

# PRESS RELEASE



## House Armed Services Committee Duncan Hunter, Chairman

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 24, 2004

**CONTACT**

Harald Stavenas  
Angela Sowa  
(202) 225-2539

### **OPENING REMARKS OF CHAIRMAN DUNCAN HUNTER**

*U.S. European and Southern Commands Fiscal Year 2005 Posture Hearing*

Over the last year or so, a number of critics have accused the administration of acting unilaterally in the world. If your test for multilateralism is global consensus, it would be easy to believe that those charges were accurate. In fact, they couldn't be further from the truth.

Even though France, Germany, and Belgium criticized the United States for Operation Iraqi Freedom, some thirty-four countries have contributed forces to providing security and stability in Iraq. Three fall under General Hill's area of responsibility and twenty-two of those countries fall under General Jones'. Collectively, they constitute a majority of our allies in NATO.

The United States is also working cooperatively with thirty-four other countries in the International Security and Assistance Force in Afghanistan, under NATO leadership.

In Haiti, the United States has deployed peacekeepers in cooperation with troops from France, Canada, and Chile. And, in Colombia, the United States is actively engaged in raising standards of professionalism and instilling a respect for human rights in the Colombian military, both of which are necessary if the Colombia's fragile democracy is to prevail against narco-terrorists.

In Africa, the Administration is launching the Pan-Sahel initiative to assist Mali, Niger, Chad, and Mauritania in reducing the ungoverned spaces they share and closing down a possible refuge for terrorists and their allies. In Liberia, U.S. forces worked closely with the Economic Community of West African States—an organization of 15 countries—to bring fighting there to a halt and restore some degree of law and order.

Clearly, this is not the picture of a country unable to work and play well with others. Instead of the caricature painted by certain pundits, it is the image of an Administration moving proactively and multilaterally to change material facts on the ground and improve U.S. national security. And ultimately, that's where our security lies, in proactively changing our environment by acting to remove the threats to our security, not in accepting the lowest common denominator on which the world's governments can all agree.

– continued –

Being proactive means changing some of our historical national security relationships. It means that some activities and locations accustomed to being at the center of U.S. policymaking during the Cold War will become less important, and that some feelings could be hurt as the United States changes its global defense posture to reflect the new strategic landscape we face. Ultimately, it means changing our global footprint and relocating many of our military forces around the world.

Generals Jones and Hill understand that and are at the center of these shifts. Even as we meet, they've been reconfiguring their activities to better deal with the war on terror. Gentlemen, I look forward to hearing how your commands are adopting to our new strategic circumstances.

###