

**Washington DC** - During House consideration of H.R. 2410, the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Congressman Duncan Hunter successfully offered an amendment to the legislation that requires the *Task Force on the Prevention of Illicit Small Arms Trafficking in the Western Hemisphere* also include the Secretary of Defense. The amendment passed by voice vote this afternoon.

Congressman Hunter delivered the following remarks during consideration of the amendment:

"Mr. Chairman, The amendment I'm offering today to H.R. 2410, the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, is straightforward. It simply adds the Secretary of Defense to the Task Force on the Prevention of Illicit Small Arms Trafficking in the Western Hemisphere that is created under the legislation.

"The stated purpose of this Task Force is to develop a strategy and integrated federal policies to better control the export of small arms and light weapons in a manner that furthers the foreign policy and national security interests of the United States within the Western Hemisphere. While the Task Force is comprised of the Secretaries of State and Homeland Security, and the Attorney General - all of whom should be members of this Task Force - it does not include perhaps the most important player in global counter trafficking operations: the Secretary of Defense.

"The Department of Defense plays an important role in U.S. security cooperation and assistance worldwide, particularly with governments and militaries throughout the Western Hemisphere. These relationships are critical to our efforts to promote peace and stability in our region of the world, and the intelligence and operational support provided by our military are an integral part of this shared responsibility.

"Given the Department of Defense's role as an interagency partner in counter trafficking and U.S. export control activities, it should not be excluded, in any way, from being a primary member of this Task Force.

"Whatever the Task Force puts forward in the way of policy recommendations will be closely

evaluated by Congress as we work to address the serious problem of weapons trafficking in our Hemisphere. It is important that these findings and recommendations fully represent the role and contributions of those Departments primarily involved in combating arms trafficking, protecting U.S. security and advancing our foreign policy objectives.

"Thank you Mr. Chairman. I reserve the balance of the time."