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# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0702

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The Honorable Donald Rumsfeld  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-1000.

Dear Secretary Rumsfeld:

I am once again writing to you to express my deep concern over continuing equipment shortages being experienced by U.S. soldiers deployed in harm's way. In spite of repeated assurances from your department to the contrary, it is now clear that our soldiers continue to report shortfalls in essential protective gear, including life-saving vehicle armor.

In fact, I was greatly disturbed by your response yesterday to a U.S. soldier in Kuwait asking why the most powerful military in the world is sending its troops to landfills for scrap metal and glass to uparmor their vehicles. In my opinion, what that soldier described is an utter disgrace. Our military should spare no expense to ensure the safety of our troops, particularly as they confront a hostile insurgency and roadside bombs throughout Iraq. Instead, they are ordered to scrounge around junkyards for spare parts and were cavalierly advised by you that, "You go to war with the Army you have."

I respectfully disagree—our troops go to war with the Army that our nation's leaders provide. In my mind, it is not our soldiers' responsibility to equip themselves with the protection they need. It is the solemn duty of the military's civilian leadership, members of Congress, and the Commander-in-Chief to outfit our troops with gear critical to their safety and combat effectiveness.

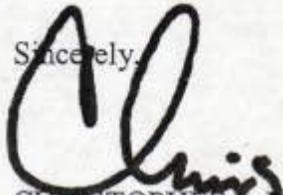
As someone who authored an amendment requiring your Department to reimburse soldiers for their own equipment purchases, I believe it is high time that the Administration crafts a thorough plan for addressing these ongoing armor shortfalls. For this reason I respectfully request responses to the following questions regarding supplies for U.S. troops deploying to Iraq and Afghanistan:

- (1) Clearly, the Army was wrong in asserting that vehicles deployed to Iraq would be adequately uparmored by July 31, 2004. What are current projections for meeting armor needs for U.S. forces serving in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom?
- (2) How is the Department of Defense preparing to implement the newly enacted requirements to reimburse soldiers for essential safety protective gear?
- (3) How does the Administration plan to address ongoing combat-critical equipment, particularly as it ramps up U.S. troop presence in Iraq?
- (4) Will an upcoming supplemental appropriations request include funding to address shortfalls in uparmored vehicles and vehicle armor kits?

US men and women in uniform deserve prompt responses to these questions. They also demand immediate action by you and the Department of Defense to address this serious and life threatening matter.

I look forward to reviewing a prompt response to this letters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris", written over the word "Sincerely,".

CHRISTOPHER J. DODD  
United States Senator