

Statement by Toyobo Co., Ltd. on Personal Body Armor Containing Zylon®

Osaka, Japan, Oct. 20, 2003 -- Toyobo Co., Ltd. wants all law enforcement officials, security officers, and its customers to know that it firmly stands behind Zylon® and believes it is a superior fiber for personal body armor manufacturers to use in the production of their vests. Zylon is the strongest high performance fiber for ballistic applications in the world, permits the making of lighter, more comfortable vests, and is far stronger than p-Aramid and steel fiber.

Because many members of law enforcement and security organizations depend on body armor for personal protection, Toyobo is deeply concerned by recent statements that some vests containing Zylon, made by Second Chance Body Armor Inc., wear out more rapidly than expected. We do not know why Second Chance has determined that the vests it makes are inadequate. Because Second Chance has not shared its test results, we are unable to understand the basis for its unilateral decision to, in effect, withdraw from the marketplace its products containing Zylon.

In contrast, other manufacturers have indicated to us no reported problems with their Zylon vests, which are designed differently from the Second Chance products and that they continue to believe Zylon is an important ingredient in the products offering the best possible ballistic protection for their customers.

Since 2001, it has been well understood in the industry that the tensile strength of Zylon fiber might be susceptible to degradation under certain extreme temperature and humidity conditions for prolonged periods of continuous exposure. Tests we have conducted on Zylon fiber were intended to estimate the aging performance of Zylon fiber itself, not to assess the actual ballistic performance of any individual manufacturer's final product. We have continued to update the manufacturers with our latest test results, about the fiber, not the vests, all of which are consistent with what has been known since 2001.

Each manufacturer of body armor uses Zylon in its own way to create its own competitively different product. That is why we have always advised manufacturers that they should take our test results into consideration when they design, test, and engineer their products. It is the responsibility of each manufacturer to make a decision on the effectiveness of the body armor they produce and sell because only they know the unique characteristics of their product and how it is made.

As a fiber producer, we are not in a position to conduct ballistic tests on vests because we do not have access to the different types, or prototypes, of body armor containing Zylon. In light of our paramount interest in the safety of law enforcement personnel, however, Toyobo encourages manufacturers to conduct tests to determine the real-life performance of their vests. We hope the results of the tests will be made public and expect that they will alleviate concerns about vests containing Zylon.

We are always working on improving the quality and performance of our products and take great pride in the innovations we have introduced for ballistic applications. Body armor

containing Zylon has been approved for use by the National Institute of Justice since Zylon was introduced in 1998. We intend to offer the NIJ our technical assistance for its ongoing research.

Toyobo Co., Ltd. is a versatile multi-national company based in Osaka, Japan active in chemicals, fibers, textiles, films, biochemicals, and pharmaceutical products. Toyobo was founded in 1882. Toyobo stock is traded on the Tokyo Stock Exchange.

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