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PRESS RELEASE

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**Hunter Statement on Secretary Rumsfeld's  
Recent Appearance at the House Armed Services Committee and the  
Inaccurate Washington Post Coverage That Followed**

Washington, D.C. – House Armed Services Committee Chairman Duncan Hunter (R-CA) made the following statement regarding Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's testimony on February 16<sup>th</sup> – *and an erroneous Washington Post front page commentary the following day*. A letter to the editor of the Post was submitted on the 17<sup>th</sup> but has not yet been published. In an effort to set the record straight in a timely manner, the letter is being released today.

“The February 17 front-page Washington Post Capitol Hill Journal piece, ‘Secretary on the Offensive’ was incorrect.

“Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld hadn't ‘had enough’ when he left my committee's hearing. We had agreed in advance that the hearing would terminate after three hours because the secretary had another hearing commitment. Therefore, the article's suggestion that he got mad and left did a disservice to the truth and to the secretary. Further, Secretary Rumsfeld graciously invited the handful of members in line to ask questions to a private breakfast in the Pentagon in the next few weeks. Hardly the actions of someone discourteous.

“As for his style, the secretary answers questions forthrightly. Sometimes the correct and honest answer is ‘I don't know.’ Dana Milbank's focus on 10 seconds of exchanges left out the remaining three hours of Secretary Rumsfeld's expansive remarks on numerous complex topics.

“Secretary Rumsfeld is responsible for a war in two theaters, reshaping the 2.5 million defense force of the United States and preparing the nation to meet present and future security threats. His success should be judged on his professional competence, not innuendo. In my judgment, he has done an outstanding job.”