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## **Hoekstra Welcomes Decision to Release Iraqi Documents**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S Rep. Pete Hoekstra, R-Mich., Chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, today commended a decision by the Bush administration to publicly release millions of pages of documents, recordings and other media captured during Operation Iraqi Freedom, Enduring Freedom and Desert Storm.

“This is a bold decision in favor of openness that will go a long way towards improving our understanding of prewar Iraq,” Hoekstra said. “By placing these documents online and allowing the public the opportunity to review them, we can cut years off the time it will take to gain knowledge from this potential treasure trove of information. This decision effectively places a collar on the bureaucracy and unleashes the power of people and the Internet to help speed this process.”

The United States has in its possession nearly 48,000 boxes of documents and hundreds of hours of recorded conversations, many by Saddam Hussein, that have yet to be thoroughly translated and analyzed. The more than two million pages of information contained within this archive are currently stored in a desert warehouse in the Persian Gulf.

Over the weekend, the Office of the Director for National Intelligence agreed to reprogram funds to develop a classification and release process for the documents. While the material will be cursorily reviewed for potentially dangerous or sensitive information, ODNI agreed to develop a process that would release a significant portion of the documents, recordings and other media to the public.

“With so many questions about prewar Iraq unanswered, I’m glad to see there is finally the sense of urgency to get this done,” Hoekstra said. “Whether Saddam Hussein destroyed Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction or hid or transferred them, the most important thing is that we discover the truth of what was happening in the country prior to the war.”

Hoekstra went on to say the details implementing the administration’s decision still need to be worked out, but he is looking for a clear signal that the emphasis will be to release as much information as possible.

“Will this process emphasize releasing as many documents as possible, or will it be used to further classify documents and keep them out of public reach?” Hoekstra said. “The bias must be towards release.”