



PRESS RELEASE

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**Opening Statement of Chairman Hunter**  
***Hearing on Schlesinger Panel Review of DOD Detention Operations***

WASHINGTON, DC—The full committee meets today to hear the findings of the Schlesinger Panel regarding DOD Detention Operations. Our distinguished witnesses are

*Honorable James Schlesinger*  
Chairman  
Independent Panel to Review DOD Detention Operations

*Honorable Harold Brown*  
Panelist

On May 12, 2004, Secretary Rumsfeld asked a distinguished panel to review all Department of Defense detainee operations to provide independent, professional advice on issues the panel considered most pertinent to allegations of abuse. The panel, comprised of two former Secretaries of Defense, a retired four-star general, and a former member of this committee, released its report at the end of last month.

The Independent Panel is the seventh of 10 major investigations, reviews, inspections, and reports into detainee operations. All of those are in addition to the over 220 criminal investigations being undertaken by the Department. Already, the Department is acting on some of the recommendations of earlier reports. It will undoubtedly incorporate the Schlesinger Panel recommendations as it moves forward.

In and of itself, the sheer volume of this effort should serve as compelling evidence that the Department of Defense finds the abuse of detainees unacceptable and is moving very aggressively to prosecute those who commit it and take the necessary steps to ensure that the system won't tolerate it. It should come as no surprise that the panel determined "There is no evidence of a policy of abuse promulgated by senior officials of military authorities." Of course not. That's not the kind of country we are, or the kind of Armed Forces we have.

That said, the panel did find that interrogation policies with respect to Iraq were inadequate or deficient. It also confirmed that there were confused command relationships at Abu Ghraib prison. The failure to follow standard operating procedures in deploying the 800<sup>th</sup> Military Police Brigade and in operations of the 205<sup>th</sup> Military Intelligence Brigade clearly contributed to a chaotic situation that facilitated criminal acts. Undoubtedly, as these investigations continue, we will discover more problems, just as Secretary Rumsfeld warned us in May.

The question we should address is: where do we go from here? In the House version of the fiscal year 2005 defense authorization act, this committee took preemptive action to require new, and better guidance and training in the Geneva Conventions and improved oversight by higher authorities. Based on the Schlesinger panel's findings, we will need to go further in the areas of resources, doctrine, and force structure.

Fortunately, the Department is already moving forward in many of these areas, further proving that it will leave no stone unturned in ensuring that justice is done and all steps possible are being taken to treat detainees in a manner consistent with our nation's values.

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