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**Opening Statement of Chairman Silvestre Reyes (D-TX)  
Conference Report on H.R. 2082, FY08 Intelligence Authorization Act**

***Washington, D.C. – House Intelligence Committee Chairman Silvestre Reyes, D-TX, delivered the following opening statement on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives today during consideration of the conference report on H.R. 2082, the fiscal year 2008 Intelligence Authorization Act:***

“Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

“Last week was a remarkable week in the intelligence community – it was the best of times and the worst of times. First, the good news – the week began with the release of a new National Intelligence Estimate on Iran. That estimate was a careful, meaningful review of the intelligence on Iran, which many of us hope will bring about a significant change in our approach to Iran, which is still a significant concern. Then came the bad news – we ended the week with the revelation that the Central Intelligence Agency destroyed videotapes of interrogations. This is a subject of great concern to us. The Committee held a briefing on it this yesterday, and we will continue to investigate the issue thoroughly. Both the good news and the bad news have one thing in common – they show that careful oversight of the intelligence community is absolutely critical. The authorization process is where we do much of our oversight. And it’s where we can address problem areas.

“Mr. Speaker, today, for the first time in three years, the House will vote on a conference report on an Intelligence Authorization Bill. I am proud of this bill, and I hope my colleagues are too. This is the largest intelligence authorization in history. It is the result of eleven months of work by the committee.

“The conference process was a challenge – the Senate bill and the House bill were substantially different. But we worked hard to arrive at a middle ground. In conference, we further improved the bill. The conference adopted amendments offered by members from both chambers and both parties. This includes an amendment by the distinguished Ranking Member of the Intelligence Committee, Mr. Hoekstra.

“Mr. Speaker, this is a good bill that will strengthen our intelligence community and our nation’s security. It adds significant funds to bolster the nation's satellite architecture. It reduces funding for non-performing intelligence activities in Iraq, while robustly funding activities against Al Qaeda, and terrorism in Afghanistan and around the globe.

“I am particularly proud of the fact that it includes funding for counter-terrorism, human intelligence collection, analysis, training and languages. We have carefully tailored provisions to enhance the diversity of the intelligence community – a critical advance for the future of the intelligence community. In another investment for the future, we’ve added significant funding for Advanced Research and Development funding. This will help maintain our technical edge over our adversaries. We have also provided money to repair and replace aging infrastructure, and to train and equip linguists, and human intelligence collectors.

“This bill promotes accountability within the intelligence community, and it puts the intelligence committee back in the business of oversight. It requires reporting to Congress on several issues of major concern to us, including a report on compliance with the Detainee Treatment Act of 2005 and related provisions of the Military Commissions Act of 2006 regarding detentions and interrogations, as well as Justice Department legal opinions related to these activities. It includes provisions to strengthen oversight by Inspectors General in the intelligence community, including a provision establishing a confirmed community-wide Inspector General armed with essential authorities. The conference report also provides for Senate confirmation of the Directors of the National Security Agency and the National Reconnaissance Office. For agencies with such significant budgets and acquisition authority, and the potential to impact American privacy rights, we think the Congress ought to have a say in their directors, through Senate confirmation.

“In short, Mr. Speaker, the Conference Report is a result of a bipartisan, bicameral effort to strengthen both the intelligence community and Congressional oversight.

“I will be proud to vote for it, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.”