



PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Harald Stavenas (202) 225-2539

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN DUNCAN HUNTER

Full Committee Hearing on the Training of Iraqi Security Forces.

This morning the Committee continues its examination of Operation Iraqi Freedom by focusing on an issue of great interest to this committee and the American public in general—the training of Iraqi security forces.

In less than two weeks, the Iraqi people will assume responsibility for their government. While they no longer suffer from the tyranny of Saddam Hussein, there is yet much work to be done to achieve democracy and prosperity. Securing Iraq is the first step on this path.

Today, Iraq has over 225,000 security forces personnel on duty and in training, just 35,000 short of its requirement. This number includes Iraqi police, border enforcers, a Civil Defense Corps, the Facilities Protection Services, and a small armed forces.

So far, the results are positive. The Iraqi Civil Defense Corps, for example, is conducting joint patrols throughout Iraq with other Coalition Forces and Iraqi Police forces. Soon, the ICDC will be equipped with additional vehicles, body armor, uniforms, radios, weapons, ammunition, night vision and binoculars. Through this on-the-job-training and equipment upgrades, the Iraqis will be able to assume more and more security responsibilities on the ground.

Tangible results may already be in the making. For instance, the Department of Defense tells us that Fallujah has remained quiet with no violations of the cease-fire since May 3rd, and that confrontations with al-Sadr's militia have declined recently.

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