



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: June 23, 2004

Contact: Harald Stavenas (202) 225-2539

Opening Statement of Chairman Duncan Hunter
Hearing on the U.S. Global Defense Posture

Today's hearing will review changes to the U.S. Global Defense Posture.

In recent months, the media has reported on possible changes to the overseas positioning of U.S. troops. We read stories about redeployments from Germany to the United States or Eastern Europe and from Korea to Australia. Most of the time, these changes get discussed in the context of our bilateral relationship with whatever country is being affected. That's understandable, but it misses the big picture.

Our global force posture was put together during the four decades of the Cold War according to the needs of the U.S.-Soviet rivalry. For that matter, the geographic boundaries of the Cold War were largely determined by the outcome of World War II. In other words, our global deployments were largely based on features of the international security system that had their roots in the 1940s.

September 11th forced us to recognize that our forces weren't necessarily in the right places for winning the global war on terror. The Administration has, rightly, been working over the last two years to reposition those forces for the future we face, not the past we remember. With that in mind, teams of negotiators have begun discussing possible changes in our force posture with old allies, and new friends. Cumulatively, these troop movements signify a change in U.S. defense posture that is as significant as the one we experienced after the Spanish-American War, when the United States became a global power.

We held a hearing at the beginning of this process almost a year ago, and a more focused hearing on changes in Korea last week. Today, we will fill in the rest of the picture.

###