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Intelligence Committee Republicans Raise Substantive Objections to FY08 Intelligence Authorization Bill

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence today approved its fiscal year 2008 Intelligence Authorization bill after party-line votes to defeat Republican efforts to strengthen overall intelligence capabilities and remove several political and "politically correct" items.

"Republicans have worked hard with committee Democrats to craft an intelligence authorization bill that strengthens our capabilities against terrorists, rogue nations and foreign enemies," said U.S. Rep. Pete Hoekstra, R-Mich., the top Republican on the committee. "Unfortunately, the bill passed by the committee includes several questionable items that are outside of the intelligence community's national security focus and weaken our nation's overall intelligence effort."

Hoekstra joined committee Republicans in criticizing deep cuts to classified CIA programs designed to help America fight and succeed in the conflict against radical jihadists. He also expressed concerns about intelligence priorities after Democrats voted to divert already scarce and stretched intelligence collection resources to study global warming.

"There are other parts of the government better suited to doing this type of study," said U.S. Rep. Darrell Issa, R-Calif., sponsor of a Republican amendment to prevent "environmental spying." "Our government should not commit expensive spy satellites and human intelligence sources to target something as undefined as the environment."

Democrats also voted to continue a nearly \$40 million earmark for the National Drug Intelligence Center, which *U.S. News & World Report* described as "rocked by scandal" and whose first deputy director acknowledged was a facility in "search for a mission." Democrats rejected a Republican amendment to have the Justice Department Inspector General audit NDIC for waste, despite a finding that NDIC is "an expensive and duplicative use of scarce Federal drug enforcement resources" by the House Committee on Government Reform and Oversight.

"After 14 years and \$400 million in taxpayer dollars, NDIC has little to show in the way of results," said U.S. Rep. Mike Rogers, R-Mich., a former FBI agent and sponsor of a Republican amendment to support the director of national intelligence's recommendation to

close the Johnstown, Pa. facility. "The nearly \$40 million earmarked in the bill for NDIC would be far better spent for counternarcotics operations. We already have the DEA's El Paso Intelligence Center, which everyone agrees has value. It's time to shut down this Clinton-era, pork boondoggle."

Republicans also offered amendments to modernize the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act and limit bureaucratic growth in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, which were rejected by Democrats along party lines.

"We are a nation at war-of that there can be no mistake," Hoekstra said. "Whether we like policy decisions or not, to cut programs that are vital to supporting national requirements and providing threat knowledge to our military forces in harm's way is irresponsible.

"Spending more on intelligence, but not spending it on the right priorities is not the same as strengthening our intelligence community."