

[Home](#) - [Site Index](#) - [Site Search/Archive](#) - [Help](#)Welcome, [ctzcrank](#) - [Member Center](#) - [Log Out](#)

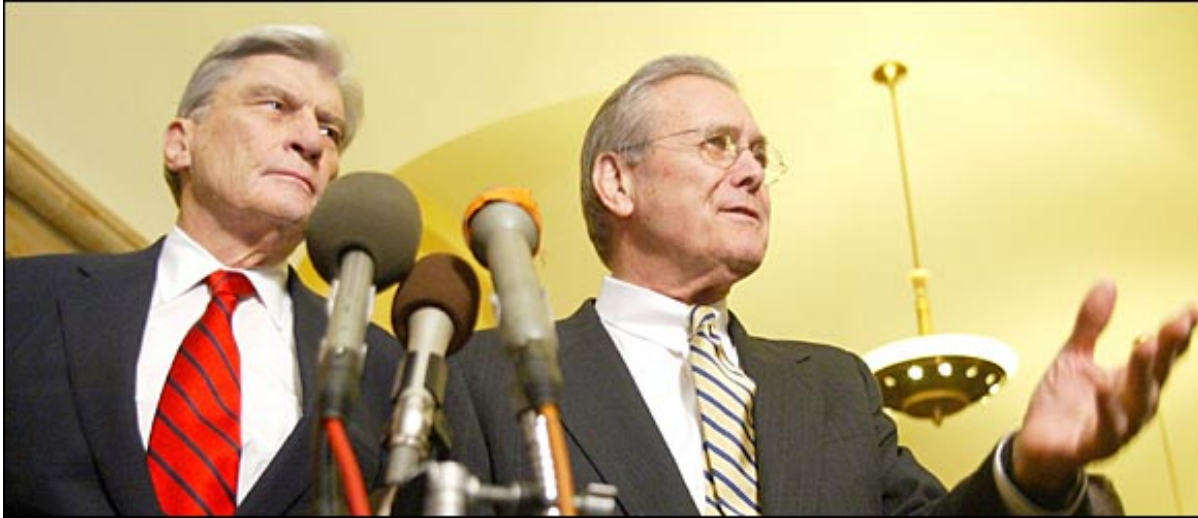
Quotes:

Search:

[NYTimes.com](#) > [Business](#)

Butting Heads With the Pentagon

Advertisement



Associated Press

Senator John W. Warner, left, and Donald H. Rumsfeld, the secretary of defense, at a recent news conference.

By **LESLIE WAYNE**

There is no better friend of the Pentagon than Duncan Hunter, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. A conservative and a hawk on defense, Mr. Hunter has long been someone the military could count on to push its dream projects through Congress.

So there is considerable dismay, and some outright consternation, over sweeping "buy America" provisions that Mr. Hunter inserted into the House version of legislation authorizing the coming year's Pentagon budget. Countries that failed to help the United States in the Iraq war, he argues, should not enjoy the spoils of American military contracts or put the Pentagon in a position of depending on them for critical components.

That view has set Mr. Hunter on a collision course with his many friends at the Pentagon and among American military contractors that buy everything from microprocessors to jet engines and airplane wings overseas. Mr. Hunter's proposal would cut back sharply on the foreign content allowed in American military goods as well as provide a laundry list of items — from fuses to machine tools to airplane tires — that only American companies could supply.

Opposition to Mr. Hunter's proposal is so fierce that the defense secretary, Donald H. Rumsfeld, has said he will recommend that

NYT Store

Photo:
City
Hall,
circa
1913
[Learn
More.](#)

Real Estate**[Sign up for E-Mail Alerts!](#)**

Receive the latest property listings in your inbox...

[Sell or Rent Your Home](#)

Post a property listing on NYTimes.com...

Get instant quotes for full-service, self-service and last-minute moves...

Get instant mortgage quotes and calculate payments...

ARTICLE TOOLS

-  [E-Mail This Article](#)
-  [Printer-Friendly Format](#)
-  [Most E-Mailed Articles](#)
-  [Reprints & Permissions](#)
-  [Single-Page Format](#)

ARTICLE TOOLS SPONSORED BY SPRINT
[E-mail this article to your PCS Phone](#)

MULTIMEDIA

[Chart: Attacking
the Bottom Line](#)

President Bush veto the entire \$400 billion 2004 Pentagon budget if Mr. Hunter does not back down. According to a White House statement, Mr. Hunter's proposals are "burdensome, counterproductive and have the potential to degrade U.S. military capabilities."

Such harsh words hardly faze Mr. Hunter, a 12-term California Republican and former Army Ranger, who is joined by other conservative House members and a number of small companies and unions that might benefit. At the moment, for all the power — and fury — of his opponents, Washington analysts say Mr. Hunter will most likely get some of what he wants.

"If the American worker is going to pay for the defense of the free world," Mr. Hunter said in an interview, "he should participate fully in the manufacture of military goods. This is a warning shot, a red flag. We need to have domestic sources for critical military components. No one argues with that. We just differ in the details."

This Washington tale is rich in ironies. An administration that has been criticized for a go-it-alone attitude toward foreign affairs is now promoting more global military trade and claiming, in the White House statement, that Mr. Hunter's efforts would "undermine our efforts to promote cooperation with our allies."

Meanwhile, the military contractors who have lavishly contributed to Mr. Hunter's political campaigns over the years are now finding that they have helped elect someone who is working against their interests — and their ability to buy from cheaper foreign suppliers. Moreover, the White House risks alienating an important constituency by opposing a prominent conservative, especially over an issue freighted with patriotism.

Foreign governments have weighed in as well, especially the British, whose contractors would be lumped in with the rest of the world, despite Britain's stalwart participation in the Iraq war. In a letter to Mr. Rumsfeld, the British defense secretary, Geoff Hoon, called the proposal "potentially very damaging" and said it "would seriously undermine our ability to work together." The Dutch government called it a "great leap backward," while the NATO secretary general, Lord Robertson, said it would threaten "political unity."

Yet for all the concern from Britain specifically, Michael Harrison, a spokesman for Mr. Hunter, said "buy America" would help, not hurt, because a stronger United States military meant America would be a better ally to Britain.

As a practical matter, such cross-border programs as the Joint Strike Fighter, a \$200 billion joint venture by the United States and Britain to build a new fighter jet and sell it globally, would be jeopardized. Other programs would be equally hard to unscramble — for instance, the Army's new light armored vehicle, the Stryker, designed in Switzerland and being assembled in Canada for an American company. The F-16 fighter jet, made by Lockheed Martin

TIMES NEWS TRACKER

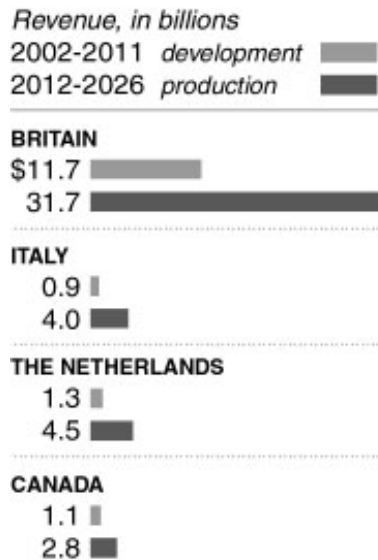
Topics	Alerts
Politics and Government	
Lobbying and Lobbyists	
Congress	
Lockheed Martin	
Create Your Own	Manage
Most Popular Alerts	Take a Tour
CLICK HERE TO SUBSCRIBE 	



Doug Mills/The New York Times
Duncan Hunter, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, has roiled the Defense Department.

On the Line

Overseas partners stand to get a large portion of the \$200 billion Joint Strike Fighter program.



Source: Department of Defense
The New York Times

almost exclusively for export, draws parts from dozens of countries.

Continued
1 | [2](#) | [Next>>](#)

It's easy to follow the top stories with home delivery of The New York Times newspaper.

[Click Here for 50% off](#)

TOP NYTIMES.COM ARTICLES

- [Councilman Killed by Political Rival at City Hall Shooting](#)
- [House Votes, 400-21, to Block Media Rule by the F.C.C.](#)
- [Nearly 800 Church Sex Abuse Victims in Boston, Report Says](#)
- [U.S. Reluctant to Broadcast Proof of Hussein Sons' Deaths](#)
- [California Is Close to Calling Recall Vote](#)

TOP BUSINESS ARTICLES

- [House Votes, 400-21, to Block Media Rule by the F.C.C.](#)
- [AOL Results Marred by Subscriber Loss and Accounting Questions](#)
- [Outside Report Says Freddie Mac Deliberately Fudged Numbers](#)
- [Afternoon Rally Lifts Stocks Into Positive Territory](#)
- [Hearst Names New Editor in Chief for Seventeen Magazine](#)

Advertiser Links

[\\$7 Trades, NO Inactivity Fees](#)

[Free Credit Report! Online in Seconds.](#)