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For Immediate Release

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Johnstown, PA - U.S. Rep. John Murtha of Pennsylvania, ranking member of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, issued the following statement today in response to President Bush's speech in Salt Lake City, Utah:

"Once again the President's speech in Salt Lake was high on ideological rhetoric and low on substance. He is ignoring the real issue. The issue is that the war in Iraq has evolved into a civil war and our troops are caught in the middle.

"Iraq today is unstable and unfriendly to the United States and coalition troops who have fought for Iraq's liberation and democracy. Iraq is not overwhelmed by foreign terrorists; it is overwhelmed by Iraqis fighting Iraqis. Foreign terrorists account for less than seven percent of the 'insurgency' in Iraq. The Iraqi people know who they are, and once they are no longer distracted by the perception of a United States military occupation, they will concentrate their efforts on unifying and ridding their homeland of all foreign fighters.

"More ideological jargon is not going to solve the quagmire in Iraq. We need a new direction."