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Eshoo Disappointed by Lack of Progress on Security Clearance Reform

Washington, DC - *U.S. Representative Anna G. Eshoo of California, Chair of the Intelligence Community Management Subcommittee of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, held an open hearing to receive the observations of a forthcoming Government Accountability Office (GAO) report on security clearance reform efforts.*

The GAO's preliminary assessment of the Administration's ongoing efforts to comply with the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 acknowledges progress in the timeliness of completing investigation and adjudication of security clearances. However, the GAO noted insufficient progress in the areas of implementation of security clearance reciprocity across the Intelligence Community, establishment of an integrated database for investigative and adjudicative information, and validation of clearance needs against mission requirements.

"The GAO's testimony makes clear that the Administration is still planning to plan," Eshoo said while discussing the recent executive order to create an additional security clearance reform body. "We have a faltering, out-dated clearance system, and the Administration doesn't seem to understand the urgency to reform the system to fit our mission needs."

In its evaluation, the GAO specifically identifies four factors as being essential to reforming the security clearance process: a sound process for determining requirements for clearances; building quality into every step of the process; valid metrics to evaluate progress and achievement of milestones; and clarifying long-term funding requirements. The preliminary report also recommends the incorporation of several "best practices" that have been overlooked in the efforts to transform the system.

Eshoo indicated her plans to hold a third subcommittee hearing in September that would include the stakeholders in the security clearance reform process. The hearing will focus on Administration goals for reform and concrete milestones to achieve those goals.

"We need to make sure that security clearance reform actually happens. We must make it happen," said Eshoo. "Sadly, it looks like any real change to the process will be passed along to the next Administration."