



PRESS RELEASE

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Opening Statement of Chairman Joel Hefley
Readiness Subcommittee Hearing on
Depot Maintenance – Capacity and Resources for Future Work

The subcommittee is gathered today to learn to what extent each service has an oversight plan to handle the depot maintenance requirements for equipment returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. The military services are currently planning the rotation for OIF 3 and OEF 6 – the question the subcommittee wants to investigate today is at what pace, and when, equipment that is undergoing high usage rates in austere conditions will return in order to receive the necessary depot maintenance. The subcommittee is concerned that a ‘bow wave’ of equipment will return and the services may not have conducted the necessary planning or requested the necessary funding to perform all the of necessary depot work in a timely fashion. The subcommittee touched upon this issue last October in the hearing “Resetting and Reconstituting the Forces.” In that hearing the vice chiefs of all the services testified to the importance of resetting the forces. Today’s hearing should present the plan for resetting the forces.

The Army and Marine Corps have the largest presence in Iraq and Afghanistan, and thus will be facing the most amount of depot maintenance work. I am concerned that both the Army and Marine Corps have a funding shortfall in fiscal year 2004 for depot maintenance. I believe the Army’s funding shortfall this year is approximately \$250 million. Lieutenant General Kelly, the Marine Corps witness today, states in his written statement that the Marines won’t be able to identify until next month the unfunded depot work that exists. Let me state up front that I would be very interested in that information when it is available. I would also like to know from both services the immediate and long term consequences that the shortfall presents.

In addition, I am aware of a study being conducted at the Department regarding “Stresses on the Force.” I am interested to know to what extent the services have provided data for this report and to make my request now that the report, when finished, be provided to this subcommittee.

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