U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

DUNCAN HUNTER, CALIFORNIA
CHAIRMAN

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: July 22, 2004 Contact: Harald Stavenas (202) 225-2539

Opening Statement of Chairman Hunter

Hearing on the Report of the Commission to Assess the Threat to the U.S. from Electromagnetic Pulse Attack

Our guests this morning are members of the Commission to Assess the Threat to the United States from Electromagnetic Pulse Attack. Its Chairman, Dr. William Graham will give us the highlights of the Commission's report. He is accompanied by several distinguished members of the Commission: Dr. John Foster, Mr. Earl Gjelde, Mr. Henry Kluepfel, General Richard Lawson, Dr. Joan Woodard, and Dr. Lowell Wood.

National security experts have known about electromagnetic pulse for decades, at least since the atomic bombs were used at the end of World War II. During the Cold War, we thought about it primarily in terms of ensuring the credibility of our nuclear deterrent. So, we hardened a large number of our military systems in order to operate in a nuclear environment.

Since the Cold War, however, several trends have forced us to think about E-M-P in a new way. The proliferation of nuclear weapons and the rise of new nuclear powers with small nuclear arsenals have forced us to think about E-M-P as an asymmetric threat in its own right. At the same time, our economy is increasingly dependent on the electronic systems vulnerable to electromagnetic pulse.

We heard a lot about this problem in the 1990s, but nobody had a good handle on it. So, this committee took the lead in creating a national commission to look into the problem. We're here today to review its findings and recommendations.

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