



March 17, 2005

**INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE DEMOCRATS CALL FOR
NEW SECURITY CLEARANCE SYSTEM**
*Multi-tiered system needed to leverage cultural
and linguistic skills to penetrate hard targets, say all 9
Democrats*

WASHINGTON D.C.----The Democratic Members of the House Intelligence Committee today introduced a resolution urging the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) to establish and oversee implementation of a uniform multi-tiered security clearance system across the Intelligence Community. Such a system would grant clearances to those with critical cultural and language skills who might otherwise be ineligible for clearance at the highest levels.

The following statement accompanied the resolution's introduction:

We believe the Intelligence Community's outdated security clearance system prevents recruiting of diverse professionals uniquely qualified to understand the plans and intentions of our enemies. When intelligence agencies and the Pentagon insist on employing only individuals who can be cleared to the highest levels, critical opportunities to promote badly needed cultural and linguistic diversity are missed.

For a variety of reasons, significant numbers of patriotic Americans capable of contributing to our national security are sometimes unable to be cleared in a timely manner, if at all, due to cultural or familial ties to certain parts of the world.

A law-abiding Iraqi-American fluent in Arabic with relatives in Baghdad should be employed by the Intelligence Community, not disqualified. There is currently no uniform program across the Intelligence Community to leverage the skills of such individuals waiting for clearances or those who may not qualify for the highest level clearances. This so-called "bridge population" can fill a key resource gap, and should be allowed to perform such mission critical tasks as translation and analysis.

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