



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –March 11, 2008

Contact: Jamal Ware
(202) 225-4121

Hoekstra, Congress Sustain Veto of Flawed Intelligence Bill with Wrong Priorities for America

WASHINGTON, D.C. – *U.S. Rep. Pete Hoekstra, R-Mich., the top Republican on the House Intelligence Committee, today voted to sustain the president’s veto of the Democrat’s 2008 intelligence funding bill that diverts scarce intelligence resources for environmental intelligence studies and includes wasteful, pork-barrel spending.*

“The majority has allowed our terrorist surveillance capabilities to erode and instead chosen to use intelligence money to study the environment and pay for earmarks,” Hoekstra said. “The national security of the United States should always come first in Congress. Unfortunately, this bill treats intelligence as a consideration, not a priority with non-intelligence issues.”

Hoekstra noted that global climate change may be a national concern, but it is not an issue that requires the focus of highly specialized and limited intelligence capabilities. He also pointed out that more than a dozen federal agencies already study climate change and questioned what more the intelligence community could add to the coverage.

Other flaws in the vetoed bill include cuts in human intelligence programs counter to 9/11 Commission recommendations and reductions to certain, classified initiatives in America’s efforts to counter al-Qaeda and radical jihadist terrorism. The bill increases the size of the intelligence bureaucracy in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. It also authorizes spending for numerous earmarks, including \$23 million for the National Drug Intelligence Center that was added in violation of House rules.

Director of National Intelligence, Adm. Mike McConnell, has requested repeatedly that NDIC be shut down, and *U.S. News & World Report* described the center as “rocked by scandal” and in “search for a mission.” The House voted on an overwhelming, bipartisan basis, 249-160, to cut NDIC and other earmarks from the bill. More than 60 Democrats joined Republicans to support stripping the politically motivated spending.

The bill would also apply the unclassified Army Field Manual to all interrogations conducted by the government. This would give al-Qaeda, which already has a manual to train radical jihadists how to resist when captured, full knowledge of American interrogation techniques.

“The majority has prioritized ‘bugs and bunnies’ and terrorist treatment, when will they prioritize passing terrorist surveillance legislation to protect America?” Hoekstra said. “Rather than holding a vote to give terrorists our playbook, Congress should be voting to strengthen the intelligence community’s ability to spy on them.”