

Testimony before the House Armed Services Committee
FY 2018 National Defense Authorization Act Member Day
Congressman John R. Carter

April 27, 2017

Chairman Thornberry and Ranking Member Smith,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today on what I believe is a major problem facing the United States Army. I am the proud Representative of Fort Hood, Texas as well as the Co-Chairman of the Congressional Army Caucus. I work every day to ensure the soldiers I represent, and all of our men and women in uniform, have the resources they need to do their job as safely and effectively as possible. I believe the work of this Committee is critical to the well-being of our service members and their families, so I thank you both for all you do each and every day to serve those who serve us all.

Today, revisionist powers are annexing territory; challenging and probing the post-WWII political world order and using Anti-Access/Area Denial technologies to thwart our ability to project power. These nations have also modernized their ground forces and the tactical overmatch that US ground forces have enjoyed for decades is now gone. As US Army Vice-Chief of Staff General Allyn recently stated, we are “Out-ranged, outgunned and outdated.” On our present course, the US Army will not be sufficiently modern to deter and defeat potential enemies.

The Army’s current fleet of ground combat vehicles was conceived in the 70’s and built in the 80’s. While multiple upgrades to these vehicles have occurred, they were not designed for the requirements of today’s – and tomorrow’s – wars.

In eight years, the Army will make a decision whether or not to keep the current thirty-five year old Bradley Fighting Vehicle for the next fifty to seventy years. The scheduled upgrades for the Abrams tank will take twenty-six years to completely outfit the entire Army – while not solving many of the problems of being outgunned. And for many reasons like having to fund current readiness requirements at higher-than-expected levels, the Army has no program in place to procure next generation ground combat vehicles.

The risk an overmatched Army presents to the Joint force fight is untenable. It is also indefensible for us as Members of Congress to sit idly by and not give our Soldiers the capabilities they will need to dominate the battlefield in future wars.

I have introduced H. RES. 238 to support the US Army and encourage them to expedite their efforts to procure and field next generation ground combat vehicles, as well as their current modernization strategy. Our ground combat vehicles are overmatched today, and the longer we wait the longer our soldiers cannot provide adequate deterrence—or win if deterrence fails without high costs in blood and treasure—in one of the most threatening national security environments our nation has ever faced. As you begin your process of drafting the FY 2018 National Defense Authorization Act, I respectfully request that the Committee include the report language contained within my resolution into the National Defense Authorization Act.

Again, thank you both for your staunch support of our military, service members and their families. I look forward to continuing to work with you on this important issue.