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House Continues Strengthening U.S. Intelligence Community

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The U.S. House of Representatives today approved bipartisan legislation that strengthens human intelligence capabilities, improves U.S. Intelligence Community oversight and training, and increases focus on counterintelligence.

“This bill addresses intelligence weaknesses caused by across-the-board spending cuts and poor policy decisions in the 1990s,” said U.S Rep. Pete Hoekstra, R-Mich., Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. “Fighting the Global War on Terror and keeping our nation safe requires an Intelligence Community that is agile, aggressive and properly staffed. It also requires increased coordination and planning between U.S. intelligence agencies, the military, and the authorizing committees on Capitol Hill.”

H.R. 5020 authorizes the first intelligence budget wholly determined by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, which was created by the Intelligence and Terrorism Reform Prevention Act championed by the committee and passed by Congress in 2004.

It authorizes funding to improve human intelligence capabilities across the U.S. Intelligence Community. It also includes funds to improve intelligence analysis and increase intelligence community focus and efforts on counterintelligence.

To further intelligence oversight, the bill requires the ODNI to conduct a regular strategic review of intelligence capabilities against threats similar to the Defense Department’s Quadrennial Defense Review. It also requires a comprehensive inventory of special access programs operated under the National Intelligence Program be submitted to the committee in classified format.

“We are improving intelligence capabilities and oversight at the same time,” Hoekstra said. “To address terrorist threats, and emerging global threats, the committee will continue its focus on strengthening human, technical and analytical capabilities. We will build the lean, mean, aggressive and agile Intelligence Community we need for the future.”

H.R. 5020, the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007, now goes to the Senate for consideration.