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Contact: Jamal Ware
(202) 225-4121

Hoekstra Statement on Withdrawal Decision by NIC Chairman Designate Charles Freeman

WASHINGTON, D.C. - *U.S. Rep Pete Hoekstra, R-Mich., the top Republican on the House Intelligence Committee, issued the following statement after Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair informed the committee of the decision by Charles Freeman to withdraw from consideration as Chairman of the National Intelligence Council:*

“The Director of National Intelligence has informed the committee that Charles Freeman has decided to withdraw his name from further consideration as chairman of the National Intelligence Council. The decision by Mr. Freeman to withdraw his name is the right decision under the circumstances.

“Mr. Freeman’s selection as chairman of the council was a poor choice from the beginning. Given his financial dealings with a Chinese state-run oil company and the backing of his think tank by the government of Saudi Arabia, it raises serious questions about the vetting that was done by the administration. Mr. Freeman’s extensive record of questionable public statements, including those that seemed to defend the Tiananmen Square massacre and raise questions about the American character following the 9/11 attacks, should have been more than enough to give the administration pause.

“This is yet another breakdown in the Obama administration vetting process—one more in a long series of missteps. More fundamentally, on an intelligence matter, it calls into question the essential judgments being made. As with Guantanamo Bay and interrogation, the administration seemingly reached a decision before thinking through all the issues. I hope the administration will show greater consideration in the future.”