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Hoekstra: House Fails to Fix FISA Again

Intelligence Committee Time Cut Short on FISA Debate

WASHINGTON, D.C. – *U.S. Rep. Pete Hoekstra, R-Mich., the top Republican on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, today warned that Congress must do better to protect the security of America, its troops in combat, government workers overseas and America’s allies in the fight against radical jihadism.*

“How much time does the majority need; how much longer will they let America’s terrorist surveillance capabilities continue to degrade before the majority acts?” Hoekstra asked. “The American people are waiting, our intelligence professionals, troops in combat, embassy staff and allies around the world are waiting on House Democrat leaders to allow an up or down vote on the one bill that gets the job done. There is no excuse for the House to go on yet another recess without having voted on the Senate bill that provides an immediate and long-term fix to America’s terrorist surveillance problems.”

Hoekstra pointed to numerous flaws in the majority’s latest FISA bill, noting that Senate leadership has already called the bill dead on arrival. Among the flaws he cited, the bill does not include liability protection for patriotic companies that have helped protect the nation in the past. The risk of endless litigation could force businesses going forward to end cooperation needed to help protect the homeland because they cannot afford the risk to shareholders and employees. The Democrat’s flawed bill also requires court orders in advance before the intelligence community can begin surveillance of foreign targets in foreign countries. This flaw risks slowing down surveillance at the time it may matter most.

Hoekstra also criticized the idea of outsourcing intelligence by creating a commission to review past surveillance initiatives approved by the administration, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and other Members of the congressional leadership.

“Speaker Pelosi was briefed on gaps in our terrorist surveillance coverage in the wake of the 9/11 attacks,” Hoekstra said. “In repeated briefings on the Terrorist Surveillance Program, she

never once objected to the surveillance being conducted or the support being provided by patriotic companies asked by the government to help defend America. The speaker was right then; she should do the right thing now and allow a vote on the Senate bill that strengthens our nation's terrorist surveillance capabilities."

Hoekstra went on to blast House Democrat leaders for only giving the Intelligence Committee 20 minutes to debate the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, which is less than one minute for each of the committee's 21 Members.

"Cutting the Intelligence Committee out of a debate that is primarily focused on how we collect intelligence is a clear sign that House Democrat leaders don't take intelligence seriously," said Hoekstra, who noted that the Intelligence Committee primarily dealt with this issue in the last Congress. "Why the Democrat leadership would sideline the committee that is responsible for ensuring America's intelligence agencies have the tools and authorities they need to protect our homeland, troops and allies is beyond me."