

PRESS RELEASE

House Armed Services Committee Duncan Hunter, Chairman

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HASC Chairman Hunter Statement on Air Force Tanker Decision

Washington, D.C. – House Armed Services Committee Chairman Duncan Hunter (R-CA) issued the following statement today regarding the Department of Defense decision to approve the Air Force KC-767 tanker lease initiative:

“I’m pleased to finally see a decision to move forward in recapitalizing the aerial tanker fleet. While I’ll reserve final judgment until I have a chance to fully review the details, this is an important step forward. Aerial refueling is a critical combat enabler and an area where we’re increasingly deficient.

“Yesterday, the House of Representatives passed the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004 to help restore our aerial refueling capabilities. The legislation includes a provision establishing a \$229 million Air Force Air Refueling Transfer Account to provide the means to address both the preparation costs of either the procurement or lease of new aircraft, or to sustain the existing fleet.

“I look forward to working with the Department of Defense and the Senate to ensure that, whatever happens, the Air Force rapidly proceeds with a program to replace our aging aerial tanker fleet.”

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The Secretary of the Air Force will now forward a report to Congressional oversight committees detailing the terms and conditions for review and approval. Rep. Hunter is leading a delegation of members of Congress to Iraq today, he returns on May 27, 2003.