

November 6, 2007 Murtha Summary of the FY08 Defense Appropriations Conference Agreement

For Immediate Release

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Washington D.C. - Congressman John P. Murtha, Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, praised both House and Senate conferees today on completing the final \$459.6 billion Fiscal Year 2008 Defense Appropriations Bill.

"This conference agreement achieves a balance between preparing military units for near-term deployments, supporting our military members and their families, and modernizing our forces to meet future threats," said Murtha.

The conference agreement provides an increase of \$39.7 billion over the FY07 enacted level for the Department of Defense.

The following is a summary of the FY08 Defense Appropriations Bill that was agreed to by both House and Senate conferees:

Supporting Our Troops and Their Families:

- * Provides a 3.5 percent pay raise for all military personnel, 0.5 percent above the President's request for a military pay raise.

- * Rejects the President's proposed increases in TRICARE co-pays by fully funding the \$1.9 billion TRICARE shortfall without cost to our troops.

- * Appropriates \$2.6 billion to provide our military families with the immediate need for more counselors, teachers, and child care providers. This is \$237 million more than the President's request and this funding is urgently needed by our military families who are stressed by repeated and extended deployments.

- * When our troops return from theater, we want them to return to the best facilities and services available. The bill provides \$615.7 million for Army facilities to upgrade barracks, improve child care facilities and enhance community services at bases throughout the U.S., Europe and Korea.

Preparing Our Forces to Meet Future Threats:

* Fully funds the personnel, equipment and training costs of growing the Army by 7,000 troops and the Marine Corps by 5,000 troops.

* Provides an additional \$980 million to purchase essential National Guard and Reserve equipment. This will ensure that they have the necessary equipment to meet overseas deployment demands and to respond to natural disasters here at home.

* Appropriates \$3.15 billion to procure 20 F-22 advanced tactical fighter aircraft.

* Supports the Army's evolution to a larger and more rapidly deployable force by providing \$3.4 billion for continued development of the Future Combat Systems, \$925 million for additional Stryker vehicles, and \$157 million for the procurement of four Joint Cargo Aircraft.

Fostering Economic Stability in Weapons Programs:

* The bill provides \$938 million above the President's request for advanced construction funding of five additional ships (1 LPD-17 Amphibious Transport Dock, 3 T-AKE Ammunition/Dry Cargo Carrier, 1 Virginia Class Submarine). This procurement increase is essential to ensuring the stability of our country's shipbuilding industry and to maintain sea superiority.

* The Joint Strike Fighter (F-35) program is critical to our nation's ability to field a modern and capable fighter. The bill fully funds the President's request and adds \$200 million for production enhancements that will help drive down procurement costs and \$480 million to continue development of an alternative engine, thereby ensuring a competitive and reliable base for engine production.

Providing Accountability and Oversight:

* DoD contract spending has grown significantly, while lacking accountability and plagued by cost overruns. The bill provides funding for additional Inspector General civilian personnel to provide much needed oversight on DoD contract services.

* The GAO found that between the year's 2000-2005, O&M service contracts increased more than 73 percent. Over that same period of time DoD civilian pay costs increased 28 percent, thus negating any preconceived plan to save money by contracting out. The bill increases funding for defense contract management and oversight and reduces funding for contracted services by 2 percent across the services, attributable to efficiencies and savings with improved management and oversight.

* Directs the Secretary of Defense to develop uniform personnel standards and accountability for all DoD contracted security services, and to establish a clear set of rules-of engagement for those contracted security personnel operating in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

* Requires the Department to include all funding for both non-war and war-related activities in the President's fiscal year 2009 annual Defense budget report, eliminating separate war-related "emergency" supplemental spending bills.

Additionally:

* Provides an increase of \$900 million above the President's request for the Defense Health Program. Major increases include \$70 million for the Wounded Warrior Assistance program, \$138 million for peer-reviewed breast cancer research, \$80 million for prostate cancer research, and \$10 million for ovarian cancer research. HIV/AIDS research and prevention programs receive a total of \$16 million.

* Includes provisions restricting the establishment of permanent bases in Iraq and prohibiting the use of torture.

