanent positions, plus additional supporting resources. To ensure a focused effort in the area of homeland defense, the Deputy Secretary of Defense directed the establishment of a consequence management program integration office and directed that the functions previously performed by that office be institutionalized throughout the Department. And in February 2001, they further directed that research, development and acquisition of that equipment be responsible—be dealt the responsibility to be delegated to my office.

As a result of that funding to complete the modernization of the weapons of mass destruction, civil support teams are now part of the Chem/Bio Defense Program. Also, due to the increased visibility and importance of chemical/biological defense within the Department, the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, Mr. Pete Aldridge, in May 2001, implemented increased departmental oversight of this program by formally designating the chem/bio defense program as an acquisition Category 1(d) program.

This designation raises the priority and visibility of the chem/bio defense program within the Department and identifies the program as a major defense acquisition program. This landmark decision provides oversight by senior department officials over this critical and national asset.

Other recent changes have significantly affected the security environment and the requirements of the chem/bio, defense program. As mentioned earlier today, the QDR of September 2001 changed the basic force structure to support major theater wars, giving greater emphasis on smaller regional conflicts. The services are evaluating the impact of this changed force structure on system requirements.

Second, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent anthrax letter attacks have increased the potential roles and missions for the Department of Defense in supporting homeland security.

Funding for defense against the potentially devastating threat of chemical and biological attacks post-September 11 was added from the Defense Emergency Response Fund and Title IX of the Defense Appropriations Act of 2002, which has allowed the DOD to procure critical defense capabilities and to energize the research base to address the most critical deficiencies in this key area.

Another management change recently approached by the Joint Requirements Oversight Council is the creation of a Joint Requirements Office for Chemical, Biological Radiological and Nuclear Defense. General Goldfein will address more details regarding that.

Another key management change is the very recent approval of a Joint Program Executive Office for the Chemical and Biological Defense Program, in a memorandum signed by Mr. Aldridge on the 19th of September. The criticality and importance of an integrated and viable program to the Nation has increased significantly, and the visibility of chemical and biological defense within all government agencies has increased far beyond the scope of the program originally established in 1994.

The program must be visionary, able to respond quickly to warfighter and national security needs, and be streamlined with authority and accountability. The JPEO will supersede the existing management structure. The JPEO will report through the Army acquisition executive to the Defense acquisition executive.

Mr. Aldridge will continue to serve as the single Milestone Decision Authority for the Chemical and Biological Defense Program. This streamlines the acquisition process, and in support of the USD(AT&L) responsibilities, Dr. Dale Klein will establish and chair a permanent overarching integrated product team consisting of representatives from the military services, the joint staff, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

The Army will continue to serve as the Executive Agent for the Joint Service Chemical and Biological Defense Program. Major General Bond and Mr. Parker will detail key aspects of the acquisition program with emphasis on individual protective equipment.

Consumable NBC defense items and maintenance of fielded items are managed by the services and the Defense Logistics Agency in accordance with their Title X responsibilities. Information on the logistical status of the services' chemical and biological defense equipment is included in our annual report to the Congress.

The most recent annual report implemented GAO recommendations to list items on contract separately from those that are actual on hand. We feel this gives a more accurate picture of the logistics readiness for U.S. forces. However, the annual report only provides a snapshot in time of the overall readiness of U.S. forces. Mr. George Allen, from DLA, will address more issues related to logistics and inventory management.

In conclusion, as I have outlined, I feel there have been significant changes in the management and oversight structures of the Chemical and Biological Defense Program over the past 2 years. Do I believe everything is perfect? Of course not. But do I believe everything is better than it was? Absolutely, yes.

The Department has made significant improvements in the decades since Desert Storm. We have made improvements over the past 2 years alone to improve the priority and importance of protecting our service members against chemical and biological threats. These changes have streamlined the oversight process and improved Joint Service coordination. They will also enhance the linkage between requirements and fielded capabilities. These changes are still in the process of being implemented and will continue to yield improvements.

I want to assure this subcommittee that the Department views chemical/biological defense as one of our highest priorities, and we

remain committed to continued efforts to improve our program, to assure the best possible defense for our men and women who will face the threat posed by chemical and biological agents.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Johnson-Winegar follows:]

STATEMENT OF

DR. ANNA JOHNSON-WINEGAR

DEPUTY ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL DEFENSE

CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL EQUIPMENT: PREPARING FOR A TOXIC BATTLEFIELD

ON

OCTOBER 1, 2002

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY, VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS HOUSE GOVERNMENT REFORM COMMITTEE

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INTRODUCTION

Chairman and Distinguished Committee Members, I am honored to appear before your Committee again to address your questions regarding the Department's Chemical and Biological Defense Program (CBDP). I am Dr. Anna Johnson-Winegar, the Deputy Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Chemical and Biological Defense (DATSD(CBD)). I will focus my remarks on improvements to the management and oversight processes for the Department's Chemical and Biological Defense Program since I testified in May 2000. As a result of several efforts initiated subsequent to my last testimony, the Department has made progress in improving areas that are of interest to your Sub-committee and we will continue to see improvements as recent decisions are further implemented. In addition, I will provide an overview of ongoing efforts on CBDP logistics management and briefly describe a program underway to address the Sub-Committee's previous concern on the ability of the Department to effectively account for Joint Service Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) defense equipment, such as the Joint Service Lightweight Integrated Suit Technology (JSLIST).

Related topics will be addressed by the other members of the panel, including:

- BG Stephen Goldfein, Director, Joint Requirements Office for Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defense, Joint Staff, J-8
- Mr. Mike Parker, Soldier Biological and Chemical Command (SBCCOM)
- Mr. George Allen, Defense Supply Center-Philadelphia, Defense Logistics Agency

I. DoD Chemical and Biological Defense Program: Management and Coordination of Service Efforts

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1994, Public Law No. 103-160, Section 1701 (50 USC 1522), mandates the coordination and integration of all Department of Defense chemical and biological (CB) defense programs. This law provides the essential authority to ensure the elimination of unnecessarily redundant programs, to focus funds on DoD and program priorities, and to enhance readiness. The continued support of Congress will ensure the successful implementation of the program.

Public Law 103-160 (Sections 1701-1703) directs the Secretary of Defense to take concrete management and oversight actions:

- Assign responsibility for overall coordination and integration of DoD chemical and biological defense (CBD) (non-medical and medical) research, development, and acquisition (RDA) programs to a single office within OSD.
- Exercise oversight of the programs through the defense acquisition board (DAB).
- Improve jointness of the program.
- Designate the army as executive agent for DoD to coordinate and integrate RDA programs of all Services.
- Submit funding requests for CBD RDA in the DoD budget as a separate account. Funding requests may not be included in the service budgets.
- Submit an annual report to congress concerning chemical and biological defense readiness and plans to improve the program.

As the Deputy Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Chemical and Biological Defense, I am the focal point within the Department for the CBD program, and responsible for the oversight, coordination and integration of all CB defense medical and non-medical research, development, and acquisition efforts, and provide the overall guidance for planning, programming, budgeting, and executing CB defense programs. My office remains the single office within OSD responsible for oversight of the DoD CB Defense Program.

As the program has matured, the Department has begun to make changes to the organization of the management structure. These changes address management improvements initiated by the Department as well as some of the recommendations identified by the General Accounting Office (GAO).

Following the Defense Reform Initiative in November 1997, the position for the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Nuclear and Chemical and Biological Defense, ATSD(NCB), was left vacant and my office was placed under the Director of Defense Research and Engineering (DDR&E). In November 2001, the Senate confirmed Dr. Dale Klein to fill the position of ATSD(NCB). Subsequently, my office was moved from DDR&E and now reports to Dr. Klein. This re-organization increased the priority and emphasis of CBRN defense within the Department. This increased attention led to an increase in the size of my office staff from only two to nine permanent positions plus additional supporting resources.

To insure a focused departmental effort in the area of Homeland Defense the Deputy Secretary of Defense, on 9 November 2000, directed the disestablishment of the Consequence Management Program Integration Office and directed the functions previously performed by that office be institutionalized throughout the Department of Defense. In February 2001, the Deputy Secretary of Defense further directed that oversight for Research, Development, and Acquisition of equipment to support Consequence Management be performed by the USD(AT&L). That responsibility was further delegated to my office. As a result of this guidance, funding to complete the fielding and modernization of Weapons of Mass Destruction – Civil Support Teams and Reserve Component Recon and Decon Teams in support of Consequence Management is now a part of the DoD CBDP. This program includes the development and fielding of upgraded analytical platforms for the detection, identification, and characterization of CB and radiological agents used by terrorists in a civilian environment. Also included is the development and fielding of communication capabilities that are interoperable with other federal, state and local agencies. Finally, we now have increased focus on the testing and evaluation of this equipment to ensure that it is safe and effective to operate.

Since September 2001, there have been significant changes that have affected the security environment and the requirements effecting the Chemical and Biological Defense Program. First, the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) of September 2001 changed the basic force structure to support major theater wars but with greater emphasis on smaller regional conflicts. The Services are evaluating the impact of this changed force structure on system requirements. Second, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and the subsequent anthrax letter attacks have increased the potential roles and missions for the Department of Defense in supporting homeland security and increased the emphasis on chemical and biological defense initiatives within the DoD.

Due to the increased visibility and importance of chemical and biological defense within the DoD the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics (USD(AT&L)), in May 2001, implemented increased departmental oversight of the program by formally designating the CBDP as an Acquisition Category 1D program. This designation raises the priority and visibility of the CBDP within the Department and identifies the program as a Major Defense Acquisition Program. This landmark decision provides oversight by senior department officials over this critical national asset.

Funding for defenses against the potentially devastating threat of chemical and biological attack post September 11th was also forthcoming within the Department and from the Congress. Significant funding from the Defense Emergency Response Fund (DERF) and Title IX of the Defense Appropriations Act of 2002 allowed the DoD to procure critical defensive capabilities and to energize the research base to address the most critical deficiencies in this key area. The department was able to procure significant quantities of biological detection systems, additional individual protective equipment and civil support CB defense capability while at the same time increasing our investment in the research area of medical countermeasures against the most serious of threats.

Another management change recently approved by the Joint Requirements Oversight Council (JROC) is the creation of a *Joint Requirements Office (JRO) for Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Defense*, which will provide a single office within the Department responsible for the planning, coordination, and oversight of all CBRN requirements. This office will replace and assume the responsibilities of the Joint Service Integration Group (JSIG) with an official stand-up date of 1 October 2002. I feel this is a very positive step in improving the requirements generation process and gaining increased emphasis within the Joint Staff for Chemical and Biological Defense requirements. BG Stephen Goldfein, the Director of the new JRO, will provide more details as part of his testimony.

A key management change is the recent approval of the Joint Program Executive Office (JPEO) for the Chemical and Biological Defense Program by the USD(AT&L) on 19 September 2002. Since September 11, 2001, the criticality and importance of an integrated and viable DoD CBDP to the nation has increased significantly and the visibility of chemical and biological defense within all governmental agencies has increased far beyond the scope of the program established in 1994. The current program demands a CBDP that is visionary, able to respond quickly to warfighter and national security needs, and streamlined with authority and accountability vested in specific individuals. The result must be a well-coordinated effort at an appropriate level to meet the nation's needs.

The JPEO will supersede the existing management structure for Joint Service chemical and biological defense research, development, and acquisition programs. The JPEO will report through the Army Acquisition Executive to the Defense Acquisition Executive. The USD(AT&L), E.C. Aldridge, Jr., will serve as the Defense Acquisition Executive and the single Milestone Decision Authority for the Chemical and Biological Defense Program. This streamlines the acquisition process, reducing the number of Milestone Decision Authorities for the CBDP from nine to one. In support of the USD(AT&L)'s responsibilities as the Milestone

Decision Authority, the ATSD(NCB), Dr. Dale Klein, will establish and chair a permanent Overarching Integrated Product Team (OIPT), consisting of representatives from the Military Services, Joint Staff and OSD.

The Army will continue to serve as the Executive Agent for the Joint Service CBDP. Mr. Mike Parker of the Soldier, Biological, and Chemical Command (SBCCOM), will detail some of the key aspects of the acquisition program, with detailed information on the elements of individual protective equipment.

II. Chemical and Biological Defense Logistics Management

The DoD CB Defense Program jointly manages the research, development, and procurement of major end items of NBC defense equipment. These items are funded through defense-wide funding accounts. Consumable NBC defense items and maintenance of fielded items are managed by the Services and the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) in accordance with Title X responsibilities of the Services, which provides for the Services to manage their Operations and Maintenance (O&M) funds. Under the provisions of Title X of the U.S. Code, Service Secretaries are responsible for, and have the authority to conduct, all affairs of their respective Departments including supplying, researching, developing, training, and maintaining equipment. The existence of defense-wide (rather than Service-specific) funding accounts has ensured the joint integration of CB defense programs. However, OSD is limited to tracking the status of the DoD CB defense logistics readiness and sustainment programs in the Services and making recommendations to correct shortfalls. The tracking information is provided to Congress on an annual basis in the *Chemical and Biological Defense Program, Annual Report to Congress*. The April 2002 report was provided to Congress and is available on-line at http://www.acq.osd.mil/cp/nbc02/vol1-2002cbdpannualreport.pdf (Volume 1) and http://www.acq.osd.mil/cp/nbc02/vol2-2002cbdpperformanceplan.pdf (Volume 2 – Performance Plan).

The April 2002 Annual Report to Congress on the DoD CBDP implemented GAO's recommendation from its September 2001 report, which recommended that items on contract were listed separately from those that were actually on hand. This gives a more accurate picture of the logistics readiness for U.S. forces. However, the annual report only provides a snapshot in time of the overall logistics readiness of U.S. forces for chemical and biological defense.

In order to improve the picture of logistics and unit readiness, the Joint Staff increased the visibility of operational standards and readiness reporting for chemical and biological defense within the Global Status of Resources and Training System (GSORTS). The Joint Staff directed units that report in GSORTS to report CB defense readiness beginning in July 2001. That system is in place and operational at the Joint level. GSORTS provides information from Unit Commanders on CB defense equipment and training. The operationally ready (serviceable) quantity of equipment provides a unit's S-level, and a unit's training status provides a unit's T-level. A unit's S- and T-levels are classified data. Each individual Service still has the primary responsibility to analyze CB defense unit readiness within that Service.

DLA and the Army Materiel Command (AMC) are the item managers, or National Inventory Control Points (NICP), for the vast majority of NBC defense items in all four Services. They are responsible for industrial base development, acquisition, and storage of wholesale peacetime and sustainment wartime stocks. They buy (process procurement actions) and, if requested, store NBC defense materiel (swing stocks) for the Services. However, the Services must provide funding to DLA and AMC for the procurements.

Mr. George Allen, DSCP-DLA, will address the Defense Logistics Agency role in logistics and inventory management

Service inventories of NBC defense items maintained at unit level use either manual records or a semi-automated tracking system. Stocks held at wholesale level are maintained using a separate automated system. Currently, there is little connectivity between the two systems. As a result, there is limited Service level asset visibility for NBC defense items. The Services are addressing this deficiency.

Under the Joint Program, the Program Manager for Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Defense Systems, Marine Corps Systems Command initiated the Joint Service CBRN Asset Management System (JSCBRN-AMS) program. The intent of this program is to support the CBRN and Combat Service Support logistical requirements of the Joint Warfighter. The JSCBRN-AMS program will integrate an existing database with Asset Identification Technologies (AIT) such as bar-coding and radio frequency identification (RFID) to create a bottom-up designed, interoperable system to provide seamless, end-to-end total asset visibility and shelf-life management of key consumables and non-consumables. As part of this project, the Program Manager conducted a market survey/search to identify existing technologies and systems that track assets in the private sector. When this technology is fielded, it will interact with Joint Service information systems and meet all DOD AIT standards. The technology within this program is key to enabling total integrated inventory management and transportation management in CBRN defense.

The Army has improved its visibility through an initiative to standardize individual issue of eleven critical NBC defense items across all major commands. Unit Status Reporting was implemented for units to report on-hand stocks *vs.* requirements on a monthly basis. In addition, plans are in place for consumable chemical defense equipment for all forces other than Force Package I and other early deploying units to be consolidated and centrally stored at one of the Army Depots. This seven-year execution plan is managed by HQ AMC and will enable better visibility and rotation of NBC defense consumable items. The Air Force has a similar program that consolidates stocks of NBC defense items for deployment in support of contingency operations. These initiatives have also reduced surveillance costs and improved overall management of NBC defense stocks. The Marine Corps has been leading a joint surveillance Technical Working Group, whose initiatives have been increasing cooperative efforts in surveillance and shelf life programs. The Marine Corps has also begun an NBC stocks consolidation program and uses a database called the NBC Defense Equipment Management Program (DEMP) to track the inventory, shelf life, and maintenance histories of NBC defense items. All Services are evaluating the Air Force's Mobility Inventory Control and Accounting System (MICAS) as a model for a CBRN defense equipment management and reporting system.

Although the database may not be identical across all Services due to Service unique requirements, the goal will be for a system that is interoperable.

III. CB Defense Equipment Logistics Status

A detailed data collection of the logistics status of CB defense equipment items is conducted annually and provided in the report to Congress. The most recent data collection is for fiscal year (FY) 2001. The data collection for fiscal year 2002 is underway and will be included in the next annual report. The FY01 data includes information on the inventory status of 129 fielded NBC defense equipment items. Quantities required for wartime needs were then compared to quantities currently on-hand.

Of the 129 items extensively reviewed, DoD developed risk assessments for 50 items based on data gathered as of 30 September 2001. These items were singled out because of their critical role or their ability to represent the general state of their respective commodity area. While some of the items assessed changed from the previous year's report due to obsolescence, the balance of assessed items among the commodity areas remained as constant as possible to provide for continuity. These items were rated as being in a low, moderate, or high risk category. "Risk" is based on the currently available percent fill of the two major theater war (MTW) requirements; the lower this fill the greater the likelihood that such shortages may significantly reduce DoD's ability to respond to a contingency. Shortages for FY01 were calculated by comparing the two MTW requirements, as defined for FY01, to on-hand quantities. The 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) outlines a shift in the basic DoD strategy away from a 2 MTW basis for planning to a transformed force that is able to defeat aggression in two critical areas in overlapping timeframes and planning for victory across the spectrum of possible conflict.

The redefinition of the two MTW requirement did not significantly affect most of the items that were assessed. Several items remain in the high to moderate risk categories while they are being fielded. These items will be monitored as continued procurement ameliorates their risk. Shortages of chemical and biological agent detection systems, collective protection shelters and their respective filters, and biological warfare defense vaccines may have a serious impact on the joint force's ability to survive and sustain combat operations under NBC warfare conditions. The extent of the operational impact of NBC defense equipment shortages is under review in several classified studies.

IV. CONCLUSION

As I have outlined, there have been significant changes in the management and oversight structures for the Chemical and Biological Defense Program over the past two years. These changes have streamlined the oversight process and improved Joint Service coordination. They will also enhance the linkage between requirements and fielded capabilities. These changes are still in the process of being implemented and will continue to yield improvements. There remain many areas where improvements can still be made. None of the changes made—whether filling the ATSD(NCB) vacancy, establishing the JRO for CBRN Defense, approving the Joint Program Executive Office for CB defense, enhancing CB defense with the joint reporting system—would have been made without the Department identifying CB defense as a high priority program.

Mr. SHAYS. General Goldfein.

General GOLDFEIN. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Kucinich, members of the committee, approximately 2 years ago the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff established a Joint Requirements Office for Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Defense within the J–8 directorate of the joint staff.

The chairman's guidance included a specific charter, a manning document and an implementation plan for this Joint Requirements Office. I am assigned the additional duty to serve as the Director of the JRO. Coincidentally, today is our first official day as on organization.

The remainder of my statement describes our organizational vision and objective as we look forward, which I request be inserted into the record.

Mr. SHAYS. That will be inserted into the record.

[The prepared statement of General Goldfein follows:]

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STATEMENT OF

BRIGADER GENERAL STEPHEN M. GOLDFEIN, U.S. AIR FORCE

DEPUTY DIRECTOR, J-8

JOINT WARFIGHTING CAPABILITIES ASSESSMENT

AND

DIRECTOR, JOINT REQUIREMENTS OFFICE,

CHEMICAL, BIOLOGICAL, RADIOLOGICAL, AND NUCLEAR DEFENSE

BEFORE THE

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

SUBCOMMITTE ON

NATIONAL SECURITY, VETERAN AFFAIRS, AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

OCTOBER 1, 2002

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Mr Chairman, approximately two months ago, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff established a Joint Requirements Office for CBRN Defense within the J-8 directorate of the joint staff. The Chairman's approval included a specific charter, a manning document, and an implementation plan for the JRO. I am assigned the additional duty to serve as Director of this JRO.

The JROC-approved JRO Charter calls for a single office responsible for the planning, coordination, and oversight of joint CBRN defense requirements and to serve as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's single source of expertise in addressing CBRN defense issues involving warfighting, force protection and Homeland Security. The Office's chartered responsibilities include developing and maintaining a CBRN defense Overarching Operational Concept and CBRN Defense Modernization Plan; representing the Services and combatant commanders in the requirements generation process; acting as their proponent for coordinating and integrating CBRN defense operational capabilities; developing a Department of Defense Chem-Bio Defense Program Objective Memorandum, in coordination with the acquisition community; and facilitating the development of joint and multi-service doctrine.

The organizational structure calls for an office of 32 DoD and contractor personnel serving four mission areas of analysis and demonstration, mission area integration, materiel requirements, and doctrine and training development. Some of these personnel will be in joint billets and some in service billets, however they will serve as one integrated team. Each of the Services as well as the U.S. Coast Guard are contributing billets and personnel to this effort. These officers will provide initial Service input into all tasks executed by the JRO. Their presence ensures a fully integrated and joint program where the Services' concerns and equities are heard within the requirements generation process. This is a significant change from the previous arrangement.

The JROC specifically approved the processes the JRO would use in developing the Chem-Bio Defense POM and generating requirements as follows:

First, the JRO will develop and present to the JROC for approval a prioritized list of joint capabilities. Development and prioritization of this capabilities list will depend on input from the Services and combatant commanders. Once approved by the JROC, this list will be provided to the acquisition community for developing a draft POM. Once complete, the draft POM will then be returned to the JRO for review and submission to the Secretary of the Army in his role as Executive Agent and in compliance with Public Law. The Secretary of the Army will then submit the POM to OSD.

Second, requirements generation will remain the duty of the Services as part of their Title X responsibilities, however the JRO will be responsible to ensure Service identified requirements fit into the joint warfighting operational architecture. The JRO will accomplish this by developing and maintaining the overarching joint CBRN operational concept I mentioned earlier. This concept will provide the basis for all future CBRN defense operational capabilities and be part of the overall Joint Warfighting Concept. The CBRN operational concept will also provide the basis for the analysis required in developing requirements documents.

The JRO will then coordinate and facilitate integration of Service requirements into joint operational requirements through the use of Integrated Concept Teams (ICTs). Membership on these Teams will include, as a minimum, representation from the Service combat developers, and the intelligence, acquisition, and the testing and evaluation communities. Using these ICTs should ensure that all the operational requirement documents (ORDs) are fully integrated in the development process. Once the ORD is developed, the Services will validate it and approve their respective annex. Approval of all ACAT 1 ORDs rests with the JROC. The JROC delegated approval for all others to the Director, J-8.

The JRO is in the process of establishing itself now. It has acquired office space near the Pentagon and is in the process of "setting up shop." Personnel are currently being assigned. As of today, the Deputy Director, four Service representatives, and several contractors are "on-board" and working issues in support of CBRN defense for the Services and the combatant commanders. It is our hope that we will be fully functional within the next several months.

CBRN weapons present a potentially lethal risk to Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines on future battlefields. It is our intent as the Joint Requirements Office for CBRN Defense to step forward with an aggressive program to properly identify the requirements for the service men and women's protection and sustainment.

Mr. SHAYS. General Bond.

General BOND. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the subcommittee, for this opportunity to discuss the Chemical and Biological Defense Program.

I am the Deputy for Systems Management and Horizontal Technical Integration, reporting throughout the Army Acquisition Executive to the Secretary of the Army; and as you requested, I would like to describe at the macro level the processes we use in the defense acquisition system to take a requirement or a technology and turn it into a tangible, reliable, sustainable product that supports the warfighter.

I am here today representing the Honorable Claude Bolton, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology and the Army Acquisition Executive. I respectfully request that his written statement be made part of the record for today's hearing.

Before I get into the details, let me put Mr. Bolton's and my bottom line up front. The Army's intent is to make sure our fighting men and women have the world's best chemical/biological defense.

Mr. Chairman, you and your committee and other Members of Congress have expressed concern over our chemical and biological defense capabilities. You have challenged us to move out with all dispatch to attain the needed capabilities, and we have accepted that challenge.

I've spent over 32 years in military services, from warfighting units and staff positions. My tours of fighting forces in Germany, Korea and here in the United States taught me firsthand that when our military is in harm's way, our soldiers, airmen, sailors and Marines need and deserve the very best we can provide them.

It is my earnest hope that chemical and biological weapons will never be used. However, history dampens that hope. Therefore, we are attacking the task of developing and fielding needed chemical/biological defense capabilities with a sense of urgency and a determination to overcome any bureaucratic obstacles that may remain.

The very lives of our fighting forces and our fellow citizens are at stake. With that in mind, I will do all I can do to make sure we are ready to meet our chemical and biological challenges that we may encounter in the modern battlefield.

To begin, I need to describe the roles of three key people in the acquisition process. The first is the Milestone Decision Authority or MDA. The MDA is often the Defense or the Army Acquisition Executive, depending on the dollar value of the program. This is the person responsible for the decisions allowing a program to enter or proceed into the next life cycle phase.

The next person with a critical role in the process is the Program Executive Officer or PEO. The PEO for Chemical and Biological Defense executes jointly the life cycle research, development, procurement and deployment of major end items of chemical and biological defense equipment. The mission is accomplished by maintaining continuous and effective communication with our warfighters. Each of the military services, the research, development, test and evaluation community, the Office of the Secretary of Defense; and of course, Congress, who have oversight responsibility, are involved.

The third key person is the Program or Project Manager. The PM is responsible for the day-to-day activities of the program and directs the concepts, designs, development, production, and initial deployment of our defense systems within the approved limits of cost, schedule and performance. The PM ensures the warfighter requirements are met efficiently and effectively in the shortest possible time.

As a result of our OSD-led review of the Chemical and Biological Defense Program management, the Defense Acquisition Executive directed implementation of a revised management concept that will effectively use all three individuals discussed above.

The Army is in the process of working with DOD components on the details of this implementation. But our intent is to structure a management organization that works. I have pledged to the DAE that we will assist in developing a management plan that will clearly define the roles and responsibility of all involved.

In addition, we will assist in developing organization metrics, which are few in number, simple to understand, and reportable to the DAE on a regular basis. These metrics will show the effectiveness and the efficiency of the organization and provide real data upon which to recognize and make organizational adjustments in the future, if needed.

With the organizational concept in place, let me briefly discuss some of the responsibilities and processes we will use to get the products to the warfighter. Each of the specific commodity areas has a corresponding Program Management Office, or PMO, and respective programs fall under their area of responsibility.

The PEO and the PM use the Defense Acquisition System on a daily basis to execute their responsibilities. The principles that govern this process encourage innovation, flexibility, tailoring, continuous improvement of the acquisition system itself. This process is intended to provide effective product transition from science and technology through development and production to fielding and sustainment. Validated, time-phased requirements allow for an evolutionary program acquisition.

Advanced technologies are integrated into producible systems and deployed in the shortest possible time. The DOD acquisition management framework, as shown on the right here—and you each should have a copy here, which was distributed earlier. As requested by the subcommittee, I will now walk through you the defense acquisition life cycle.

The cycle is a continuum of phases. The phases are Pre-Systems Acquisition, Systems Acquisition, and Sustainment. The MDA can allow a program to enter an acquisition life cycle at any phase, in accordance with the technical maturity and acceptable risk.

The program life cycle starts with a validated user's needs statement or operational requirements document or a mission need statement. The requirements generation process manages the generation and validity of—validation of this need, based on capabilities required, and in some cases, a specific threat to be countered.

Concurrently, as part of the Pre-Systems Acquisition Phase, the PM begins identifying promising technologies in the Department's laboratories and research centers, as well as in academia and from commercial sources. Entrance into the Systems Acquisition Phase

indicates that the user and the developer have agreed on a design concept and a technical approach, and the MDA has approved the acquisition approach.

During this phase, the PM reduces the program risk and ensures the program is mature enough for productions. The PM evaluates, and if necessary, reduces integration and manufacturing risks, designs for producibility and ensures operational supportability, affordability and interoperability. The system also undergoes rigorous testing and evaluation during this phase.

The final phase is the Sustainment phase, which begins when the support performance requirements are achieved and when the system is sustainable in the most cost-effective manner for its entire life cycle. At this point, management of the system transitions to the service system command or the defense logistics agency.

But the program doesn't stop there. At end of its useful life, the PM ensures that the system is demilitarized and disposed of in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements. The acquisition cycle is continuous. As the field identifies improvement or modifications, or as new requirements are identified by the user through an evolving concept of operation or emerging doctrine, or as advances in technology surface and changes in the threat develop, we are able to insert the required material improvements and manage them in appropriate portion of the acquisition life cycle.

We have continued to refine our process of the metrics or objective measures of effectiveness we will use in getting the best equipment available into the hands of our warfighter.

In summary, we are committed to providing our soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines the best technology and equipment at the right place at the right time and at the right cost.

This concludes my opening remarks. I am pleased to answer any questions from the members of the subcommittee.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Bolton follows:]

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STATEMENT OF

THE HONORABLE CLAUDE M. BOLTON, JR.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

(ACQUISITION, LOGISTICS AND TECHNOLOGY), AND

ARMY ACQUISITION EXECUTIVE

BEFORE THE

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY, VETERANS AFFAIRS,

AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

OCTOBER 1, 2002

CONCERNING

CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL EQUIPMENT:

PREPARING FOR A TOXIC BATTLEFIELD

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TESTIMONY

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee. I am Claude M. Bolton, Jr. Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics and Technology), and the Army Acquisition Executive. I appreciate this opportunity to represent the Army and provide testimony on our Chemical and Biological Defense Program.

The Army is the Department of Defense's Executive Agent for the Joint Service Chemical and Biological Defense Program (CBDP). We are responsible for procuring biological defense equipment for all the Services. Additionally, for chemical defense equipment, Army Project and Product Managers (PM) work closely with other service PMs to develop and procure assigned chemical defense equipment.

Before I get into the details, let me put my **bottom line** up front. The Army's intent and certainly mine, is to ensure our fighting men and women have the world's best Chemical Biological (CB) defense. Mr. Chairman, you and your committee and indeed Congress as a whole have expressed concern about our CB defense capabilities. You have challenged us to move out with all dispatch to obtain the needed capabilities, and I accept that challenge and charge. I spent many years as a military fighting man and I know first hand that when our military goes in harms way, they need and deserve the very best we can provide them. It is my earnest hope that CB weapons will never be used; however, history

dampens that hope. Therefore, I sense urgency in developing and fielding needed CB defense capabilities quickly. There are many issues surrounding the management of this effort as you are aware and may observe during this hearing. Mr. Chairman, we will resolve those issues. The stakes are too high to allow us to get mired down in what some have characterized as bureaucratic rice bowl infighting. The stakes are the very lives of our fighting force and our fellow citizens. And with that in mind, I will do all I can to make sure we are ready to meet the CB threat that should ever come to pass.

In his testimony, Brigadier General Goldfein discussed the requirements process as our mandate to provide quality and sustainable equipment to our brave men and women. Mr. Michael Parker, in his testimony, will describe to you some specific examples of individual protective equipment and technology requirements and initiatives in the Joint Service CBDP that meet this requirement. With their testimony in mind, I would like to describe, at a more macro-level, the processes we use in the Defense Acquisition System to take a requirement or a technology, and turn it into a tangible, useful product that supports the warfighter.

To do this I will need to describe the roles of three key people in this process. The first person is the Milestone Decision Authority (MDA), often the Defense or Army Acquisition Executive depending upon the dollar value of the

program. This is the person responsible for the decision approving a program entering or proceeding to its next life cycle phase.

The next person with a critical role in the process is the Program Executive Officer, or PEO. The PEO for Chemical and Biological Defense (PEO-CBD) executes jointly the life cycle research, development, procurement and deployment of major end items of Chemical and Biological defense equipment. This mission is accomplished by maintaining continuous and effective communication with the Science and Technology (S&T) community; the Joint Requirements Office (JRO); our warfighters; industry, technical and operational testers and independent evaluators, Service logistics and sustainment activities, and with the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Congress who have oversight responsibilities. The mission of the PEO is to meet the materiel requirements of our warfighters. We accomplish this mission through the rapid and effective transition of assigned programs from science and technology, through development and procurement, to deployment using a focused program management organizational structure and a highly trained and motivated acquisition workforce.

The third person is the Program or Project Manager (PM). The PM directs the concept, design, development, production, and initial deployment of a Defense system within the approved limits of cost, schedule, and performance.

The PM ensures the warfighter's requirements are met efficiently and effectively in the shortest possible time.

As a result of an OSD-led review of the chemical/biological defense program management, the Defense Acquisition Authority (DAE) directed implementation of a revised management concept that will effectively utilize the three individuals discussed above. The Army is in the process of working with other DoD components on the details of implementation for the revised management concept. I have pledged to the DAE that we will assist in developing a management plan that clearly defines roles and responsibilities for all involved. In addition, we will assist in developing organizational metrics which are few in number, simple to understand, and reportable to the DAE on a regular basis. These metrics will show the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization and provide real data upon which to recognize and make organizational adjustments in the future if needed.

Let me briefly discuss some of the responsibilities and processes to be used to get the products to the warfighter. Each of the specific Commodity Areas has a corresponding Program Management Office (PMO), and respective programs fall under their area of responsibility.

The PM manages the risks associated with achieving performance and technical objectives of a system as well as meeting its schedule and cost

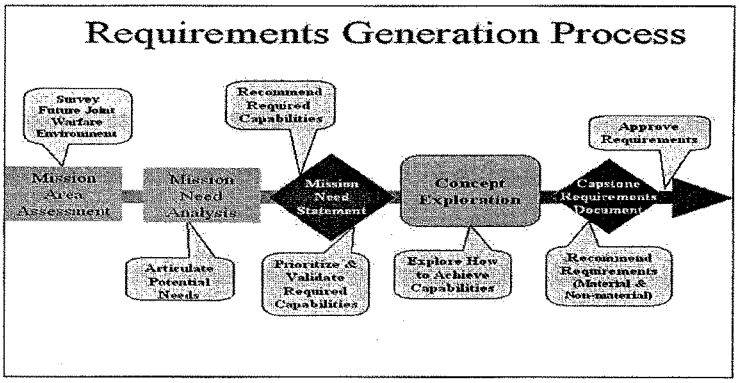
objectives. Objective assessment of technology maturity and risk is a continuous aspect of this process. In managing these risks, the PM must work with three overarching management frameworks, which are the Requirements Generation System, the Defense Acquisition System, and the Resource Allocation Process. The end state of these frameworks is delivery of the required, sustainable product to the warfighter on time and within budget.

The PEO and project managers use the Defense Acquisition System on a daily basis to execute their responsibilities. The principles that govern this process encourage innovation, flexibility, tailoring, and continuous improvement of the acquisition system itself. This process is intended to provide effective product transition from S&T, through development and production, to fielding and sustainment. Validated, time-phased requirements allow for evolutionary program acquisition. Advanced technologies are integrated into producible systems and deployed in the shortest practicable time. These principles also identify the PM as the single point of accountability for total life cycle management of the product. PMs can tailor the life cycle of individual programs, consistent with technical risk and cost and MDA approval.

The Defense Acquisition Life Cycle is a continuum of phases. These phases are: Pre-Systems Acquisition, Systems Acquisition, and Sustainment. The MDA can allow a program to enter the acquisition life cycle at any phase, in accordance with its technical maturity and acceptable risk. Prior to transition to

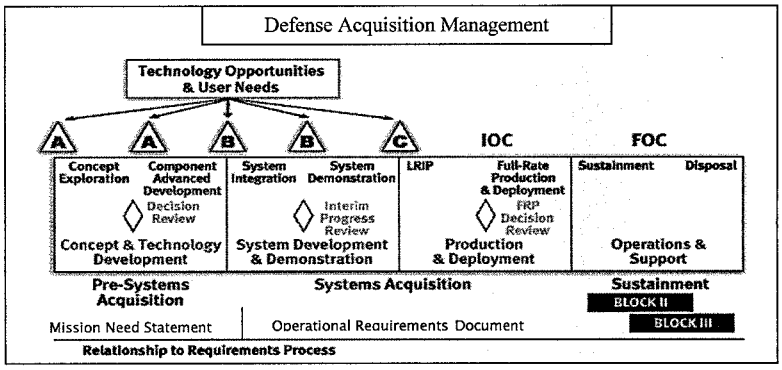
the succeeding phase, the MDA conducts a milestone decision review where the program's maturity and its potential success are assessed.

I would like to describe the generic template that outlines the system we use to meet the needs of our Warfighters, beginning with the Requirements Generation Process.



The life cycle of a program starts with a validated user need. The Requirements Generation Process manages the generation and validation of this need, based on the capability required or, in some cases, a specific threat to be countered. Concurrently, as part of the Pre-Systems Acquisition Phase, the PM begins identifying promising technologies in the Department's laboratories and research centers, as well as, in academia, and from commercial sources.

The Science & Technology community addresses the user's needs based on stated future operational capabilities desired, and maintains a broad-based program spanning all Defense-relevant sciences and technologies that can anticipate future needs and those technical areas not being pursed by civil or commercial communities. The S&T community also preserves long-range research; and enables rapid, successful transition of programs to support the warfighter. Technology development is a continuous process reflecting close collaboration of scientists with users and developers, as future operational capabilities are stated and requirements are refined.



Supporting plans provide the S&T vision, objectives and investment strategies for critical technologies to support warfighter needs. This strategy is responsive to the National Security Science and Technology Council's National S&T Strategy, and the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff's S&T objectives and strategies. The Defense S&T Strategy focuses on four considerations: affordability, dual use,

accelerated transition, and a strong technology base. The Services' supporting master plans guide their preparation of S&T programs and budgets. The Defense S&T Reliance Executive Committee accomplishes oversight and coordination of the Defense S&T program and process. S&T investment is focused and guided by the use of Defense Technology Objectives, and Advanced Concept Technology Demonstrations.

As part of the overall risk management strategy, the PM, based on assessments from the Departments lab system uses Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs) to characterize the technology. A technology can be described as being at any one of nine levels that range from basic scientific research through actual proven technology that allows the system to be used under operational conditions (see Appendix 1, Technology Readiness Levels). The goal is to identify appropriate, effective and supportable technologies that can be transitioned to the PM for development, procurement and fielding.

During this pre-acquisition phase, the MDA designates a PM. Promising technologies are funded by the technology base agencies. The feasibility of alternative concepts are defined, studied, and evaluated. A System Design Concept is developed. Component technologies are developed and proven in concept in order to reduce technical risk. The program proceeds to the System Acquisition Phase when a system architecture is developed and the technology

is demonstrated in the relevant environment. At this point the requirement and key performance parameters should be validated and the program is fully funded.

Entrance into the Systems Acquisition Phase, indicates that the user and developer have agreed to a design concept and technical approach, and the MDA has approved the acquisition approach. During this phase, the PM further reduces the program risk and ensures the program is mature enough for production. The PM evaluates, and if necessary reduces integration and manufacturing risk, designs for producibility, ensures operational supportability, affordability and interoperability. The system also undergoes rigorous testing and evaluation during this phase. In conjunction with the services logistics organizations or the Defense Logistics Agency, sustainment strategies evolve and are refined. Upon decision of the MDA, system deployment and operational capability is achieved through a ramp-up to full rate production. The PM ensures that the gaining units receive training on the system and a logistics support structure is in place.

The Sustainment Phase begins when the support performance requirements are achieved and the system is sustainable in the most cost effective manner for its entire life cycle. At this point management of the system transitions to a service systems command or the Defense Logistics Agency. The PM maintains oversight and receives feedback from the field in the form of readiness and maintenance reports concerning how the system is performing.

At the end of its useful life, the PM ensures that a system is demilitarized and disposed of in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements.

The acquisition cycle is continuous. As the field identifies improvements or modifications through feedback to the PM, or as new requirements are identified by the user through evolving Concepts of Operations or emerging doctrine, or as advances in technology surface and changes in the threat develop, we are able to insert the required materiel improvements and manage them in the appropriate portion of the acquisition life cycle.

We continue to refine our process of "metrics" or objective measures of our effectiveness we use in getting the best equipment available into the hands of our warfighters. The PMs are held accountable for program performance by requiring that they think strategically and set, measure, and report on specific goals quarterly to address the triad of acquisition excellence: cost, schedule and performance. These reports tell us how well we are doing. In addition, our programs are directly linked to the Joint requirements process. Each program can be traced back to an Operational Requirements Document (ORD). In this way, we are assured of providing the warfighter with the capabilities they deem to be imperative in successfully completing their assigned missions in a chemical biological environment. The Chemical Biological Defense Program will continue to follow principles that have quantifiable, measurable, outcome-oriented goals and related measures.

In summary, we are committed to providing our soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines the best technology and equipment, at the right place at the right time, and at the right cost.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify before the committee.

Appendix 1

Technology Readiness Levels and Their Definitions

Technology Readiness Levels

The following table lists the various technology readiness levels and provides a description of each.

Technology Readiness Level	Description
1. Basic principles observed and reported.	Lowest level of technology readiness. Scientific research begins to be translated into technology's basic properties.
2. Technology concept and/or application formulated.	Invention begins. Once basic principles are observed, practical applications can be invented. The application is speculative and there is no proof or detailed analysis to support the assumption. Examples are still limited to paper studies.
3. Analytical and experimental critical function and/or characteristic proof of concept.	Active research and development is initiated. This includes analytical studies and laboratory studies to physically validate analytical predictions of separate elements of the technology. Examples include components that are not yet integrated or representative.
4. Component and/or breadboard validation in laboratory environment.	Basic technological components are integrated to establish that the pieces will work together. This is relatively "low fidelity" compared to the eventual system. Examples include integration of "ad hoc" hardware in a laboratory.
5. Component and/or breadboard validation in relevant environment.	Fidelity of breadboard technology increases significantly. The basic technological components are integrated with reasonably realistic supporting elements so that the technology can be tested in simulated environment. Examples include "high fidelity" laboratory integration of components.

6. System/subsystem model or prototype demonstration in a relevant environment.	Representative model or prototype system, which is well beyond the breadboard tested for level 5, is tested in a relevant environment. Represents a major step up in a technology's demonstrated readiness. Examples include testing a prototype in a high fidelity laboratory environment or in simulated operational environment.
7. System prototype demonstration in an operational environment.	Prototype near or at planned operational system. Represents a major step up from level 6, requiring the demonstration of an actual system prototype in an operational environment. Examples include testing the prototype in a test bed aircraft.
8. Actual system completed and qualified through test and demonstration.	Technology has been proven to work in its final form and under expected conditions. In almost all cases, this level represents the end of true system development. Examples include developmental test and evaluation of the system in its intended weapon system to determine if it meets design specifications.
9. Actual system proven through successful mission operations.	Actual application of the technology in its final form and under mission conditions, such as those encountered in operational test and evaluation. Examples include using the system under operational mission conditions.

Mr. GILMAN [presiding]. Mr. Parker, will you proceed?

Mr. PARKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, committee members. My name is Michael Parker. I am the Deputy Commander of the U.S. Army Soldier Biological and Chemical Command.

My boss, Major General John Doesburg, has a number of responsibilities in the Chemical and Biological Defense Program, two of major significance to your hearing today; that is, he heads a group of component service general officers who are responsible for the planning, programming, and budgeting for the materiel, that is, the equipment which is developed under and procured under the Chemical and Biological Defense Program; and he has the laboratory structure which provides the technology and the engineering support to the project managers that were outlined in Major General Bond's discussion of the acquisition process.

I would like to just touch on about a half-dozen of over 150 projects and work packages that encompass the Chemical and Biological Defense Program as far as equipment and technology development.

These six focus on the issue today that this committee is pursuing today of individual protection. The Joint Service Protective Mask is a current development mask to replace the fielded M–40 mask and the MCU–2P. It is a significant improvement over the field mask, providing a much lighter mask, a better fit factor, a larger lens to improve visibility and compatibility with weapons systems, significantly reduced breathing resistance to reduce the burden on the soldier, sailor, airman, Marine who would wear this in a combat environment.

It also considers observations by this panel or this committee, many of the audit agencies and one of our own internal Army and other service reviews in the area of reducing the burden on preventive maintenance in the field environment. The design is such that it is much more robust and will reduce the burden on the user to continually maintain the equipment. It will also replace all of the ground masks, such that the services will have a single mask, reducing the total ownership costs and logistics burden. We anticipate an initial fielding of that mask in about fiscal year 2006.

The next item is the Joint Service Chemical Environment Survivability Mask, which is a mask that the combatant commanders and field forces have asked for, which is designed to provide a capability in a reduced threat environment. The individual protective equipment that is fielded now is designed against a maximum threat. There are many conditions where the threat is present, but the concentration of chemical and biological agents would be much reduced.

This piece of equipment is designed for a—to be a single-use item, capable of protecting for a short duration at a significantly reduced burden. We anticipate fielding that in the 2005 timeframe.

The Joint Service Aircrew Mask will be a standard mask for high-performance aircraft, replacing a number of masks that are fielded, primarily between the Air Force and the Navy. It will be fully compatible with all of the high-G, high-pressure systems that are on high-performance aircraft, also reducing to a single mask to reduce the logistics burden. We anticipate fielding it in the 2006 timeframe.

The Joint Service Mask Leakage Tester is a system that will be able to test masks to production standards in a small compact piece of equipment that will be man portable and will be much easier to take to the field, to conduct that operation in the field. We anticipate fielding that in the 2003 timeframe.

The Joint Service Protective Aircrew Ensemble is an extension of the lightweight suit technology program to create a suit specifically oriented toward aircrews and the environment that they have to operate in. That will also be a 2005 fielding.

The Joint Service Lightweight Integrated Suit Technology ensemble, which has been discussed somewhat today, is a program of a continuous nature where new materials will be continually introduced in the ensemble to reduce the burden, the heat stress, the weight of the suit, improve performance such as launderability, wear and tear, replace the current series of three gloves with a single set of gloves—that type of continuous improvement. It will also be compatible with the maintained capability of the new General Purpose Mask.

One of the additional challenges which we continuously introduce into equipment is the recognition that we are facing threats, or our forces will face threats, in the field beyond the traditional chemical warfare agents and biological warfare agents. Toxic industrial chemicals can be diverted and can present a challenge to our field forces if purposefully employed, or if released as a collateral effect as we operate in urban terrain where there are maybe large chemical plants or storage of chemical materials that are industrial in nature, but nonetheless very toxic. We are expanding the protection capability of all of our fielded systems to deal with these toxic and industrial chemicals.

With that, let me summarize and be open for your questions.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you, Mr. Parker.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Parker follows:]

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION
UNTIL RELEASED BY
THE HOUSE COMMITTEE
ON GOVERNMENT REFORM**

STATEMENT OF

MR. MICHAEL A. PARKER

DEPUTY TO THE COMMANDER

SOLDIER AND BIOLOGICAL CHEMICAL COMMAND

BEFORE THE

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY, VETERANS AFFAIRS,

AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

OCTOBER 1, 2002

CONCERNING

CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL EQUIPMENT: PREPARING FOR A TOXIC

BATTLEFIELD

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION
UNTIL RELEASED BY
THE HOUSE COMMITTEE
ON GOVERNMENT REFORM**

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am Mr. Michael A. Parker, Deputy to the Commander of Soldier and Biological Chemical Command located in Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. Today I represent Major General John Doesburg, Chairman of the Joint Service Materiel Group (JSMG) and Commander of the U.S. Army Soldier and Biological Chemical Command. As Chairman, JSMG, MG Doesburg leads a team of General Officers from each Service in the planning, programming, and budgeting of funds allocated to the Joint Service Chemical and Biological Defense program under OSD oversight. As Commander SBCCOM, MG Doesburg is responsible for supporting the respective Program Managers from each of the Services by providing the science and technology and engineering talent to develop critically needed materiel. I am pleased to appear before you today to discuss research and development of individual protective equipment in the Joint Service Chemical and Biological Defense Program.

Since Congress passed Public Law 103-160 in 1994, Joint Service efforts have significantly improved the survivability of our war fighters on a battlefield poisoned with chemical and biological agents. We are keenly aware that, when diplomacy, deterrence, and avoidance fail, individual protection must not. I am proud to say that in keeping with the intent of the public Law, the terms of our current Joint Service Agreement, and the leadership of the Army as Executive Agent, our warfighters in all Services have the best individual protective equipment in the world, and it's going to get even better.

There are multiple types of systems currently being developed and fielded within the area of individual protective equipment. There are ground systems, aviation systems, masks, clothing ensembles and testers. These systems are designed to allow warfighters to fight and win in any battle environment. As time progresses, the Joint Service Chemical and Biological Defense Program is capturing technology and translating it into combat capable systems that enhance the effectiveness of the individual Soldier, Sailor, Airman and Marine on the battlefield.

There are many systems currently in development. The following six (6) systems represent the most significant developmental efforts in individual protective equipment.

The Joint Service General Purpose Mask is currently in development. It will be the standard field protective mask for the U.S. Armed Forces. This mask will provide improved protection, be lighter than current masks, have reduced breathing resistance, have an improved field of view, have lower weight and bulk and be more compatible with other equipment. The fielding of a single standard field protective mask will not only enhance the performance of warfighters, it will enhance logistics effectiveness and reduce total ownership costs. The Joint Service General Purpose Mask is projected to begin fielding in FY06.

The Joint Service Chemical Environment Survivability Mask will bring a new capability to U.S. armed forces. It will be a lightweight, low bulk, short duration protective mask and hood (above the neck, head, eye, and respiratory ensemble) capable of protecting the individual from anticipated low levels of chemical and biological agents, radioactive particles, and selected toxic industrial materials contamination. The mask is intended to provide commanders at all levels with greater options for protection, especially in operations other than war. It will be one-size-fits-all, inexpensive and disposable. The Joint Service Chemical Environment Survivability Mask is projected to begin fielding in FY05.

The Joint Service Aircrew Mask will be the standard nuclear, biological and chemical aircrew protective mask for all U.S. armed forces. This family of aviation masks will provide nuclear, biological and chemical protection to all aircrews and will simultaneously integrate with pressure breathing for G systems in high performance aircraft. The Joint Service Aircrew Mask is being designed to reduce the heat stress imposed by current systems and can be donned and doffed in flight. It is compatible with the gamut of existing and co-developmental aircrew life support equipment. The Joint Service Aircrew Mask is projected to begin fielding in FY06.

The Joint Service Mask Leakage Tester will be a portable, unit level device that is one-man transportable, capable of determining serviceability and proper fit and identifying defective or unserviceable components of current and future NBC

protective masks. Due to its compact size, improved diagnostics and ability to test multiple masks simultaneously, the tester will improve unit nuclear, biological and chemical equipment maintenance programs and promote a higher state of readiness. The Joint Service Mask Leakage Tester is projected to begin fielding in FY03.

The Joint Service Protective Aircrew Ensemble will be used in conjunction with above-the-neck individual head-eye-respiratory protection by rotary wing and fixed wing aircraft personnel. The ensemble will allow aircrew to fly throughout their operating envelope in an actual or perceived chemical and biological warfare environment. The ensemble will be suitable for performing all normal and emergency procedures, both in-flight and on the ground. It will provide the ability to fully exploit combat capabilities in a chemical and biological environment while reducing heat stress induced by existing aircrew chemical and biological protective garments. The Joint Protective Aircrew Ensemble is projected to begin fielding in FY05.

The Joint Service Lightweight Integrated Suit Technology ensemble consists of multiple components. The overgarment consists of a top with integrated hood and trousers. The ensemble also contains multipurpose overboots and protective gloves. When worn with a field protective mask, the system will provide complete head-to-toe protection from chemical and biological agents and radiological particulates. The overgarment is designed to provide 24

hours of protection after 45 days of wear. The overgarments and multipurpose overboots are currently being produced and will take the place of preexisting individual protective equipment held by the services and special operating forces. Protective gloves are currently under development and are projected to be fielded beginning in FY03.

Recent and current technology projects support both ongoing and future individual protective equipment research and development programs. Within these technology projects, new and improved material technologies and new design concepts are key to advancing the state-of-the art in protective ensembles for warfighters. New and improved materials offer the potential for lighter, more durable and more comfortable ensembles, smaller filters, end-of-service-life indicators and protection from a wider array of chemical and biological agents.

Multiple laboratories, including those located at the Natick Soldier Systems Center, are working vigorously to prove new design concepts and new protective technologies. Current and recent technology projects include projects to develop material treatment technologies for protective suits, reactive materials for protective suits, lightweight materials for protective suits, permeable selective membrane technologies for suits, end-of-service-life indicators for filters, new filtration technologies, new mask materials and new protective equipment modeling methods. The objective of this technology development is to reduce the physical burden on warfighters while providing enhanced protection and

improved logistics. Developing the technology and end items within a system of systems approach that is focused on reducing the overall number of items or systems used to protect the soldier is our overall objective. As a result, the overall logistics burden will be reduced to the soldier and Army will benefit, as we are able to take advantage of streamlined business practices for inventory management and item surveillance. In the end the soldier will be better equipped at lower overall cost.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, in closing I would like to thank you for the opportunity to discuss the development of individual protective equipment within the Joint Service Chemical and Biological Defense Program. I would also like to thank you for inviting MG Doesburg to the hearing and allowing me to testify before you today in his stead. We will continue to do all we can to meet the materiel needs of our nation's operating forces and capitalize on advancements in technology.

Subject to your questions, this completes my testimony.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Allen.

Mr. ALLEN. Good morning, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Kucinich, distinguished Members. I am George Allen, representing Vice Admiral Keith Lippert, who is Director of the Defense Logistics Agency.

I appreciate the opportunity to come before this committee to address your concerns concerning individual protective equipment and supplies used against a chem/bio attack.

Mr. GILMAN. Can you bring the microphone closer to you, please? Go ahead.

Mr. ALLEN. I have submitted a written statement for the record, which I would like submitted.

Mr. GILMAN. It will be accepted for the record.

Mr. ALLEN. In your invitation to testify, you requested that we address the progress we have made with respect to equipment inventories, quality controls, serviceability for the battle dress overgarment and the JSLIST suit in particular.

You also asked that we address or focus on the effect of management, proper maintenance, ready availability and the on-hand status of both the equipment and supplies. And in response to these questions, I hope to make three very, very important points to this committee.

First, we will do everything in our power to prevent the outrageous criminal conduct that resulted in the presence of defective BDOs in our inventories in years past. We have reemphasized the especially rigorous quality assurance measures in our contracting for these items. And we continuously monitor the shelf life of all such items in conjunction with the Program Manager and the military services.

Second, we have significantly improved our visibility of inventory over these items.

And, finally, we maintain a very close working relationship with the Program Manager and our customers to ensure as much integration of these items as we can.

The most significant chemical and biological protective items we have bought on behalf of the services are the BDOs, battle dress overgarments, the JSLIST suits mentioned by Mr. Parker, and the chemical gloves, although there are a number of other items. We store a large number of these items on behalf of the customers in our depots. We are now able to manage the shelf life of these because we have begun to store these items in lots by their shelf life expiration date. We plan to expand this capability to managing these items by specific manufacturing lot as we implement our new Enterprise Resource Planning System.

The quality assurance and shelf life surveillance provisions that we have implemented for JSLIST suits, in particular, represent a significant improvement over those we used for BDOs in years past. We have expanded the shelf life surveillance provisions to everything that is also in the inventory. We work closely with the military services and their agents and other agencies in this effort. We take random samples from every JSLIST lot that is manufactured to undertake further testing and quality control before government acceptance.

The component manufacturers have to provide a certificate of compliance before the components are provided to the prime con-

tractors. The prime contractors have to inspect those components, then they have to perform inspections throughout the manufacturing process as part of our contract.

Defense contract management agency quality assurance representatives are part of this process, and we employ independent labs that provide live agent testing on the end item as opposed to on the individual pieces of materiel.

Similar procedures are also in place for newly purchased items and some of the shelf life procedures are in place for items that remain in the inventory. Overall management of individual protective equipment used for chem/bio defense is really the responsibility of program management. Oversight is provided by Dr. Winegar, as she has maintained. We maintain a close working relationship for the Program Manager in our role of acquiring and warehousing these items.

Over the past decade, we have provided several million suits to the military services. There are currently over 4 million suits in the inventory, according to the Program Manager and as testified to by GAO. That 4 million suits includes approximately 1.5 million JSLIST suits, and there are several hundred thousand more JSLIST suits on contract not yet delivered. In the event of a contingency, we can surge production to 1.4 million suits annually.

Our current replacement requirements for gloves in the aggregate are approximately 1 million pairs annually. We are negotiating contracts with surge capacity of up to 2.5 million pairs of gloves per year.

Switching to medical supplies, which was mentioned also in your letter, we use similar processes to work with the DOD and determine requirements and to contract for those medical supplies. We currently have contract coverage to meet the requirements for all of the services in the event of a single major theatre of war, and we are expanding that capability to a larger scenario, should it be required. These contracts guarantee availability of up to $630 million worth of materiel if we exercise all of the refresh options in the contract. And as I have said, this is the equivalent to a single major theatre war.

Mr. Chairman, in conclusion, we are working closely with the services to ensure integrated management of the chem/bio protective items in a way we were not 2 years ago. We have reemphasized and strengthened our quality assurance measures to ensure the products comply with technical requirements for the items; and we monitor the shelf level of all of these items in our inventories over time.

And, finally, Mr. Chairman, we have made some significant improvements in our visibility of the inventories of these items, and we are poised to realize much more significant advances as our agency deploys its new Enterprise Resource Planning System.

Subject to your questions, that concludes my testimony.

Mr. SHAYS [presiding]. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Allen follows:]

STATEMENT OF

MR. GEORGE H. ALLEN

DEPUTY COMMANDER, DEFENSE SUPPLY CENTER PHILADELPHIA

BEFORE THE

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY, VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

OCTOBER 1, 2002

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and distinguished members. I am George Allen, Deputy Commander of the Defense Supply Center Philadelphia (DSCP), a field activity of the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA). Vice Admiral Lippert, the Director of the Agency, has asked me to represent him today inasmuch as DSCP manages those chemical and biological defense items that are assigned to the Agency. I appreciate the opportunity to

appear before this subcommittee to address your questions concerning individual protective equipment used against a chemical/biological attack as well as medical supplies.

SUBCOMMITTEE QUESTIONS

In its invitation to testify, the Subcommittee requested that we address the progress we have made with respect to individual protective equipment inventories, quality controls and serviceability for the Battle Dress Overgarment (BDO) and the Joint Service Lightweight Integrated Suit Technology (JSLIST) suit. You also asked that we focus on the development of requirements to insure effective management, proper maintenance, and ready availability of appropriate individual protective equipment and medical supplies. Finally, you asked that we be prepared to discuss the on-hand status of individual protective equipment, particularly BDOs and JSLIST suits. I will try to address your questions in the order in which they were presented. In so doing, I hope to make three very important points. First, we are working closely with the Marine Corps' Program Manager, Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Defense Systems to insure integrated management of JSLIST suits and other chemical/biological protective items. Second; we have the quality assurance measures in place not only to insure that we take delivery only of products that fully comply with the technical requirements for chemical/biological protective items, but also to monitor the shelf life of those items in

our inventories over time. Finally, we have significantly improved, and will continue to improve, our visibility of inventory of chemical protective items.

INDIVIDUAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT INVENTORIES

The most significant chemical/biological protective items DSCP buys (or has bought) on behalf of the Services are the BDOs, chemical protective gloves (in three thicknesses), and the JSLIST suits (in both woodland and desert patterns). The DLA continues to own previously-acquired chemical protective gloves and stores them in its depots. While the DLA has not, historically, owned stock of JSLIST suits and transferred its own inventories of BDOs to the Military Services in the late 1990's, we continue to store large numbers of both items on behalf of the Army, Air Force and Marine Corps in our depots. As long as these suits remain in our custody, notwithstanding the fact that they may be owned by the Services, we are accountable for them just as we are for gloves. Also while the suits are in our custody, the depots verify shipping documents and insure that the stock is safe and secure. They spot check the inventory to insure that contents of each shipping box match the external markings, including a count and match of stock numbers as well as surveillance and shelf life numbers. They also check to determine whether vacuum seals have been maintained as is necessary to preserve shelf-life. Periodically they check stocks to be sure that boxes have not collapsed in storage. Once the items are shipped out of our depots, accountability passes to the owning Service. Most recently, DLA has been authorized to build its own contingency level of JSLIST suits.

Chemical gear is stored in our depots according to the quarter and year in which the items reach shelf-life expiration, with individual stock numbered items manufactured during the same quarter stored in the same location. Items such as JSLIST suits whose initial shelf-life can be extended after testing are identified in the system by the initial shelf-life expiration date as well as the date of manufacture. We, therefore, have the ability to manage the shelf-life of the suits (and other individual protective equipment) in our custody. We plan to expand this capability to managing this equipment by specific manufacturing lot. The Distribution Standard System already in place in our depots will have the ability to do this with a minor systems change. Although our current materiel management system cannot take advantage of this capability, SAP, the enterprise resource planning system which will replace our legacy system, can do so. SAP (which stands for Systems, Applications, Products) has strong shelf-life and batch management functionality, the latter being equivalent to lot number tracking. It is our plan to move JSLIST suits currently under our control (as well as our other chemical protective items) under SAP management at the earliest practicable date, which we currently estimate will be December 2003. SAP's Logistics-Batch Management function will allow us to assign unique batch numbers to individual lots of suits, record all quality-relevant data applicable to that lot, and track each lot from its procurement to its ultimate delivery to a specific customer.

QUALITY CONTROLS AND SERVICEABILITY

The quality assurance and shelf-life surveillance provisions we have implemented for JSLIST suits represent a significant improvement over those used for BDOs. The DSCP

and the DLA work closely with the Program Manager as well the other concerned Military Services and agencies in this effort.

To assure the quality of the suits delivered to the Government by contractors, random samples from every JSLIST lot produced by a specific manufacturing facility undergo testing and quality control evaluation before Government acceptance. As part of this process, the manufacturers of each of the components must inspect their own products and provide prime contractors a Certificate of Compliance certifying the performance requirements for the component were met. In addition, the prime contractors themselves must visually inspect each lot of components to insure compliance with the performance specification. Quality assurance personnel employed by the contractor are positioned at each production station in a facility, and the Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) Quality Assurance Representative can, at any time, inspect both the garments in production and the quality assurance processes the contractor has in place. At the end of the manufacturing process, the contractor is required to inspect 100 percent of JSLIST items produced in accordance with the specification. This specification involves 220 different inspections. Completed lots are then presented to the Quality Assurance Representative, who inspects for visual and dimensional conformance and, in so doing, performs 220 different inspections on randomly selected items (200 from a typical lot of 5000 items). The Quality Assurance Representative then randomly selects samples (normally six) to be sent for live agent chemical testing. This testing is performed by independent test and evaluation facilities and is the final step in assuring that the

garments produced and delivered perform the same as those produced during research and development.

We follow an equally exacting process in assuring the serviceability of suits retained in inventory after their manufacture, a process set forth in a memorandum of agreement between DSCP, the using Services and the Program Manager, Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Defense Systems. In collaboration with the Program Manager we have established a shelf-life surveillance team in Albany, GA to insure the appropriate emphasis is placed on this effort. Under the Joint Service Set Aside Program, six items from each manufactured lot of JSLIST suits are set aside and stored at Albany to permit us to conduct periodic shelf-life testing throughout the JSLIST lifecycle. To date more than 4,000 suits have been set aside for future testing, which will occur 5, 10, 12 and 14 years after manufacture. The shelf-life team also pulled representative samples from existing inventory of the full range of chemical protective apparel stored in DLA's depots, and has cataloged it for out-year examination. At the appropriate times for each item, we test these samples to determine their continued viability. The shelf life surveillance team, using the world-wide message system, notifies the Services and DLA of the results, pass or fail, and DLA forwards this notice to its depots as well as any non-DoD customers it has identified. If the samples fail, the items they represent are removed from inventory and either disposed of or used for training purposes. We follow a similar shelf-life surveillance protocol for the other chemical/biological defense items we have in stock, including BDO's and gloves.

MANAGEMENT, MAINTENANCE AND AVAILABILITY OF INDIVIDUAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Overall management of individual protective equipment used for chemical/biological defense is the responsibility of the Program Manager, Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Defense Systems, a component of the Marine Corps Systems Command, with oversight provided by the Deputy Assistant to the Secretary of Defense (Chemical-Biological Defense). DLA maintains a close working relationship with the Program Manager in our role of acquiring and warehousing chemical/biological protective items.

DLA has already issued approximately 4 million BDO and JSLIST suits to the Services. For JSLIST suits, the Program Manager provides requirements, along with the funding upon which they are based, to DSCP for procurement. This usually occurs during the first or second quarter of the Fiscal Year; however, it can also occur at year end. Typically, DSCP acquires the suits for the Services in the following agreed-upon ratio: Army, 50 percent; Air Force, 20 percent; Navy, 20 percent; and Marine Corps, 10 percent. It is also permissible for the using Services to buy additional suits from DSCP using their own funds. DSCP's role is to place these requirements on contract and maintain the industrial base. The current producers have been able to support our routine delivery requirements with their aggregate annual production capacity of 948,000. Since the inception of the program, 1,550,000 JSLIST suits have been purchased and delivered from these sources. In the event of a contingency, their production can surge by up to

fifty percent, to the equivalent of 1.4 million suits annually compared with a mobilization requirement of 4.4 million suits.

The chemical protective gloves currently in the system predate introduction of the JSLIST suits and are manufactured of butyl rubber in three thicknesses. For a number of years we had no need to acquire new gloves based on the existing level of inventory. However, projected mobilization requirements consistently and significantly exceeded on hand inventories or what could be acquired from a cold industrial base. As a result, we placed Industrial Base Maintenance Contracts with the two established producers of these gloves to insure their survival and ability to produce in the event of a contingency. More recently, as portions of the existing inventory have reached shelf-life expiration, we have again begun to buy these gloves. Our current replenishment requirements for all three sizes of glove in the aggregate are approximately 1,000,000 pairs annually. The two MTW mobilization requirements are 2.9 million pairs. We are currently negotiating contracts that will enable us to acquire approximately 1,700,000 gloves under routine conditions in the first year (1,500,000 in the option year) with surge capacity of approximately 2,500,000 pairs in the first year (2,300,000 in the option year). The award will be split between the two firms whose facilities we maintained with our base maintenance contracts. Efforts are currently underway aimed at the development of a new generation of chemical protective gloves. Production of a general use glove is expected to begin in Fiscal Year 2004.

MANAGEMENT, MAINTENANCE AND AVAILABILITY OF MEDICAL SUPPLIES

DSCP uses the same processes to determine DoD requirements and to contract for coverage of critical chemical/biological defense materiel as it does for all medical materiel with the necessary exception that chemical/biological materiel requires and receives an added level of scrutiny. DSCP has the ability to meet the requirements for all Services in support of a single Major Theater of War (MTW). However, the Joint Staff commissioned the Logistics Management Institute to evaluate the ability of the wholesale medical logistics system to acquire and distribute consumable medical/surgical and pharmaceutical products during a nearly simultaneous engagement of US forces in two major theaters of war. This issue was raised by commanders-in-chief as a result of the medical community's near-complete shift from the DoD depot system to outsourcing of logistics support by means of "prime vendors." Phase 1 of this initiative (begun in 1999) was to define the Services' medical supply requirements for two major theaters of war over a 60-day period and Phase 2 (in 2000) was to determine if the commercial vendors could meet those requirements from on-hand stocks.

This study determined that for Pharmaceutical and Medical/Surgical product lines the commercial supply base could supply the majority of the requirement from existing on-hand inventories. Stock availability for pharmaceutical items was estimated at 90 percent while medical/surgical stock availability was 83 percent. Requirements for medical materiel outside of the pharmaceutical and medical/surgical products lines, i.e., medical

equipment, could be supported at a less than desirable level of service and was estimated at 50 percent. The original study commissioned by the Joint Staff demonstrated that the commercial industrial base can support DoD's medical contingency requirements if two systemic challenges are addressed, those being: (1) identification and maintenance of requirements and (2) contractual coverage that would ensure DoD's access to required materiel. The Integrated Medical Logistics Group (comprised of the Commander, United States Army Medical Materiel Agency, the Commanding Officer, Navy Medical Logistics Command Chief, Air Force Medical Logistics Office ,the Staff Director, Joint Readiness Clinical Advisory Board and the DSCP Director of Medical Materiel) chartered several working groups to address these and other issues. For example, the Integrated Medical Logistics Group chartered a Broad Contract Coverage Working Group to address the issue of contractual coverage that would ensure DoD's access to required materiel. This working group has developed joint time-phased requirements. The generation and consolidation of Service requirements has been formalized into an agreed upon format and location. The Services agreed to populate a database called the Medical Contingency File. This file consolidates the time-phased wartime requirements from all four Services and is managed by DSCP. The Medical Contingency File will become part of the Readiness Management Application, a comprehensive tool that affords DSCP and the Services the ability to incorporate into one database all wholesale medical logistics readiness information. The Readiness Management Application is constantly updated, enabling the Services to use the Medical Contingency File, as well as associated data feeds within the Readiness Management Application, in obtaining

"product of choice" information in developing wartime requirements and contractual coverage information.

Progress in meeting the Broad Contract Coverage Working Group's responsibility to guarantee the Department coverage of Service shortfalls of required materiel is measured by the number of Medical Contingency File items covered under a contingency contract. The baseline requirement is the Services' identified shortfalls in the Medical Contingency File. One year ago DSCP had guaranteed coverage for 30 percent of the Services unfilled requirements for the two MTW scenarios. Today we have coverage for 50 percent of the shortfall. DSCP's POM 2004 submission has identified funding requirements to achieve coverage for 85 percent of the shortfall, which we consider optimal, by Fiscal Year 2006.

The vast majority of Class VIII sustainment will be provided from industry in the form of new materiel just off the assembly line. Maintenance of medical items is a less significant issue since few items are stored. The bulk of this sustainment support will be provided from pre-negotiated contracts for materiel. DSCP is contracting in advance for as much of this materiel as possible. DSCP identifies materiel the Services cannot obtain early during a contingency and either buys and stores the materiel or contracts with manufacturers and distributors to increase their safety stock of this materiel to guarantee additional, immediate coverage for critical materiel. The safety stock remains with the manufacturers/distributors who rotate the materiel to keep it fresh. It is made available to the Services during contingencies. Some of the contracts have "refresh" periods built in which require the vendor to provide additional materiel within a predetermined period of

days/weeks. These contracts supported the Services during Operation Enduring Freedom and they are periodically tested.

For surge requirements, the Service elements deploying overseas will receive some support from existing Prime Vendors and from the DLA depot system (which holds some military unique items). The bulk of the surge support will come from the Medical/Surgical and Pharmaceutical Prime Vendor Surge Programs. These programs provide coverage for the Services' surge requirements by relying on Prime Vendor peacetime contracts. These contracts are designed to help deploying units within a geographical region obtain those medical/surgical and pharmaceutical items to fill out their assemblages that are not on-hand due to shelf life or other considerations. "Surge" items are tailored by region and by Service to get specific units out-the-door in time of conflict. "Surge" items are identified by the Services and are incorporated into peacetime Prime Vendor contracts by means of surge option clauses and by adding tailored line-item detail for medical/surgical materiel.

To support the Services' two major theater of war requirements, DSCP currently has contracts in place that guarantee availability of up to $314 million worth of surge and sustainment medical materiel. This coverage increases to a total of $630 million if all "refresh" options are exercised. This capability will support a single major theater of war, although it is possible there may be shortages in some of the 8,000 medical lines needed for war. This level of guaranteed availability is steadily increasing. I have provided a chart that reflects the coverage available today (including "refresh" options).

Commodity	Amount of Surge Coverage	Examples
Pharmaceutical	**$333 million**	**Vaccines, Antibiotics, Nerve Agent Antidote Autoinjectors, IV Fluids**
Medical/Surgical	**$290 million**	**Bandages, Sutures, Wound Care, Wraps, Gowns, Orthopedic Supplies**
Medical Equipment	**$ 7 million**	**Suction Apparatus**
Total	**$630 million**	

A major shift in our management of medical materiel required for chemical/biological defense has resulted from the fact that other Federal agencies are now buying materiel that formerly was considered to be military unique. Since September 11, 2001, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Office of Emergency Response, and the Department of Veteran Affairs have been stockpiling chemical/biological defense materiel for early responders in increased volume. As a result, DSCP meets regularly with other agencies involved in homeland security to coordinate requirements and to develop a consolidated approach to industry for the procurement of chemical/biological defense items under the aegis of the Federal Medical Materiel Coordination Group. This group has been instrumental in fostering mutual support among the agencies, with beneficial results. For example, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention loaned Ciproflaxin to DSCP to support forces initially deployed to Afghanistan; the Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention and the Office of Emergency Response acquired nerve agent antidote autoinjectors using a DSCP contract already in place, resulting in more rapid availability of materiel; and the Office of Emergency Response arranged for DSCP to buy materiel for its Disaster Medical Assistance Team sets.

In addition to the Medical Contingency File (which includes 8,000 items), DSCP maintains a Critical Items List of 80 critical chemical/biological defense items. The list summarizes chemical/biological requirements from the Medical Contingency File and identifies the contracts in place to support those requirements. Chemical/biological items are managed most carefully because lack of these items could prevent a force from deploying to theater. Items on the Critical Item List include Ciproflaxin, Nerve Agent Antidote Autoinjectors, deployment vaccines, Tetracycline, and anti-malarials (such as Mefloquine).

There is some chemical/biological defense materiel for which DSCP is not the Department's lead agent. For example, the Army has the lead for anthrax vaccine, and the Joint Program Office-Biological Defense is responsible for development of vaccines for biological threats such as Recombinant Plague, Tularemia, Q-Fever, Brucella, and Recombinant Botulinum. The Joint Program Office is also developing a smallpox vaccine. Until a new smallpox vaccine is developed, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will support our requirements.

ON HAND STATUS OF INDIVIDUAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

I have provided a chart that reflects the current inventory of the primary chemical/biological protective items stored in DLA depots:

Item	Army	Navy	AF	Marines	DLA	Total
Gloves						
7 mil	19250	0	0	0	345	19595
14 mil	38845	0	0	0	20946	59791
25 mil	1686159	0	0	0	27501	1713660
BDO						
Woodland	874	0	0	0	0	874
Desert	82605	0	0	0	0	82605
JSLIST						
Woodland Coat	315843	75190	95904	61101	85170	633208
Woodland Trousers	314251	36352	96029	63686	91933	602251
Desert Coat	78255	26491	58716	2493	33259	199214
Desert Trousers	64635	23107	62348	1022	41089	192201

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, we are working closely with the Program Manager, Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Defense Systems to insure integrated management of JSLIST suits and other chemical/biological protective items in a way we were not two years ago. It is also clear that we have quality assurance measures in place to insure we take delivery only of products that fully comply with the technical requirements for chemical/biological protective items and to monitor the shelf life of those items in our inventories over time. Finally, Mr. Chairman, we have made some significant improvements in our visibility of our inventories of chemical/biological protective items, and we are poised to realize much more significant advances as our agency deploys its new enterprise resource planning system.

Mr. SHAYS. We are going to be calling on Mr. Gilman. I would just say that one part that I will want you to address is this issue of who is responsible for inventory. Because, frankly, I felt like you were just throwing it right back to Dr. Winegar; and I just—I tend to feel that basically, Mr. Allen, it really rests in your agency.

And just before we ask questions again, really we ask to give a shape to this panel. We asked Dr. Winegar to be here as the Program Manager of the life cycle as we go through.

We look at you, General Goldfein, as being responsible for the issue of requirements.

Mr. Bond—General Bond, excuse me—the issue of acquisition.

And the testing and training, Mr. Parker, kind of in your area.

And then the logistics, kind of, in your area, Mr. Allen.

That is kind of how I view this panel; if I am inaccurate about that, I will need to be straightened out.

And I will also say, General Goldfein, that I was waiting for you to read in your statement, on page 3, "Approval of all ACAT 1 ORDs rests with the JROCs." I figured that every two words you had an acronym, and we only allow two per sentence. So you didn't give me the pleasure of interrupting you then.

OK, Mr. Gilman.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I want to commend the panel for concentrating on trying to have better inventories and better quality material. However, this panel, our committee is concerned about testimony we received at our first panel.

In their prepared testimony, GAO stated that the Department of Defense cannot easily identify, track and locate defective suits because inventory records do not always include contract and lot numbers. And in May 2000, DOD directed units and depots to locate over some–700,000 defective suits produced by a single manufacturer; and as of July 2002, as many as 250,000 of those suits remained unaccounted for.

I welcome some comment from all of you.

The DOD IG stated that the Defense Logistics Agency, DLA, reported to the DOD OIG that DLA believed that 250,000 unaccounted-for BDOs were issued, worn and disposed of. DLA also reported that based on repeated messages and advisories and through incentives to their customers, DLA believed any remaining defective BDOs were identified and pulled out of serviceable inventories. Once segregated, the defective BDOs were to be used solely for training.

However, according to the IG, not all units have received that information from higher headquarters; and as recently as April of this year, the IG continued to identify units that had not segregated the defective BDOs.

Why does DOD continue to have defective BDOs in unit inventories? And why have some of those units not received the advisories regarding these defective BDOs?

How can DOD ensure defective BDOs are not going to be located and used in theater as we prepare for hostile action?

Mr. SHAYS. And you will note for the record that Members of Congress can use acronyms, as many as they want, in a sentence.

Mr. GILMAN. I want you to know it would be very helpful if you could give us a summary of all of those acronyms so that we would be better advised.

But, please, I address that to all of the panel. Who is prepared to respond to that? You have made extensive comments about the history of your agencies and how well prepared you were are.

What are we doing about those defective units?

Mr. SHAYS. Do you want to ask each of those three questions again separately?

Mr. GILMAN. Sure. Why does the DOD continue to have defective BDOs in their unit inventories? Who would like to venture?

Mr. ALLEN. Sir, I think the best way to answer your question is to reiterate for you what we have done to attempt to purge inventories.

Mr. GILMAN. I know what you are trying to do. Why are these defective units still there?

Mr. ALLEN. The inventories would sit out there at the unit level, as you have noted and as the prior panelists have noted, that are in the control of the commanders. If the word has not gotten down to the commanders, if the commanders have not cleared out their inventories, if they have not taken the incentive to return those units to us, that would be the reason why there may be——

Mr. GILMAN. Who is responsible for doing that, if not you five panelists who are in charge of all of this?

Mr. ALLEN. The unit commanders, through their chain of command, are responsible for the inventories within their control, sir.

Mr. GILMAN. But if they are not responding, isn't that the responsibility of you panelists to make sure that they are responding? You are in charge of inventories; you say you want the troops to be better prepared, to be fully equipped to go into hostility.

Mr. SHAYS. Will the gentleman suspend a second?

Mr. Allen, but basically the question is directed at you because you are in charge of the logistics. And we need an answer to the question of why. It is really not directed, I don't think, to all of the panelists here yet, unless you can direct us to someone on this panel that it should be directed at.

You are in charge of logistics. We need to know why defective equipment is still out there. And that is the question; he wants to know why.

Mr. ALLEN. All I can tell you, sir, is that the way the inventory process works is that we purchase this inventory under the auspices of the Program Manager. We supply it to the unit commanders—not all of it but some of it—we supply it to the unit commanders; at that point, custody of that inventory passes to the unit commanders.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Allen, is there some defective equipment now in the hands of the unit commanders?

Mr. ALLEN. Sir, I cannot say for certain that there is or is not. We have said what we have tried to do to purge all of the inventory. I cannot give you any better answer than that, sir.

Mr. GILMAN. Why have some units not received the advisories regarding this defective equipment?

Mr. ALLEN. We provided the information through the program managers, through the military services down the chain of com-

mand. And if the chain of command—if there was a failure of communication there, sir, I do not know how to address that.

Mr. GILMAN. Well, again to the entire panel. If there is defective equipment out there and if the unit commanders are not trying to cleanse that defective equipment from their units, don't you have some responsibility to make certain that our troops are going to be out on the battlefield without defective equipment?

And again I address that to the entire panel. You folks are in charge of providing decent equipment. And you said it in your testimony, your major objective is to make certain that our troops have the kind of equipment they need.

General BOND. Mr. Gilman, we do take this very seriously. And I can speak personally from personal experience. But I can also tell from my current job that the Program Manager, working through the Defense Logistics Agency, makes inventories, goes out and checks with the unit commanders, tries to find and identify these stocks that have not been turned in, tries to make sure that these bulletins are provided to the commanders.

I think that the Defense Logistics Agency's incentive programs have made it to these commanders that are looking for ways in which to further their capabilities, by turning this in, can acquire additional resources, is a great way to try to do it, and a help that the GAO and other audit agencies, even within our own internal IG ranks, have gone out and tried to identify within these units—those units which have failed to provide or return these, and turn in these defective garments.

We will continue to do that. We are not going to give up on it, Congressman.

Mr. GILMAN. General Bond, we are approaching E-Day here, or whatever day you want to call it, when we are going to be confronting Iraq. We have 250,000 defective units that are not identified or found in our inventories.

Aren't you fellows concerned about that?

General BOND. Yes, sir. And we will continue to work to try to identify any of those.

I tend to agree with Mr. Allen that most of these, if not all, have been purged out of the system through the normal training process. Yes, there are probably—the possibility that some may be lingering out there. But I would almost guarantee from personal experience that they would not be in high priority units. They would have to be in a unit that was not training all of the time, for which those kind of stocks were not brought up.

Mr. GILMAN. GAO has stated that some of them may be lingering in the warehouses, but you need some manpower to identify them. Why aren't we applying that?

General BOND. The warehouses you would have to discuss with Mr. Allen.

Mr. GILMAN. Well, Mr. Allen, what do you say about that?

Mr. ALLEN. We have turned in all of the suits that—all the suits that we have received, we have segregated or are or are in the process of destroying them, so they cannot fall into the hands of soldiers who might inadvertently use them, thinking that they were going to be protected.

The warehouses——

Mr. SHAYS. Will the gentleman yield?

Why wouldn't we take those that are defective, clearly mark them, put a big X on them or whatever, and use them for training? Why would we destroy them?

Mr. ALLEN. We went through a significant discussion on exactly that point, sir; and given the sensitivity of those items, we decided to take the ones which were defective and destroy them so that there would be no possibility that they would ever, in any way, find their way into someone's hands. It was absolutely a conscious decision. It was not made lightly.

Mr. SHAYS. The sad thing about that decision, though, because you could make it so noticeable that you wouldn't have to ever fear they would be used improperly. I am constantly being asked to appropriate more money and to—we, the committee, Members of Congress, to make sure that our troops practice with live ordnance.

We also want to make sure that they practice—I don't mean practice—that they train with live ordnance, that they train with equipment that is the same equipment that they would use in the battle. And, to me, this is nonsensical, what you just told me, that they would destroy it.

Mr. ALLEN. Sir, one of—in accordance with that exact thought, we took the ones that—the suits that were not determined to be defective, but had been—had expired shelf life. And we do use those suits for training only; we take them out of their vacuum-sealed bags, we mark them very clearly with big black ink "For Training Only." But we chose not to do that with the suits which were determined to be defective, because we simply didn't want any possibility that they might be used.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you.

Mr. Gilman.

Mr. GILMAN. What are your comments, then, about GAO's report that there is still 250,000 defective pieces of equipment that have not been identified or found? What is your response to that?

Mr. ALLEN. The response, sir, is that I can reiterate the actions that we have taken to attempt to identify, to account for——

Mr. GILMAN. Have you accounted for the 250,000?

Mr. ALLEN. We have accounted for 550,000 out of the 800 that we did issue over the past 10 years. We have not accounted for the 250,000 which were issued and have not been turned in.

Mr. GILMAN. So what are we doing to account for those?

Mr. ALLEN. As recently as last month we provided another notice to all of the military customers through the military services to turn those suits in if they had them out there, to screen their inventories again, turn them in. We provided transportation funds to—for them to utilize so that they could do it at no cost, is one of the ways that we attempted to incentivize them to turn that material in, should it be found out there.

Mr. GILMAN. I'm asking our entire panel, are you satisfied that tomorrow, if we go to battle with Iraq, that there would be no defective equipment out on the battlefield?

Mr. ALLEN. I think there's a very low degree of risk of defective suits out on the battlefield, sir.

Mr. GILMAN. Despite the fact that you can't locate 250,000 of these defective units.

Mr. ALLEN. That is my assessment, sir.

Mr. GILMAN. I address our other panelists.

What are your thoughts about that? There's 250,000 defective pieces of equipment that haven't been located. Are you assured that these—that these are not out on the battlefield?

Ms. JOHNSON-WINEGAR. I don't think there is a perfect assurance if that's what this committee is looking for.

I'm personally appreciative of the comments that were provided earlier by the GAO and the DOD IG on the effort that would be needed to individually account for every single item in the inventory. I cannot tell you this morning whether the DOD is prepared to undertake that level of assessment or not.

I do share your concern. I would be very upset if an individual service member were to go into an environment facing chemical and biological weapons in defective gear. None of us on this panel, none of us from the Department of Defense would like to face a situation like that.

And I want to assure you that I certainly support the DLA in their efforts to make an assessment of the inventory, and we will continue to pursue that until we are satisfied.

Mr. GILMAN. Well, I hope you will. This is an imminent situation that could happen tomorrow, next week. And yet we have some 250,000 defective suits out there that should be removed from the hostile area. And I hope that you're going to find a way to do that.

I direct that to all of the panelists.

Ms. JOHNSON-WINEGAR. Sir, I would just like to clarify that the number is somewhere between zero and 250,000. I don't know that any of us today can tell you that there are 250,000 defective suits anywhere in the——

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Allen just testified, out of the 800,000 you found, about 500,000, so it must be in that range.

Any other comments by any of our other panelists with regard to our query?

If not, my final urgent message is, let's get rid of these defective units and not allow our troops to be out on the battlefield with defective body suits.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you, Mr. Gilman.

Mr. Kucinich, you have the floor. I'd like to welcome our two Members, Ms. Schakowsky and Mr. Allen, who are both welcome. I know they have been very busy on other things, but happy to have you here.

Mr. Kucinich.

Mr. KUCINICH. In the testimony by the IG's office, they said that the Defense Logistics Agency reported to us that they believe that the 250,000 unaccounted-for overgarments that are at issue here were issued, worn and disposed of.

Now Dr. Winegar just said that the number is anywhere from zero to 250,000.

There's a contrast here with the IG's report and the Defense Logistics Agency's account. Do you want to reconcile it?

Ms. JOHNSON-WINEGAR. Sir, I believe that the DLA testimony was that, of 800,000 items that were determined to be defective,

they have made a positive accounting for 550,000 of those at this time.

Is that correct, Mr. Allen?

Mr. ALLEN. Yes, ma'am.

Mr. KUCINICH. I'm asking the questions here. So I would like to say that we're on the record saying there are 250,000 unaccounted-for suits. You're saying it could be anywhere from zero to 250,000, but it could be 250,000?

Ms. JOHNSON-WINEGAR. That's correct.

Mr. KUCINICH. OK.

At the end of the last panel, Mr. Decker of the GAO said that the Defense Department had been extremely slow in reviewing GAO's work for classification concerns. He said this process has slowed to the point that sensitive and timely GAO reports that relate directly to this chemical and biological area are being significantly delayed, in some cases, by as much as 2 or 3 months.

So, Doctor, why is the Defense Department slowing and delaying its review of GAO reports regarding chemical and biological vulnerabilities?

Ms. JOHNSON-WINEGAR. Sir, I'd like to say for the record that I do not believe the Department is deliberately slowing its review of any such reports. I think this attests to the fact that we are taking the issue very seriously and providing a very thorough and very comprehensive review by many different offices within the Department of Defense. And that does require a certain amount of time so that each and every individual who brings their own area of expertise to bear on the question does have adequate time to provide that level of review.

Mr. KUCINICH. Now, the people at this table, the Defense Department's top experts on chemical and biological dangers, is the cause of the delays in reviewing the GAO reports, is this the panel that's the cause of it?

You want to answer? You could go right down the line, yes or no.

Ms. JOHNSON-WINEGAR. Sir, my office is one of many offices that's provided an opportunity to review and comment on the GAO report; and depending on the length and the complexity of that report, as I said, I think it is incumbent upon to us provide our very best assessments of that.

I hope you'll appreciate the workload that all of us have and the care and consideration which we want to give to this report. I can only speak personally from my own office. I do not have direct control over many other offices in the Department of Defense who do the security review, who do the intelligence assessment, etc.

Mr. KUCINICH. I'm going to say that your answer is nonresponsive.

Now, this is a serious concern. The GAO is Congress' investigative arm, and we rely on them to provide us with critical information on vulnerabilities and dangers which the servicemen and women serving this country face. We depend on them for independent and unbiased reporting.

Now, Mr. Chairman, at the start of the hearing, we heard Mr. Schmitz, the Inspector General, make an offer to this committee to investigate any irregularities or improper actions by the Defense Department in their classification procedure. I mean, in view of the

fact that we have Mr. Decker stating that the Defense Department's been extremely slow in reviewing GAO's work for classification concerns, and since there is a question here of timeliness and GAO reports that relate directly to chemical and biological preparedness, and since we know they're being significantly delayed, and since this panel and the gentlelady have not made a case for the reason for the delay, and considering the critical nature of this moment, when this country may well be at the threshold of sending our men and women into a region where biological and chemical weapons could be used, it seems to me that this subcommittee should request that the Inspector General investigate and report on the claims that the GAO made.

I just want to offer this for the consideration of the Chair and the members of this committee, because it seems that this is a matter that needs to be pursued.

Now, Mr. Chairman, how much time do I have remaining?

Mr. SHAYS. Four minutes.

Mr. KUCINICH. There is a finding, Doctor, in the GAO's unclassified report that is particularly troubling. On page 8 they describe a situation in which the Pentagon is "understating the real risk," to our service members. Let me ask you a quick series of questions on this.

First of all, do you concede that the Defense Department has understated the real risk? I'm directing it to Dr. Winegar.

Ms. JOHNSON-WINEGAR. I think that you have to put the estimation of the risk in the proper context. And I'd appreciate if could you read the entire sentence.

Mr. KUCINICH. This is from page 8 of the GAO report.

Ms. JOHNSON-WINEGAR. Sir, I was not provided a copy of that report until this morning.

Mr. SHAYS. Excuse me. This is a statement, the report is—this is the statement of the GAO before us.

Mr. KUCINICH. Since you haven't been provided with a copy, I'm going to read from the copy.

Ms. JOHNSON-WINEGAR. Sir, I would like to enter into the record that we did ask for an advance copy of this, so that I could be prepared to answer your questions; and no copy was provided until this morning.

Mr. KUCINICH. But may I ask, in reply, whether or not it would be appropriate to ask you to answer questions based on things that are certainly within your operational knowledge.

Ms. JOHNSON-WINEGAR. Certainly.

Mr. KUCINICH. OK.

The GAO said that we reported that the—they're citing previous circumstances where they found that the DOD had inaccurately reported the risk in most cases as low. And having reported that the process for determining risk is fundamentally flawed because, one, the DOD determines requirements by individual pieces of protective equipment—suits, masks, breathing filters, gloves, boots and hoods—rather than by the number of complete protective ensembles that can be deployed to the service members; and they go on to say, No. 2, the process for determining risk combines individual service requirements and reported inventory data into general cat-

egories, masking specific critical shortages that affect individual service readiness.

And he goes on to conclude, had DOD assessed the risk on the basis of the number of complete ensembles it had available by service, the risk would have risen to "high" for all the services.

So, the question comes again, do you concede that the Department of Defense has understated the real risk?

Ms. JOHNSON-WINEGAR. I agree with the GAO's assessment of how the risk should be calculated. I also agree that this is the GAO assessment of what the risk would be if that recalculation were done.

The Department of Defense is in the process of redoing that calculation ourselves, and I agree that it will probably change from our previous recommendation.

Mr. KUCINICH. So you're redoing the calculation?

Ms. JOHNSON-WINEGAR. That's correct.

Mr. KUCINICH. We're at the threshold possibly of an invasion of Iraq and the calculations are being redone. That's fine.

Now do you concede, as the GAO does, that the data the Department has used is fundamentally flawed?

Ms. JOHNSON-WINEGAR. No, I do not.

Mr. KUCINICH. Do you concede that the Department has quoting from the GAO, "inaccurately reported the risk in most cases as low?"

Ms. JOHNSON-WINEGAR. That relates to the method that was used for calculating the risk, and I have already agreed that we agree now with the GAO on a different way to calculate the risk.

Mr. KUCINICH. That's fine. Then do you—rather than low risk, do you agree with the GAO that, in fact, the risk is high?

Ms. JOHNSON-WINEGAR. I'm not prepared to say that it's high. I'm prepared to say that it is probably different than our original calculation.

Mr. KUCINICH. So it's not low.

Ms. JOHNSON-WINEGAR. Probably not.

Mr. KUCINICH. And because you know it's not low, you're recalculating. Could it be high?

Ms. JOHNSON-WINEGAR. It could be.

Mr. KUCINICH. OK. Why does the DOD insist on ignoring the GAO and making statements like those made by General Myers in which, obviously, the risk is being understated, the risk to our servicemen and women is being understated?

Why does the GAO make statements like that, since this is something that is so important? We're talking about the security of our men and women.

Ms. JOHNSON-WINEGAR. I think that the GAO's statement relates to one particular item, and in this particular case we're talking about the protective ensemble for chemical/biological defense. Without knowing General Myers' entire statement and, again, putting that into the proper context, I believe that the availability and readiness of chemical/biological protective ensembles is but one piece of the overall assessment of readiness.

Mr. KUCINICH. One piece is the suit itself, correct?

Ms. JOHNSON-WINEGAR. That's correct.

Mr. KUCINICH. If there are holes in the suit and tears in the seams, is that of concern to you?

Ms. JOHNSON-WINEGAR. Absolutely.

Mr. KUCINICH. There's 250,000 of those suits, is that correct, that are out there?

Ms. JOHNSON-WINEGAR. Yes.

Mr. KUCINICH. You don't know where they are; is that correct?

Ms. JOHNSON-WINEGAR. That's correct.

Mr. KUCINICH. OK. But the DOD has claimed, miraculously, even though they don't know where those suits are, that they've all been accounted for, that they've all been issued, worn, and disposed of.

So, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate your generosity with the time. I have another set of questions if we get to that point. Thanks.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you.

We have Mr. Tierney.

Mr. Tierney, you have the floor.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you. I'd like to see that my colleagues get an opportunity to question. I want to be brief.

Which one of you folks would be dealing with training? Would that be you, Mr. Parker?

Mr. PARKER. Mr. Tierney, I'm really connected with the acquisition side as well. I think of the panel members here, that their current capacities—we're lacking someone who's addressed training as a functional speciality.

Mr. TIERNEY. All right. Certainly cramps one's style of question, doesn't it?

General GOLDFEIN. Perhaps not.

In this Joint Requirements Office that I indicated to you earlier we have just formed up and are looking forward to new ways of developing requirements for the Department, training falls in a category of activities that we'll look at. I'd be happy to attempt to follow through, then, with whatever your question is.

Mr. TIERNEY. Let me ask you, I don't want to put you at a disadvantage on that, but I'm curious to know, in your opinion then, are you able to make an assessment as to whether or not an adequate number of people have been trained—men and women have been trained for involvement in a venture that might take to us Iraq?

General GOLDFEIN. I would not be able to judge that overall picture, sir, but what I can tell you perhaps is a couple of other points. One relates to Mr. Gilman's earlier question.

There is a very consistent process of reporting from levels of command all the way down to fairly small units. You've heard of the name, it's another one of our acronyms, it's a SORT, status of readiness and training of units. And an item that has been required in that category now for the past, I believe about 1½ years, has been the status of the chem/bio defense equipment that a unit has and the status of the training of the unit.

So I think it would be safe to draw the conclusion that if a unit reported its status as fully capable, which would include equipment and training; and if, in fact, a series of units were selected to participate in any activity—the one that you mentioned could be one of those—and all of them had reported "ready," then, in fact, everyone who showed up would be prepared to deal with the situation.

Mr. TIERNEY. And I guess what I'm getting at is, we're not quite sure yet whether everybody that would be asked to show up would meet that criterion of readiness. That's what I was getting at, but I'm not sure you're able to answer that.

General GOLDFEIN. I'm not able to answer that question.

Mr. TIERNEY. Should we be concerned, General, with the fact we recently fairly conducted the Millennium Challenge 2002, the warfare scenarios, that mocked the situation that we might expect to find in a possible war with Iraq, that during those exercises we did not get involved at all with any lethal biological or chemical agents or any scenarios under which those would be launched against our troops in terms of readiness and training? Wouldn't we expect that kind of a mock exercise would, in fact, engage in those types of activities so that we could assess our training level and our performance level?

General GOLDFEIN. Yes, sir. I would answer in two ways.

First, I'm not personally familiar with Millennium Challenge, so it would be improper for me to attempt to judge that. I just don't know what was involved in the exercise.

I will tell you from general experience, though, that we never get everything done in every exercise; but in a collection of exercises, over time, we get at everything.

It could well be that this particular one was focused for some reason on some area, and that there is another exercise of great import that was conducted to cover that subject. And again, I would speak to my own experience in various combat units.

Mr. TIERNEY. I say this not to engage you necessarily, but just for the record, because I'm reading off of reports about those exercises that basically indicate that Paul Van Riper, who is the retired Marine lieutenant general who was playing the Millennium military commander at that time, fully anticipated that he was going to be able to use them; and he asked to use chemical weapons and he was refused on that.

And so it seems that, clearly, there was something—at least it was anticipated that they were trying to do a full exercise of what might have been met at that point in time and were refused.

I have some concerns of that, but I clearly don't want to put you at a disadvantage.

Mr. Chairman, I know I sent a letter to you asking whether or not we would have the opportunity to question people that might have been engaged with that exercise. Do you know whether or not we're going to be able to do that and when?

Mr. SHAYS. The gentleman has asked the question. I don't think in the next month, only because we may be here only 2 weeks and we already have schedules.

But if you're asking me, should we have a hearing, absolutely. I would be prepared, even if I'm in a minority, to have a hearing next year or this year. When we get back, I'd be happy to work on a hearing with the gentleman.

Mr. TIERNEY. My only concern is, I certainly would think we would want to do it sooner rather than later, because we want to know why people are stopped from exploring those avenues at a time when we definitely ought to be able to see whether or not we're prepared.

Mr. SHAYS. In terms of two things, we wanted to focus in on the issues we're focusing in on now. The people you asked originally could not come today.

But the bottom line is, you have identified a very logical hearing for this committee, and I would be happy to work with you to have one. Obviously, I know the sooner the better. I can just tell you, though, if I'm not here in the next 2 weeks I'm not going to be here the next 5 weeks.

Mr. TIERNEY. Just, Mr. Allen, a question on the number of suits—I don't want to beat that question to death—the number of suits that are in our inventory now, protective gear, I thought I heard you say 1.5 million.

Mr. ALLEN. No. In fact, perhaps I can help clarify the whole issue of the unaccounted-for suits.

If you go back to 1989, when the first defective suits were produced by a company named Isratex, since that time we have issued several million suits to the military services for use in Desert Storm, Bosnia, etc. Of those several million suits that were issued over that period of time, up to today, 800,000 were Isratex suits. Of those several million suits, 1.5 million are new JSLIST suits.

Mr. TIERNEY. Are you saying several or seven?

Mr. ALLEN. Several. I'm going to try to step you through the whole process in an attempt to clarify the issue of where we are with respect to accountability for suits.

We have issued several million, I would estimate 6 to 8 million suits over that period of time. Of those several million suits, 800,000 are Isratex suits. Of those several million suits, another 1.5 million were current new JSLIST suits. The balance were other BDOs by other manufacturers.

There are—we can clearly tell there are about 4 million suits in the system today. So some millions of suits have been consumed. Some hundreds of thousands or millions of suits have been consumed since 1989.

Because we went through such a rigorous process on multiple occasions to recall the very specific suits which were found to be defective, and because we know that there have been consumed 3 to 4 million suits over that period of time, we have a relatively high level of confidence that we have captured the defective Isratex suits.

The problem that we stand before this committee with is, we cannot account for the Isratex suits on a one-for-one basis. There is—short of some individual putting their eye on every single suit in the system today, we would not be able to ever make that statement.

I hope that clarifies what——

Mr. TIERNEY. It helps. I want to thank you, but it still gets us to the number, of the 800,000 Isratex suits, 250,000 have yet to be accounted for. And you're assuming that someplace between zero and 250,000 have washed out in the general usage of training and——

Mr. ALLEN. That is exactly correct, sir.

Mr. TIERNEY. So 30 to 250,000 leaves us with a pretty high margin, leaves us with anywhere between as high as 16 percent of our

suits that are out there, if it's a whole 250,000. So that would be pretty dramatic.

It would seem to me that somewhere—Dr. Winegar, probably starting with you and through Mr. Allen on down—somebody would have the responsibility to then say, I want those 250,000 suits, and here's the plan; and move it down there.

So what is the plan to get those 250,000 suits, identify them, and take them off the shelf?

Mr. ALLEN. At this point, we have repeatedly gone out to the services through the communications channels and asked for a 100 percent identification of those suits, and we think we have recovered all of them.

Mr. TIERNEY. If you counted them, you're 250,000 short, so you know you haven't got them all. Because I assume you went out and asked for them, you counted the number you got a response for, and that's how you got from the 800,000 down to 250, right?

Mr. ALLEN. If the suits had been consumed, they can't identify them to us, they can't turn them in to us.

Mr. TIERNEY. You have no way of telling whether they've been consumed or not. Your problem is, you don't know whether the people on the unit level are being responsive or not; you don't know—in identifying them, you don't know if they can. So until those suits go out by just—by the fact of expiring or something of that nature, you're not ever going to be certain.

Mr. ALLEN. We will never be able to make positive identification unless we can actually put our hands on the 250,000 suits.

Mr. TIERNEY. When would be the last expiration date of those suits? How long are they anticipated to live?

Mr. ALLEN. Let me think for 1 minute.

The last—the final expiration dates for the suits purchased in the 1989 contract would be this year or next year; and 2 years hence for the suits manufactured in the 1992 contract, or 3 years hence.

Mr. TIERNEY. When the expiration date comes, do you have just a regular routine with—those suits are then taken off the shelf, marked training units and moved on?

Mr. ALLEN. Yes, and it's the same routine we use to identify suits that we want to recall.

Mr. TIERNEY. So we won't be certain for a number—for another several years that we've got them all. The only way we'll be certain is when that time period comes and you have some certainty that all of the manufactured suits for those particular years have been marked "training," taken off the shelf and used for training only?

Mr. ALLEN. Yes, sir.

Mr. TIERNEY. And you have in place now a system where we thought—I was taking note of Mr. Decker's chart indicating that the expiration date seems to be happening at one pace and the replacement rate at another. We have some plan in place, I hope, to make sure that we get those numbers up.

Can you tell us what that is and what you're doing?

Mr. ALLEN. Yes. We have a—we've done a number of things to increase the capacity to produce suits. We have added manufacturers and we've added—one of the limiters for producing suits is the liner itself, the lining material. We've added—there's a separate

plant now in production, and we're looking at another manufacturer of that as well in an attempt to increase our production capacity.

We are replacing suits at a rate which today could replace——

Mr. SHAYS. Would the gentleman just yield a second? It's a timely response. Are these domestic manufacturers or are they overseas?

Mr. ALLEN. The end-item manufacturers are all domestic manufacturers. The liner material itself is originally made by a plant in Germany, who has established a second plant in the United States; and we are looking at an additional manufacturer of a comparable material to establish itself in the United States.

Mr. SHAYS. Are any suits made overseas?

Mr. ALLEN. No suits are made overseas.

Mr. SHAYS. Any materials made overseas?

Mr. ALLEN. Yes, some material made overseas.

Mr. SHAYS. If I hadn't asked you that second point about suits and gone to the material, would you have volunteered that the material was made overseas?

Mr. ALLEN. Certainly if it came up in the conversation. I mean——

Mr. SHAYS. I mean, sometimes we always think that——

Mr. ALLEN. It is not an issue that I have any concern about revealing, sir.

Mr. SHAYS. In this day and age of terrorism, I have a concern about where they're made.

Mr. ALLEN. We do too, sir, which is why we're looking to expand our industrial capacity to operate solely on our own.

Mr. SHAYS. That's why it's pertinent that they are in fact being made overseas, the material.

The gentleman's light has been on for a while.

Mr. TIERNEY. One more question.

Dr. Winegar, we talked about the process for assessing risk, and you agreed that it was somewhat flawed and you were going to take corrective measures to come up with new risk assessments.

Ms. JOHNSON-WINEGAR. That's correct.

Mr. TIERNEY. When do you think that will be fully implemented, so you're able to look at all of—the entire ensemble, as Mr. Decker was saying, and give us an assessment as whether it's low risk, no risk, medium risk or high risk?

Ms. JOHNSON-WINEGAR. We're certainly in the process of doing that now. It would be no later than when we submit our next annual report to Congress, which would be early February, but hopefully before that.

Mr. TIERNEY. When you say, "hopefully before that," the end of this year, or just like January instead of February.

Ms. JOHNSON-WINEGAR. Hopefully, by the end of this year.

Mr. SHAYS. I'm going to recognize myself and yield in a second to Mr. Platts.

One of the previous hearings we had on the whole issue of what terrorists could do in our ports, both our boat ports and our container ports. We also had a hearing on how we ship our own military hardware overseas; and 90 percent of what we ship goes

over—what we send overseas, 90 percent, we learned, goes by non-U.S. carriers, which is of concern.

And that's—I'm, you know, happy that you're identifying this concern as well, wanting to make sure something so important is made in the United States.

I am wrestling with—before I tell what you I'm wrestling with, I will go with Mr. Platts. Then I'll see how much time I can wrestle with what I have left.

Mr. Platts.

Mr. PLATTS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll be brief. I actually just want to followup Mr. Tierney's line of questioning with Mr. Allen.

In trying to get an understanding about this 250,000, if I took your answer correctly, you're saying that you don't have your hands on this number up to 250,000, but what you have done is, through the chain of command been informed that every unit that's been issued these has checked all of their suits, have not found any more of the defective manufactured suits?

Mr. ALLEN. That's correct, sir.

Mr. PLATTS. So you have pursued it?

Mr. ALLEN. Multiple times, sir.

Mr. PLATTS. So the people out with the individual units have come back, are you able to confirm that every unit has responded in that, yes, we've done the review, personally looked at every—what type of communication has come back?

Mr. ALLEN. We went out through the military services, and they would be the ones that would certify or, if you will, hear from all of their units. As far as we know, all of their units have reported back to them, according to the information we have been provided by the military services.

We work through their chain of command.

Mr. PLATTS. Would any other panelists be able to comment further about that aspect of the actual checking of the suits?

General GOLDFEIN. Sir, I'll give you a personal experience.

I came to this duty having previously been commander of one of our largest fighter wings. We often received very clear instruction to search for a particular lot or a particular suit. We very closely control all of these items, and we had a very straightforward procedure to go through.

Then we had a reporting requirement back, that I referenced earlier to Mr. Tierney's question. And through that process, we went—again, I'm speaking from my own experience, but I would be very comfortable betting that other units operated in exactly the same way.

Mr. PLATTS. Given that it would be a life-preserving—kind of like making sure your gun is well cleaned and operating, it would be something that would be taken very seriously by the people on the front lines.

General GOLDFEIN. Yes, sir, absolutely.

Again, we exercised—speaking for the wing I commanded, we exercised often. I have countless hours wearing the equipment, days. And in every exercise we always had a series of inputs that would force us through this problem.

I can recall on the top when the Air Combat Command inspector inspected my wing, we had at least three times where we were tasked with a defective something to see if, A, can we recognize we have a tasking; B, how did we process it; C, how did we get the young folks out of the wrong stuff and into the right stuff; D, how did we report it or destroy equipment or pass it where it's supposed to be passed.

This is a very routine experience in my experience.

Mr. PLATTS. So back to that typical, normal process, back to DLA is what you've been told by each of the services, they've done that review. And my understanding is, this specific manufacturer's suit would be clearly identifiable if a suit was looked at.

Mr. ALLEN. Yes, sir.

Mr. PLATTS. There wouldn't——

Mr. ALLEN. There would be no question. We identify them by contract number, so people can easily read the number on the package and identify that suit.

Mr. PLATTS. Would the suit itself, like if it was——

Mr. ALLEN. Let me—just the suit itself—that's OK.

The suit itself is vacuum packed. It looks like a miniature green duffle bag that's been shrink-wrapped. It's about so big, about so big around. And it has the contract number on it, I believe.

Mr. PLATTS. On that individual pack?

Mr. ALLEN. On every pack. So it would be easily identifiable.

Mr. PLATTS. Is it accurate to say, what we're asking you to account for, the 250,000, is asking you to kind of prove a negative in the sense of, if they've been destroyed, you'll never be able to prove you have all 250,000, because if you've looked at them, you can say, we've looked at all the ones we have, none of those are in the 250,000 lots that we're looking for. So the best answer you can give is that, you know, we've proven that they're not in our possession, but you can't prove what happened to them.

Mr. ALLEN. That's exactly correct, sir.

Mr. PLATTS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Mr. SHAYS. I think what I'm going to do is have my own full time. So I consider that Mr. Platts' time.

And we'll go right now to Ms. Watson.

Ms. WATSON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Let me apologize for not being here for this part of the panel. But I am concerned, from the first panel, about if we are really prepared.

And so let me ask of any one of you that would like to answer, what can our suits do, and can they protect against the lethal biological weapons that we believe Saddam Hussein has at the current time? And can we cover the necessary number of troops that will be there on the ground?

Mr. PARKER. Ms. Watson, the suits are qualified against a requirement document which specifies what the suit or the protective ensemble has to meet as criteria. That's driven out of a threat analysis looking at a broad array of threats.

The threat that Iraq might present is well within the operational requirement characteristics of the ensemble, whether that's the lightweight ensemble or the battle dress overgarment ensemble. It's very rigorously tested against it.

In fact, the criteria were developed against the Soviet Union, a much more rigorous threat than a country like Iraq could present, or probably any other country in the world at this point in time.

So I would say emphatically that the suits can—the protective ensembles can meet or exceed any threat that the Iraqis could present, when employed by a trained force and properly maintained in the use environment.

The quantity of suits that are available, if you're speaking specifically against the Iraqi circumstance——

Ms. WATSON. Yes.

Mr. PARKER. The quantities of the suits that are available in the inventory, given the likely size of the force that has been talked about—at least in the newspapers, let me put it that way—is more than enough to deal with the demands of that type of a warfight.

Ms. WATSON. I continue to hear it being said that Saddam Hussein possesses chemicals and biological weapons that are deadly, and he has used them on his own people. Let me say then, in light what we heard from the first panel that did risk assessments, there are 250,000 suits that are missing, and they feel that at this point there still is risk in terms of the protective suiting.

So let me ask this, is it General Bond?

General BOND. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. WATSON. Let's just sum up everything we've heard this morning and afternoon. Would you advise the commander in chief to send our troops today into that highly, shall I say, dangerous chemical and biological environment that we have been told on a daily basis is awaiting us?

General BOND. Ma'am, that's really not my forte right now. But I can give you my personal belief in knowing from my 32 years of experience, extensive tours in Korea in dealing with this.

Ms. WATSON. That's acceptable.

General BOND. I feel we can meet the threat that's out there with an acceptable risk. Can we do everything? We'll never know whether we'll be fully prepared. But I know from personal experience, the training that we undergo and the training that we give our soldiers and what they're undergoing right now today, as we prepare for what the likelihood—that we feel that this is one of the highest criteria categories of training that they're undergoing, and that I feel assured, if it was my son or daughter out there, that they would be protected.

Ms. WATSON. Did we have this technology during the Gulf war?

General BOND. Not to the extent that we have. We've made significant progress since the Gulf war from where we are today. Could we have gone further? Yes.

You know, there are a lot of things we could have done, knowing what we know today. But my personal experience is, I think—given the information that we had and the way that we have moved forward, I think in this area of technology and where we've made great strides.

Ms. WATSON. I have to be constantly reminded that many of the veterans came back concerned of a lowered health condition. I am recalling the Vietnam veterans and Agent Orange and so on. And for years, our government denied that these conditions did exist, and might have been a result of biological and chemical warfare.

And anyone that would like to answer, are all of you comfortable with sending our sons and daughters over in this environment with what we have today?

Mr. PARKER. Ms. Watson, I've worn predecessor versions of the current fielded equipment more than a dozen times in an immediately lethal environment with nerve agent sarin. Older forms of military equipment, more than a dozen times, in an environment that would have killed you within minutes. And I am absolutely confident that the versions we have in the field now are more than adequate to address the threat, without question.

Ms. WATSON. Could I quote you?

Mr. PARKER. Absolutely.

Ms. WATSON. All right. Because it seems to me that our veterans had tremendous trouble and are still having trouble, and I would like my constituents to be assured that—and it will be my constituents that will be on the front line; I guarantee you that—assured that when they send their sons and daughters, that their sons and daughters will be well protected, and their offspring in the future. And we're finding that this has not been the case in the past.

And for me to support us going in on a preemptive strike, I want to be sure we're not putting—we're already putting our people into harm's way, but I want to be sure the side effects of the chemical and biological warfare will not be the deadly touch.

I will quote you. Thank you.

Mr. SHAYS. I would like to recognize myself now.

Mr. Allen, I—and, kind of, I'll consider you bookends here, Ms. Winegar as well—I view you as being in charge of the entire chemical/biological program of the U.S. Government defense. Is that the way I should view you?

Ms. JOHNSON-WINEGAR. Well, that's a tremendous responsibility, and thank you for the compliment. I do have——

Mr. SHAYS. Just give me a short answer. Tell me your responsibility. If you want to define it more narrowly, do it, but fairly quickly.

Ms. JOHNSON-WINEGAR. My responsibility is for research development and acquisition of chemical and biological defensive equipment.

The responsibility for training, etc., is that of the services in accordance with their Title X responsibilities.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Allen seemed to be passing the ball back to you as it related to inventory. If I heard him properly in his statement, I think he was saying that was your responsibility.

Is inventory your responsibility?

Ms. JOHNSON-WINEGAR. No, sir, I do not consider it my responsibility.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Allen, did I hear you incorrectly.

Mr. ALLEN. I didn't intend to imply that Ms. Winegar was responsible for inventory. What DLA is responsible for is procurement and distribution of these items of supply; and part of that procurement is the quality control and where we have——

Mr. SHAYS. Let me just clarify. Distribution means you put is it somewhere, you give it—in other words, you send it somewhere?

Mr. ALLEN. There are two levels of distribution sir. One level of distribution is in the DLA warehouses where we maintain equip-

ment on behalf of the military services, in the DOD supply depos, if you will.

Mr. SHAYS. DOD?

Mr. ALLEN. Yes.

Mr. SHAYS. And that's your responsibility?

Mr. ALLEN. That is our responsibility. There are—there is—some portion of this equipment is sent to the deploying services, so that they can train with it.

Mr. SHAYS. I hear you.

Mr. ALLEN. They can deploy with it, etc. And that portion of the supplies is the responsibility of the military services.

Mr. SHAYS. So it your statement that none of the 250,000 potential defective gear is in any of your warehouses?

Mr. ALLEN. That's correct.

Mr. SHAYS. So now what you're basically saying to us is that you've sent it out into the field. Is it your responsibility to try to locate it?

Mr. ALLEN. We, in conjunction with the program manager, have attempted to locate all——

Mr. SHAYS. That's not what I asked. I didn't ask that what you've attempted to. I just want someone to take ownership.

You know, in my office, if two people take ownership, no one has ownership. I always make sure that someone has ownership.

I found your statement in the beginning and your answers to the first questions alarming, and I wanted to jump in; and now I've waited my chance. I felt you were very cavalier in your answers, and now I'm trying to understand why it seems so cavalier.

I'll also say something to you. I come with a bias. I come with a bias that says, you know—I would say to my dad, you know, I just didn't remember, you know; and he would tell me, remember to be home at a certain time. He said, Well, I'll give you a little incentive; if you don't get home by 10 tomorrow, you can't go out of this house for a month.

Now, you know what? That was an incentive. I didn't say I couldn't remember the next time. I made sure I remembered.

I'm trying to figure out who's responsible and who can provide the incentive. For instance, this may seem extreme, but if I happen to feel, and others happen to feel, that defective suits are potentially endangering our troops; and we then spread the word out to the field, and the field ignores us, what happens if you said, You'll be court-martialed if you ignore it? Would the field ignore you then? No.

I mean, that's pretty extreme, but we were court-martialing people because they didn't want to take anthrax even though they felt it would potentially harm them. So we were willing to be pretty strong when we wanted to be. So we had this incentive, this system of trying to provide rewards.

I guess what I'm having a hard time understanding is, if you have dangerous equipment out there, you want to know where it is and you want it out of there. Now—so I want to know, do you take ownership of the responsibility to make sure we can get this defective equipment?

Mr. ALLEN. Sir, before I answer that I have to apologize if I gave you the impression that I was being cavalier. That was absolutely not my intent. I take this very seriously.

I would tell you that 34 years ago, I went in the service, and the chemical suits we wore were ponchos—not very protective. On top of that, though, I would tell you that DLA is not responsible for equipment that is owned by the military services. And once we give equipment to the military services and they use it for training or they use it for deployment——

Mr. SHAYS. Who is not responsible, again?

Mr. ALLEN. Defense Logistics Agency is not responsible for military equipment that is owned by the military services.

Mr. SHAYS. OK. So tell me who is.

Mr. ALLEN. The military services are responsible for equipment they purchase to use to execute their mission, as part of their Title X responsibilities.

Mr. SHAYS. So I'm going to know that, by the book, that's true and I accept that. But the bottom line is, you want to make sure they get good equipment, correct?

Mr. ALLEN. Yes, sir.

Mr. SHAYS. So you, or partly you, your agency, were partly responsible for giving them defective equipment?

Mr. ALLEN. Yes, sir.

Mr. SHAYS. So there's got to be some kind of responsibility that, my God, we gave——

Mr. ALLEN. Yes, sir, there is.

Mr. SHAYS. So I'm going to accept the fact that while technically you don't have responsibility, you have to feel that you have some obligation here to try to take care of this problem.

Mr. ALLEN. That's correct, sir.

Mr. SHAYS. OK.

What I'm trying to then understand is, did your answer in the beginning just stem from the frustrations of not feeling as a civilian that you're getting the respect from the military folk that you need in order to have them pay attention to these notices?

Mr. ALLEN. No, sir. Again, I obviously conveyed an impression to you that was not intended on my part and apologize for that. My answer in the beginning was an attempt to explain that what we are responsible for is the procurement and distribution of these items of supply, and that where we do store it on behalf of the military services——

Mr. SHAYS. Let me just say I will qualify it and see if you agree.

Your responsibility is to make sure that they get equipment that is supposed to do the job as requested by the military, as designed by the military, and as created by the manufacturer; and that is your obligation. In other words, not just to get them equipment, but to give them equipment that works, correct?

Mr. ALLEN. Yes, sir that is our job.

Mr. SHAYS. In this case, the system failed.

Mr. ALLEN. With Isratex, that's correct.

Mr. SHAYS. It failed. It totally failed. And we had 800,000 suits and we'd identified, you know, 550,000. We have 250,000 to go. Now, admittedly they are the battle dress overgarment, and I'll get into the question of what equipment we send into the Middle East,

but I just want to know, isn't it fair for me to accept that if you are responsible for making sure that good equipment, and in the end, maybe your predecessor, or two predecessors ago, didn't make sure that happened, for whatever reason, that you have an obligation to do everything to make sure that you relocate that bad equipment and get it out of the system?

Mr. ALLEN. That is our obligation, and I think we have gone through extraordinary steps to try to meet that obligation on repeated instances, sir, to include last month, because the fund site that was used to provide the transportation accounts to return any deficient equipment, they might have found had expired. We, on our own, went out again to renew that fund site to again take in another opportunity to remind them to check their equipment and make sure it was not part of the Isratex equipment, and return it to us if it was so done, and return it to us at no cost to them—in fact for replacement. We've done as much as we could do to incentivize——

Mr. SHAYS. Let me ask this: In cases like the no-cost—I think that's good, everyone is looking at their bottom line, but in my mind would be, my God, this is bad equipment. It could endanger our troops. If I was in the military, I would think you wouldn't need any incentive. You just need the command to make sure that people down a little further know.

Mr. Allen, I'd be happy to have you ask questions if you would like and take my time. I don't want you to feel you have to leave.

Mr. ALLEN OF MAINE. I do have to leave, but I don't mind. I've given a question to Jan Schakowsky. She can handle it for me.

Mr. SHAYS. With regard to the joint list, we have the battle dress overgarment and in there are potentially zero to 250—obviously, it's going to be less than 250,000, but it could be 100,000 it could be 50,000, it could be 20,000.

We want to make sure—even if it's 2,000, we want to make sure it's zero, because we don't want 2,000 going into the Middle East. My understanding is that the Joint Service Lightweight Integrated Service Technology suits that we have, we wanted 4 million, and we've got how many now.

Mr. ALLEN. We have 150—I'm sorry 1,000,500 suits in our possession, another 800,000 suits on order, currently being manufactured.

Mr. SHAYS. I would think that someone would want to ascertain and say, with all commitment—and I would like to think that somebody would have been given the permission to say what would have to be the truth—whatever these 1,500 really high technology suits that other countries want to use, wherever they are in the field, we would collect them and make sure that they will be the only ones used in the Middle East. I would like to think that.

Would that be illogical for me to make an assumption that should happen?

Ms. JOHNSON-WINEGAR. No, sir. I think that's a perfectly valid assumption, as we plan for these times of contingencies, that we can readjust the inventory, if you will, and move existing suits from units that won't need them to those that will.

Mr. SHAYS. One of the things that I think this committee should do is, we should contact the Department of Defense and have an

ironclad agreement that none of the battle dress overgarments will be used, and any that are used we are certain are not part of the 250,000 defective equipment.

I would think that would be like a no-brainer for us.

And, Mr. Allen, do you want to say something?

Mr. ALLEN. No, I certainly understand that perspective. I would agree with that perspective.

Mr. SHAYS. One last question: Do we have the capability, if we need—we had 700,000 troops; I don't think we would have that many in Iraq this time, if in fact we do go in, but do we have the capability to bring together 500,000 of these suits?

Mr. ALLEN. One of the improvements we have made since our last hearing on this subject is, absolutely we have the capability to identify the suits. In fact, within the DLA warehouses we have more than 500,000 of these suits we're storing on behalf of the services, so we could put our hands on those specific suits and make sure those were the ones that were issued. We have established some positive controls since the Isratexes were sent to the field.

Mr. SHAYS. I would like to think that you would take ownership of the fact that you have these in your possession and you would want to make sure that these are the only suits that get out, unless I don't know something and the battle dress overgarment has a function that the JSLIST doesn't that is needed. But if the Joint List suit is going to do the job, I would think that's the only suit that would be there.

Mr. ALLEN. The JSLIST suit would be the one of choice in all likelihood, and that would be the one we would issue, unless there were specifically instructed to do otherwise, sir.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you for your patience, Ms. Schakowsky. You could have 10 minutes' time, whatever.

Mr. SCHAKOWSKY. Thank you. I want to thank the chairman for so relentlessly pursuing this issue, which has become heightened in its importance given the fact that we actually may be in a state of war, though I hope that can be avoided.

I have been, not only as a member of this committee, participating in hearings like this, but also as the ranking Democrat on the Government Efficiency Subcommittee. I want to quote you something that was said by a licensed practical nurse that's been in Afghanistan. This was a quote from a Los Angeles Times article. He says if Hussein used chemical or biological weapons, "he'd be an idiot," said Staff Sergeant John Hughes, a 38-year-old licensed practical nurse, who returned from a 7-month stint in Afghanistan in mid-July. "I don't think it would be a problem. It's something that the infantry trains on all the time."

It is with that sort of confidence that our enlisted men and women have that they would be going into harm's way in danger of biological and chemical weapons. But I want to tell you, after sitting in these hearings, both this subcommittee and my subcommittee, and hearing essentially the Keystone Cops way that we've been handling inventory and these defective suits, I would hate for our men and women in the armed services to know about that, because this would damage their attitude.

And I want to talk to you about a couple of things that I still have been hearing that don't—that still don't give me confidence. You said, Mr. Allen, that we know the contract and lot numbers and so we can find these suits. And yet the GAO stated that the DOD could not easily identify, track and locate defective suits because inventory records do not always include contract and lot numbers.

Are they mistaken or are you?

Mr. ALLEN. What the GAO and the IG correctly identified is that, at the unit level, there is not a consistent inventory management system. And one of the IG's findings and recommendations to this panel and the DOD was to establish an inventory management system at the unit level that included all that information.

At the wholesale level we do have that information, so we are able to maintain those controls at that level.

At the unit level what they're talking about oftentimes is that many posts, camps and stations that are training in a regular environment, in some cases they're talking about gear-gets on a ship at sea as people deploy with gear, because they may need it while they're deployed. And it's at that level where the lack of an inventory management system is.

Mr. SCHAKOWSKY. Not only an inventory management system, but according to the Inspector General, not all units received the information from their higher headquarters about the suits. And as recently as April 2002, the IG continued to identify units that had not segregated those defective BDOs in their inventories; is that so?

Mr. ALLEN. I can't question the IG's findings. We were not given that report until yesterday afternoon. I'd like to have the specifics of that, so that we could followup with that to determine if something happened in our procedures and our processes; we can make the corrections for the future. I was not aware of that until yesterday afternoon.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. But a few minutes ago you asserted that we did. I think that it is at least important that we acknowledge the problem fully in order to be able to correct it.

Just a few minutes ago you asserted that, in fact, all of these units had been informed and that we are going to be able to find these suits. So, please, I hope you will be making sure that every single unit is aware of them.

The issue of inventory control, even on the new suits. We had testimony, I think it was in the Government Efficiency Subcommittee, that inventory control ranged from having information on a computer system to having it on erase boards. And you know how long-lasting that is. So the question of even being able to identify where the 1.2 million or however many working suits that we have seems to be a problem, and yet you seem very confident that we could call up the necessary number of suits, that we know where they are,and I don't feel as confident.

You know, if we are talking about erase boards, who knows where they could be? And you are talking about on ship. What are we doing to centralize and reform this inventory control system so that we really do know where they are?

Mr. SHAYS. Before the gentleman answers, I just want to, for the record, point out that was our hearing on inventory control in June; and we used, as an example, the suits. We used as an example the very issue we are doing right now.

So it is kind of like we are doing the reverse. First, we did inventory and then talked about the suits. Now we are talking about the suits and talking about inventory.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. I think Government Efficiency, though, also looked at inventory control, not just regarding the defective suits but now the new suits, knowing where they are.

Mr. SHAYS. Right. And the hearing was on the pathetic nature of how we keep inventory on a whole host of issues, not just the suits.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Right. So what are we doing to make sure that we know where the good ones are?

Mr. ALLEN. Based on the last hearing a couple of years ago, the program manager and the military services took responsibility to—and in part being driven by the committee here—to establish and report annually on the inventory status of those suits. That is a manual process at some part at this point. In some part, it is automated. I must make a distinction between the wholesale level inventory management and the visibility and the automation level that we have at the DLA and at the Army level, from the inventory management capability at the unit level.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. But isn't that what we care about? Isn't it at the unit level that we fight a war?

Mr. ALLEN. We keep suits and can supply suits at both levels. So, yes, we care about unit level. But we also care about at the—the wholesale level. And we do have much better capability, which we are expanding.

I believe during the June hearing that the program manager, Mr. Bryce, outlined a test program he was going to institute to get visibility of suits as they pass to an operating level unit within the Marines Corps.

He also testified, and it was part of my written record, that we are establishing an enterprise resource planning system which we will make available to link to all of the services' inventory records as a way to get a handle on the inventory from top to bottom. We are not there yet.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. So we are doing annual testing?

Mr. ALLEN. We are doing annual reporting, some portion of which is manual.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Does this kind of system apply to other inventory, or now you are just responding to the committee's—both subcommittees' focus on suits?

Mr. ALLEN. No. This kind of system would apply to all inventories, eventually. But one of the issues is that suits are probably—chemical protective gear is more important perhaps at this point than some other equipment which might not be so life protecting.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Well, let me ask you about the extent to which they are life protecting. I understand that the Navy SEALs are concerned because the suits don't work if there is saltwater on them. Is that the case?

Mr. ALLEN. One of the operating requirements for these suits, the JSLIST suit, was to operate in a salt mist environment. If you immerse it in saltwater, no, it does not protect if there is immersion. But it does protect in a normal operating environment at sea where it is raining or it is misting.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Are you concerned that in the Gulf Region that this might put some of our people at least in harm's way if it is not—if saltwater itself—not mist, but water—would make the suits ineffective?

Mr. ALLEN. I don't believe the JSLIST suits would ever be used by SEALs in their saltwater mission environment. The SEALs—when you are referring to the SEALs, they are operating underwater; and the JSLIST suits were not intended for use underwater.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. So you are not concerned that the saltwater issue is a problem?

Mr. ALLEN. The services did not make that a requirement for—one of the technical requirements for the suit.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. OK.

Mr. ALLEN. They built the requirement based upon the threat that they expected to face.

Mr. SHAYS. Really, General Goldfein, this is your—you basically try to determine what you need; and, General Bond, you try to determine how you make it. So couldn't both of you also answer that question?

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. That would be helpful.

General BOND. Well, it would be interesting to find out what the Navy and the special operation forces had requested to support the Seal's mission in this endeavor. The JSLIST suits were never intended for this. They may have a special purpose one, or this may be a new evolving requirement for which we are now going to get a requirement. We will supersede through—while we wait it through the formal process, to now find a way to satisfy this one.

There are mechanisms, I think, that science and technology—that we have that would allow us to have a suit that could withstand this.

Mr. PARKER. There is a specific undergarment which is designed for the special operating forces, including the SEALs, which has a rather extraordinary range of applications and extremely severe operating environments, which would be suitable for the, you know, the use that I think you are intimating in your questioning. That is available to the SEALs.

The JSLIST was never intended for that type of an operating environment.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Do you all feel confident that we know where enough of the non-defective suits are right now so that they can be immediately put to use in a combat situation in Iraq?

Mr. ALLEN. Unequivocally, yes.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. You are certain that none of the defective suits would end up being used in that way?

Mr. ALLEN. When you ask me if I am certain, I cannot be unequivocal about that. I have a high degree of confidence that there would be no defective suits utilized for a number of reasons, partly because of what we have been through to identify and cull out the defective suits;partly because of what the chairman mentioned,

which would be the CINCs would want to use the new suits. And we know we can identify those suits.

So, unequivocally, we could equip the force that is envisioned today with good suits and knowing, with virtual assurety, that they are all good suits.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. I just have to say that I think, addressing some of these incredible inefficiencies at this late date, while it is important that we do it, would really astound most Americans, I think, the fact that we don't have a better handle on something as basic as these protective suits.

But I am happy to hear that even though it is so late that we are trying to get a handle on it and that at the next hearing we will have a full report about where these 250,000 defective suits are and that we have an inventory system capable of tracking all of these lifesaving, at the very least, equipment that our young men and women need.

Thank you.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you.

I ask just the indulgence of the committee to ask two questions that we have. We prepared questions beforehand, and usually they are covered by different members, but these two questions haven't been to our satisfaction. We want them on the record, so whether I am chairman a year from now or someone else, another party or whatever, we have this on the record so we can have a benchmark. I think really, General Goldfein, it may be in your area.

I would ask, how will the establishment of the Joint Program Executive Office improve the CB defense requirement process?

General GOLDFEIN. That is—the way you stated the question, Mr. Chairman, is a bit of a mixture in sort of the way we describe——

Mr. SHAYS. OK. I am going to ask you another question, and you decide which one you want to answer first and whether you want to.

How will the establishment of a Joint Program Executive Office improve the CB material acquisition process?

General GOLDFEIN. Yes, sir. I am going to defer to General Bond on the Joint Program Executive, because that would be his business. I would, however, if I can help, I will answer on the requirements side. I will make a couple of comments.

First of all, having a counterpart, a Joint Program Executive to match with me as a Director for Joint Requirements is a good thing. We should work—we should be joined at the hip. We should work hand in hand. In other words, I should do the work to establish the requirement. For example, earlier the comment was made about SEAL equipment. It there was a need, I should have a good system that will bring that need my attention.

I would then hand that responsibility to the Program Executive and ask that he go forward and, for example, purchase an item. And I am making this overly simple.

Mr. SHAYS. Sure. I understand.

General GOLDFEIN. We should work closely hand in hand. I should be aware whether or not he accomplished that task, because then I know whether that requirement has been met.

So I guess my answer to your question would be that the Joint Program Executive, from my perspective, is the requirements person, is an important office, an important advantage, and the two of us should work—and we intend to—hand in hand.

I would prefer to defer to General Bond with regard to the specifics of that office.

Mr. SHAYS. OK.

General BOND. Mr. Chairman, in my prior job for the last 2 years I was on the requirements and was the counterpart for the Army that worked up through the JROC process to validate requirements.

It was not with malice aforethought that the chief or the Secretary moved me to this position now where I now take the requirements and now have responsibility for delivering actual performance.

In that venue, the issue that General Goldfein Talks about is really clear, because we need to work very closely. He identifies requirements. I need then to tell him what really technology, along with Mr. Parker, is really achievable within the timeframes that they want. We don't want to set the bar too high, for which then our soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen are waiting and waiting for that out there.

But at the same time, he wants to challenge us to make sure that we get the best possible capability out there for soldiers. We need to do that in a joined-at-the-hip manner, in which we make sure that we get the best capability out there. So we are going to work this together and will continue to do that in the future.

Mr. SHAYS. And it is not that way right now?

General GOLDFEIN. That is correct, Mr. Chairman. That is why the chairman of the Joint Chiefs and the Under Secretary for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics collectively arrived at a position that said we need to come up to a better way, which is what generated this office I indicated to you earlier which we have just started.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you. That is very helpful information.

Is there anything in this public part of this hearing that you want to put on the record?

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Chairman, I didn't do justice to Mr. Allen's questions. Could I ask them briefly?

Mr. SHAYS. Absolutely.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Thank you.

It is my understanding that after 5 years—I think this is an old rule not a new rule—suits are supposed to be tested for defects annually; is that correct?

Mr. ALLEN. I think what you are referring to is the shelf-life extension program. We have a joint shelf-life extension program on all chemical equipment, and we set the timing on each piece of equipment differently.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Have you been doing that annual——

Mr. ALLEN. For suits at—the 5th year we test it for shelf-life extension, and we test it again at——

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Have you been doing the 5 year?

Mr. ALLEN. Yes. I think it is 5, 9, 12 and 14 year. We extend it up to 14 years if it passes the tests.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Allen's question was, does the Pentagon have the paperwork demonstrating that it has conducted annual testing on all suits that have extended past their recommended shelf life?

Mr. ALLEN. Yes, we do. Especially since 2 years ago. We really—we really tightened up that process as a result of some problems that we experienced 2 years ago and partly as a result of this committee's hearing then.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Thank you.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you. I just want to make sure, since we are trying to be precise here. So we tightened up a system where we didn't have it. So there may have been some in the past where we weren't doing it. And your response to the question for Mr. Schakowsky, on behalf of Representative Allen, is that from this—from a period of 2 years ago on, you have started this paperwork.

Mr. ALLEN. No, I wasn't clear. We also did the testing. I don't know that the documentation was as clean and as proper as it is now.

And one of the reasons we did that, sir, is so that we could provide some assurance that there would be no defective suits going to any soldiers. And we—we do that according to all equipment at this point.

Mr. SHAYS. OK. Let me ask, is there anything else that anyone wants to put on the record in this open hearing?

We are going to adjourn. We are going to start sharp at 25 after. It gives about 13 minutes if you want to quickly—on the basement level there is—I think you can get something to eat, if you wanted to just get something to drink, and we will resume the hearing at the other site behind closed doors that——

You all are sworn in. It is just a continuation;and, frankly, we may just put all of you together so we can have an interactive dialog.

But it will be by 25 after at the next site.

This hearing is adjourned until 2:25.

[Whereupon, at 2:10 p.m., the subcommittee recessed, to reconvene in closed session.]

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