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Intelligence Committee discusses FISA with outside experts

Washington, D.C. – The House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence held an open hearing on the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) today. This hearing featured non-governmental experts on issues surrounding FISA.

Congressman Silvestre Reyes, D-TX, Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, released the following statement at the conclusion of today's hearing:

“The main question before the Committee is this: ‘how do we achieve that delicate balance between national security and the preservation of Constitutional rights?’

“The scope of the so-called ‘Protect America Act’ passed in early August is extremely troubling, and the witnesses before us today voiced strong concerns that it does not protect Americans' civil liberties and could authorize a broad range of warrantless surveillance.

“We also heard concerns that the House Intelligence Committee will not be able to conduct meaningful oversight if the Administration continues to deny access to critical documents about the NSA surveillance program.”

Witnesses at today's hearing:

James X. Dempsey, Policy Director, Center for Democracy and Technology

Lisa Graves, Deputy Director, Center for National Security Studies

James A. Baker, former Counsel, Department of Justice, Office of Intelligence Policy and Review;
Lecturer on Law, Harvard Law School

David B. Rivkin, Partner, Baker Hostetler