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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, held a press conference today with Congressman Alcee Hastings (D-FL), Congressman John Tanner (D-TN), Congressman Robert Wexler (D-FL), and Congressman Stephen Cohen (D-TN) to urge the House Leadership to not bring the Armenian Genocide Resolution to the House Floor for a vote.

The following are excerpts from his remarks:

"What happened nearly 100 years ago was terrible. I don't know whether it was a massacre or a genocide, but that is beside the point. The point is, we have to deal with today's world.

"Until we can stop the war in Iraq, I believe it is imperative to ensure continued access to military installations in Turkey, which serve U.S. operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

Currently 74 percent of air cargo into Iraq goes through Incirlik Air Base in Turkey. I have seen estimates that it would cost American taxpayers an additional \$160 million per year if those operations were forced to move to Germany. Also, 25 percent of fuel used by Coalition forces in Iraq comes from Turkey.

"I met with Turkish President Abdullah Gul and foreign policy experts and they all impressed upon me that a U.S. resolution will further fuel anti-Americanism among the Turkish population and will in turn pressure the Turkish government to distance itself from the United States in the region.

"I am also concerned about the recent developments regarding possible Turkish military action against the PKK in northern Iraq. This resolution could very well increase political pressure in Turkey and force the government to take such military action.

"This Administration's war in Iraq has brought nothing but instability to the Middle East and it has alienated our allies throughout the region.

"Turkey is a strong ally of the United States and I believe that this resolution could harm our relations with Turkey and therefore our strategic interests in the region."