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ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

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OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE RENEWS REQUEST TO CIA IG ON WASTEFUL SPENDING

WASHINGTON, DC — Chairman Henry A. Waxman and Ranking Minority Member Tom Davis wrote to the CIA's Inspector General (CIA IG) yesterday reiterating the Committee's request for information concerning unimplemented recommendations.

On December 7, 2007, the Oversight Committee requested that each federal agency Inspector General provide a list of all unimplemented reforms since the start of the Bush Administration. However, to date, the CIA IG John Helgerson has refused to provide the information.

"The Constitution directs Congress to conduct oversight to check abuse by other branches of government," said Chairman Waxman. "The intelligence community isn't exempt from oversight, and as its record over the past several years reveals, it may deserve more scrutiny, not less."

"Though I didn't sign on to the Chairman's original letter," Ranking Member Davis said, "protecting the jurisdiction of this committee and affirming its mandate to root out waste, fraud and abuse is as important to me as it is to Chairman Waxman. It's ironic that as the intelligence community is making overtures about opening up to more public scrutiny we'd receive this sort of simplistic stonewalling from the CIA IG."

The text of the letter follows:

Dear Mr. Helgerson:

On December 7, 2007, the Oversight Committee sent you a letter requesting information on recommendations made by your office from 2001 to the present that have not been implemented by agency officials or Congress. The Committee sent identical letters to the Inspectors General of more than 60 other federal agencies as part of a broad, government-wide survey the Committee is conducting for its ongoing efforts to uncover waste, fraud, and abuse in federal spending.

The Committee received a letter from you dated January 3, 2008, responding that, although you have provided the requested information to other congressional committees, you will not provide it to the Oversight Committee. Your letter stated as follows:

CIA's Office of Inspector General assembles information such as you have requested and provides it to the Congress through the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI). The CIA's Congressional intelligence oversight committees are provided the status of significant OIG recommendations at a minimum of once every six months in the OIG's semiannual reports.

Your letter is not an adequate response to our request. The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee in the House of Representatives and has broad oversight jurisdiction as set forth in House Rule X. Under this rule, the Oversight Committee "may conduct investigations of *any* matter." The House rule governing the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence expressly provides that nothing in this clause "shall be construed as prohibiting or otherwise restricting the authority of any other committee to study and review an intelligence or intelligence-related activity" when the relevant matter is otherwise within the jurisdiction of that committee.

The House rules carve out only a limited sphere of exclusive jurisdiction for the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, providing that the Intelligence Committee "shall review and study on an exclusive basis the sources and methods" of intelligence agencies. In this case, the Oversight Committee is not seeking information about the "sources and methods" of intelligence agencies. Rather, the Committee is seeking to identify (1) audit recommendations made from January 1, 2001, to the present that have not been implemented by CIA officials or by Congress; and (2) the monetary and non-monetary benefits the CIA could realize by implementing these recommendations. As the Government Accountability Office noted in recent testimony, this kind of oversight of the intelligence community "has taken on new prominence and is of greater concern" since 2001.

For these reasons, the Oversight Committee cannot accept your position that we are not entitled to any information about recommendations made by the CIA Inspector General over the past seven years. The Committee has years of experience handling classified documents, and we are willing to discuss both your concerns about sensitive recommendations and potential alternatives for compiling the requested information. Moreover, if you believe that certain audit recommendations deal exclusively with sources and methods, we are willing to work with you and the Intelligence Committee to address these concerns.

Sincerely,

Henry A. Waxman
Chairman

Tom Davis
Ranking Minority Member