

September 30, 2005- Sanchez: Clear Goal Needed for Success in Iraq

House Armed Services Committee
DEMOCRATS Ike Skelton, Ranking Member
For immediate release: September 29, 2005 http://www.house.gov/hasc_democrats

Contact:

Loren Dealy (HASC) 202-226-6339
Lara Battles (Skelton) 202-225-2876
Carrie Brooks (Sanchez) 202-225-2965
Clear Goal Needed for Success in Iraq

WASHINGTON, DC – Today the House Armed Services Committee heard testimony from Secretary Rumsfeld, as well as several senior military officials responsible for operations in Iraq. Democrats questioned whether the disconnect between the President and military commanders in defining our ultimate goals in the region have hindered our efforts in that conflict.

“Everyone agrees that we want success in Iraq. Unfortunately, there is no clear idea of what success means,” said Ranking Member Ike Skelton (MO). “The President has defined our goal as building democracy throughout the Middle East, but that does not give our military a clear, well-defined mission. How are our commanders supposed to develop a strategy to succeed when they don’t know the definition of success? What are our troops supposed to prepare for?”

Skelton continued, “In order to prevent the continued wearing out of our troops, the administration must clearly define a mission and commit the resources necessary to win it. If the training of Iraqi security forces is our priority, then that should receive the majority of our attention.”

“You have to understand what the goal is before you can develop a good strategy to get there,” commented Rep. Loretta Sanchez (CA). “Since major combat operations ended, there has not been a well-defined goal for our military, and the current state of affairs in Iraq proves that we need one.”

“The ultimate purpose of our efforts must be made clear, and the benchmarks of our progress must be clearly defined. We owe it to our fighting men and women to determine a realistic goal and to commit the resources necessary to achieve it,” concluded Skelton.