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## **Hoekstra: Bush Should Pressure IOC on Iraq Decision**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – *U.S. Rep. Pete Hoekstra, R-Mich., the top Republican on the House Intelligence Committee, issued the following statement in response to the International Olympic Committee’s decision to exclude Iraqi athletes from the Beijing Olympics:*

“It is outrageous that the IOC would reject athletes from a democratic Iraq, and at the same time, embrace those from repressive regimes like North Korea, Burma and Sudan. This is the same Olympic organization that embraced the participation of athletes from Saddam Hussein’s son Uday’s notorious, torture-based Iraqi Olympics team.

“Rather than give the world the excitement of seeing Iraq’s athletes further unify their nation across sectarian boundaries in the spirit of Olympic competition, the IOC has chosen to spit in the eye of the athletes and people of this emerging democracy.

“I urge President Bush and the leaders of the free nations participating in the Beijing Olympics to put maximum pressure on the IOC to reverse course. Democratic leaders should not embrace the farce of watching athletes from some of the world’s most brutal regimes being paraded in front of them while athletes from new democracies are spurned.

“First tortured by Uday, and now rejected by the IOC, the athletes of Iraq have suffered enough.”