

May 1, 2006: 22 HASC Members Call for Hearings With Ret. Generals

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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22 HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE MEMBERS CALL FOR HEARINGS WITH RETIRED GENERALS

WASHINGTON- Today, 22 Members of Congress serving on the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) delivered a bipartisan letter to Chairman Duncan Hunter (R-CA) requesting formal oversight hearings to receive testimony from several former generals who have recently spoken out about ongoing operations in Iraq.

Initiated by Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-CA) and joined by HASC Ranking Democrat Ike Skelton, the letter was signed by Neil Abercrombie (D-HI), Robert A. Brady (D-PA), Jim Cooper (D-TN), Susan Davis (D-CA), Lane Evans (D-IL), Steve Israel (D-NY), Walter Jones (R-NC), James Langevin (D-RI), Cynthia McKinney (D-GA), Marty Meehan (D-MA), Kendrick Meek (D-FL), Solomon P. Ortiz (D-TX), Silvestre Reyes (D-TX), Adam Smith (D-WA), John Spratt (D-SC), Ellen Tauscher (D-CA), Gene Taylor (D-MS) and Mark Udall (D-CO).

Honorable Duncan Hunter

Chairman

House Armed Services Committee

2120 Rayburn House Office Building

Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Hunter:

We write to respectfully request that the House Armed Services Committee hold a hearing to examine in greater depth the recent comments of several former general officers on the prosecution of ongoing military operations in Iraq.

Their comments have sparked a firestorm of criticism and controversy. Behind the sensationalism of recent events, however, there are serious issues being raised that require Congress to exercise its oversight responsibilities. These Generals have served our country with honor and distinction, and whether we agree with their statements or not, their opinions are born from their experiences and professional military judgment. We should consider them carefully.

Bringing these distinguished officers before the Committee in an open hearing will allow Members to directly engage them in a thoughtful and substantive manner befitting the seriousness and importance of the issues they raise. The Committee will be able to probe and question the propositions given by the generals with a depth and complexity that

has not been provided in the public sphere up to this point.

Specifically, a hearing on this subject will allow the Committee to examine the functioning of the Title 10 process for rendering military advice and counsel to the national command authority through the agency of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and unified command system.

We are fully aware and respectful of the traditional, constitutional and legal subordination of military to civilian leaders, which has been a bedrock principle of civil-military relations in the United States since the earliest days of our republic. By holding this hearing, in fact, we believe that we strengthen that principle by subjecting the statements of these generals to a formal and public review, so that both military and civilian leaders recognize their accountability to the electorate on matters of war and peace.

Regardless of our differing opinions on the war in Iraq, this Congress ignores what its senior generals are saying at its peril. In holding such hearings, we fulfill our Committee's oversight responsibility and our duty to the American people to seriously consider the views of our citizen soldiers. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

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