

**For Immediate Release:** *March 3, 2009*

**Washington DC** - U.S. Congressman Duncan Hunter (R-CA), a member of the House Armed Services Committee, was briefed today by Marine Corps officials on details surrounding the FA-18 crash in San Diego on December 8, 2008.

"The Marine Corps provided an informative and candid assessment of the events leading up to the crash," said Congressman Hunter. "The entire evolution of the incident was thoroughly examined and I greatly appreciate the Marine Corps' openness about these details and the expediency of their investigation.

"This was a tragic incident that could have been prevented. Standard procedure dictates that the aircraft, in this particular scenario, should have been diverted to North Island Naval Air Station. However, senior military officers communicating with the pilot, as well as the pilot himself, did not consult their checklists and follow appropriate procedure. If they did, the aircraft would have been immediately directed to North Island and the crash would not have occurred.

"According to the Marine Corps, four individuals have already been released from their duties. These individuals are the Squadron Commander, Operations Officer, Standardization Officer and Maintenance Officer. The Marines have also issued clarifying guidance for fuel system transfers, which was the underlying cause of the crash, and gave their assurances that the mistakes that contributed to this incident will not be repeated.

"At this time, my thoughts and prayers continue to go to the families involved in this unfortunate incident."