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Hoekstra Introduces Bill to Speed Iraqi Document Release

WASHINGTON, D.C. – House Intelligence Chairman Pete Hoekstra, R-Mich., has introduced legislation that would force the Office of the Director of National Intelligence to release more than 48,000 boxes of documents captured by the United States during operations Desert Storm, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

“What should have been a simple decision by the DNI to make these documents available to the public has become needlessly bureaucratic and absolutely unworkable,” Hoekstra said. “To help simplify the DNI’s thinking and eliminate bureaucratic hand wringing, I have introduced legislation that makes it patently clear what should happen with these documents: Release them and put them on the Internet.”

Under Hoekstra’s bill the documents would be released to the public and placed on the Internet after select culling for known files containing dangerous and sensitive information. The bill sets a deadline of Sept. 30 for documents from operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom to be made public. It sets a March 31, 2007 release date for Desert Storm documents.

Hoekstra made the decision to introduce legislation after letter exchanges and direct conversations failed to yield a viable plan to make the documents available in a short time frame. The initial plan offered by the DNI would have sent some documents exclusively to select universities and think tanks, with release to the general public coming several years later.

“This situation demands a greater sense of urgency than the DNI has so far shown,” Hoekstra said. “Whether Saddam Hussein destroyed his weapons of mass destruction or hid or transferred them, the most important thing is that we discover the truth of what was happening in pre-war Iraq.

“There are more than enough people with the linguistic and analytic backgrounds, and a demonstrated interest, that it would be a major government failure to not tap them as a resource and instead let this potential treasure trove of information continue to languish.”

The more than 48,000 boxes Hoekstra is seeking to make public contain nearly two million pages and 3,000 hours of recorded conversations, most of which have yet to be thoroughly translated and analyzed. They are currently stored in a desert warehouse in the Persian Gulf.