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WASHINGTON DC—Congressman Duncan Hunter, a Member of the House Armed Services Committee, today returned from Afghanistan, where he met with General David Petraeus and other military and civilian officials on current operations and the first phase of troop withdrawals. Hunter was accompanied by Congressman Allen West (R-FL) and Congressman James McGovern (D-MA).

“I’ve seen Afghanistan through the eyes of a Marine and a Member of Congress,” said Hunter. “Both perspectives are unique, offering varying viewpoints of where the mission stands and how to proceed.

“Undoubtedly, our military men and women are doing their mission and doing it well. They are well trained, highly experienced and highly capable. Every one of them shares responsibility for the gains that have been made up to this point. We have come this far not because of Afghanistan’s government, its leaders or their willingness to change, but rather the service and sacrifice of America’s military over the last decade.

“General Petraeus also deserves credit for his work and I appreciated the chance to sit down with him and discuss daily operations, the buildup of Afghanistan’s security forces and plans for the first phase of troop withdrawals. As the number of U.S. combat troops change, the strategy along the counterinsurgency-counterterrorism continuum will adapt as necessary. Our objective to deny transnational terrorists from taking hold of the country is still the same, just as building up Afghanistan’s military remains a priority. Once the lead security role is handed over to the Afghans, our objectives will shift as we identify and understand the strengths and limitations of Afghanistan’s security forces.

“The American military still has its sights set on winning in Afghanistan. Even with a troop drawdown set to begin, it’s more important than ever that we keep focused on leaving in victory.”