



## HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE DUNCAN HUNTER – CHAIRMAN

### ***PRESS RELEASE***

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### **TACTICAL AIR AND LAND FORCES SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WELDON OPENING STATEMENT** *Full Committee Hearing on Improving Interagency Coordination In the Global War on Terrorism and Beyond*

**Washington, D.C.** – As we fight the global war on terror, we face a determined, adaptive and ruthless enemy. Since this war began, President Bush and other senior leaders have repeatedly said that, to preserve our freedom in the face of such an enemy, we must use all the instruments of our national power—such as the diplomatic, economic, intelligence, law enforcement and military elements. Given this Committee’s particular focus on our Armed Forces, I would add that this effort cannot involve only—or even primarily—America’s military services. Simply put: the fronts of engagement are so vast, no one agency can fight this war alone.

So it follows that to effectively employ all of America’s instruments of national power, the organizations involved—from cabinet agencies to other non-defense agencies—must collaborate and cooperate as seamlessly as possible.

But, to quote one recent witness, interagency coordination is “both essential and lacking.” Many other administration officials, military leaders and non-government experts have echoed this assertion. In fact, the Department of Defense’s (DoD) recent Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) notes this deficiency in a section devoted to “achieving unity of effort.” To illustrate the challenge, it cites the relationship in the field between DoD’s combatant commanders and the State Department’s Chiefs of Mission, concluding that people from the two agencies “must expend considerable effort, on a case-by-case basis, to act together in

support of operations.” The result, according to the QDR, is that “Commanders and Chiefs of Mission lose agility in the face of an adaptive adversary, fleeting targets are missed, and risks to U.S. interests and those of our partners increase.” We look forward to the witnesses commenting on this particular issue.

Experts cite various factors as to why such joint collaborations are ultimately unresponsive, cumbersome and slow: they point, for example, to the different legal authorities, philosophies, cultures and missions that guide each agency.

Today, this Committee looks forward to the witnesses’ assessments regarding the state of interagency coordination, the progress being made to address particular areas of concern and how, if appropriate, Congress might help.

This Committee wants to be as supportive as possible in achieving the goal of seamless interagency coordination. If the way we are currently arranged is not flexible or responsive or comprehensive enough to meet this war’s frontline demands—and that appears to be so—we must critically examine our interagency relationships. Then we must make the necessary strategic and institutional changes to eliminate the stovepipes that restrict resources, information and expertise. The longer we wait to address the root of this national security challenge, the more difficult it will be to fix. We should therefore ensure in all proper haste that we can use instruments of national power as easily and as effectively as situations on the ground demand.

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