

For Immediate Release: *February 24, 2009*

Washington DC - Congressman Duncan D. Hunter (R-CA), a member of the House Armed Services Committee, made the following statement before President Obama's speech tonight:

"In his speech this evening, President Obama will convey his priorities and vision for America. While the condition of our economy is expected to be the focus of tonight's speech, it is important that the President also touch on our national security challenges. In particular, I hope that President Obama will address the security situation in Afghanistan and ongoing military operations in the region.

"During my recent visit to Afghanistan, I had the opportunity to talk with civilian and military leaders, as well as coalition troops. For all the progress that has been made so far, there remains a critical need for additional combat resources and technology. The fact that the Afghanistan-Pakistan border is still open, despite the availability of Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance technology, continues to present a significant threat to coalition forces and complicates their mission. There also is a severe lack of counter-IED infrastructure, which needlessly threatens our forces.

"Failure to provide these and other necessary resources creates a situation that puts our troops and their mission at risk. With an additional 17,000 troops scheduled to arrive in region, President Obama should use this opportunity tonight to pledge his full support for our military men and women, and commit to providing them the tools they need to stay safe and achieve victory."