

July 28, 2005

HOUSE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE HOLDS FIRST IN A SERIES OF OPEN HEARINGS CONCERNING INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY REFORM

WASHINGTON D.C.- Congressman Robert "Bud" Cramer (D-AL), Ranking Minority Member of the Oversight Subcommittee of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, today pledged to work with Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence, General Michael V. Hayden and Ambassador John Negroponte as they implement the reform of the U.S. Intelligence Committee. Hayden testified before the Subcommittee in the first of a series of open hearings on the establishment of the DNI.

Congressman Cramer released the following statement today:

The stand up of the DNI is an issue of great importance to America. Al Qaida is weaker, but as events in the last month have shown, the terrorist threat is growing and spreading..across Europe, Asia, and Africa. From our own experience on 9/11, we learned that better intelligence is essential to counter this threat. In an effort to improve our capabilities, last year we significantly reformed the intelligence community through the Intelligence Reform and Terrorist Prevention Act of 2004. We came up with a plan and put it into law. Now you, General Hayden, working with Ambassador Negroponte, have the tough job of implementing the changes and making them work.

We want to assist you, General Hayden, in any way we can. We have made significant investments in the concept of the DNI; it is essential for our national security that we get it right. The Committee recognized that we might have to make some adjustments along the way, particularly as you wrestle with complex issues confronting agencies that make up "the community." As a result, the Oversight Subcommittee is monitoring the standup of the new DNI, actively pursuing answers to questions in order to facilitate any adjustments.

We are also counting on you to tell us if there are any issues, particularly those which Congress can help to resolve now, so that we do not waste precious time. It will be helpful if you address the changes in the structure and operating procedures of the intelligence community implemented since the standup of the DNI. We are particularly interested in how the standup is progressing and the extent to which the DNI is exercising his statutory, personnel, budget and tasking authorities. Most importantly, we really want to know if you believe that these changes will make our nation safer. Do you believe these changes will prevent future terrorist attacks and better identify other threats to our homeland?

We are looking forward to a continuing dialog with you. Most of the Committee's work is necessarily done behind closed doors, but the Intelligence Reform Act is a public law. I'm hopeful that this public hearing can help foster a thoughtful, public dialogue about how intelligence reform is progressing. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased that this is the first in a series of hearings with more to follow in September to hear from other experts and ensure that reform is on track.

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