

PRESS RELEASE

House Armed Services Committee Duncan Hunter, Chairman

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 22, 2003

CONTACT

Harald Stavenas
(202) 225-2539

HOUSE APPROVES NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT *Implements Initial Lessons Learned in Iraq and Afghanistan* *Provides New Tools for War on Terrorism* *Supports Military Personnel and Their Families*

Washington, D.C. – Today, the U.S. House of Representatives approved H.R. 1588, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004, on a bipartisan 361 to 68 vote. The legislation authorizes \$400.5 billion in budget authority, matching the President's request, for the Department of Defense (DOD) and the national security programs of the Department of Energy (DOE). House Armed Services Committee Chairman Duncan Hunter (R-CA) issued the following statement:

“With this legislation we continue our commitment to defend our homeland and take care of our military personnel. The legislation provides for today's defense needs while addressing tomorrow's threats and this strong bipartisan vote validates our belief in this approach.

“There are many lessons learned from recent operations in the war on terrorism; this legislation draws from them in its funding and policy provisions. Major weapons programs approved today include an initiative to maintain our heavy armor forces. Many of our troops survived firefights in Iraq thanks to our M1 tanks and Bradley Fighting Vehicles. I believe in developing forces that are quicker and more lethal, but never at the expense of safety.

“Another important decision was made in working to maintain our near-term deep strike capabilities. A critical lesson learned from the continuing war on terrorism is the need to retain and upgrade our B-1, B-2 and B-52 bomber fleet, especially when access to overseas bases is limited.

“Our safety and freedom ultimately relies on our troops. This legislation provides a strong across the board pay raise and other important provisions for our men and women in uniform and the families that support them.

“Important policy reforms would also be implemented by this legislation. These range from acquisition reforms that would benefit small businesses to the modernization of the Pentagon's outdated civilian personnel system. The new system would be based on many years of successful programs supported by the tens of thousands of current personnel who participated.

– continued –

“I look forward to working with our colleagues in the Senate and then sending this legislation to President Bush in the coming weeks.”

Some highlights of H.R. 1588 include:

- A 4.1 percent average pay raise
- Over \$6 billion for new housing, child care centers, schools and other construction
- Increased funding for air lift and aerial refueling
- \$9.1 billion for missile defense programs
- Research and development funds for a new deep strike bomber
- \$10.8 billion for maintenance of equipment and weapons
- Establishment of a TRICARE beneficiary outreach program
- A balanced approach to military readiness and environmental conservation
- \$7.3 billion to fight terrorism including \$75 million to develop new technologies
- Requiring the DOD to help bolster U.S. defense industrial base capabilities
- Funds to dismantle, secure, and eliminate weapons of mass destruction
- Reform of DOD policies and practices – from personnel to acquisition
- \$1.1 billion for high priority unfunded readiness requirements, including depot maintenance across the services
- More than \$65 million for Special Operations Forces weapons and equipment procurement
- Increases in active component end strengths to meet high priority manpower shortfalls
- Initiatives to facilitate and enhance the service of reserve and National Guard personnel
- \$119 million for B-1B bomber modifications to begin the regeneration process for 23 aircraft
- \$726.8 million in upgrades for M3A2 Bradley Fighting Vehicles and M1A2 Abrams tanks
- \$3.7 billion for ammunition replenishment and industrial base upgrades

###