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For Immediate Release

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Washington D.C. - Congressman John P. Murtha, Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, issued the following statement in response to the President's Speech today before the Veterans of Foreign Wars:

President Johnson said in 1966, "the solution to Vietnam is patience."

President Nixon said in 1969, "As our commanders in the field determine that the South Vietnamese are able to assume a greater portion of the responsibility for the defense of their own territory, troops will come back."

Today, we hear the same misleading rhetoric coming from this Administration. In Vietnam, we were talking about 10 years of patience and in the end a U.S. military solution did not work. Now, five year's into the war in Iraq, the President continues to seek a U.S. military solution to an Iraqi civil war. There will be no real progress in Iraq until key political, economic and diplomatic improvements are made by the Iraqi's.

The facts on the ground in Iraq indicate that electricity is below pre-war levels (only 2 hours a day in Baghdad), oil production remains below pre-war production and at least 50% of the Iraqi population is unemployed.

All Americans realize that stability in the Middle East is important to our national security. The American people will not accept patience as a strategy while the Iraqi Government continues to ignore key political and economic benchmarks.