



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: May 21, 2004

Contact: Harald Stavenas (202) 225-2539

Opening Remarks of Chairman Duncan Hunter
Full Committee Hearing on the Conduct and Support of Operation Iraqi Freedom

I called this hearing because the Committee has focused practically all of its energy on moving our defense authorization bill through the House and addressing the Abu Ghraib prison situation for much of the last month. While all of that is very important, we must not forget that there is a war on and our troops are in the thick of it.

While the media has been absorbed with the misdeeds of a few MPs, our soldiers turned back an uprising by Moqtada al-Sadr and his Iranian-supported Mahdi brigade. He and his militia are now cornered and have retreated into holy sites in Najaf, proving to Iraqis and the world that he has no respect for Islam or Iraq's future as a nation. Ultimately, winning that war and building a secure Iraq are immensely more important to the future, and we must not lose sight of that. I called this hearing to make sure that we don't.

###