

□ ***New Intelligence Report Also Supports Increased Diplomacy***

December 6, 2007

WASHINGTON, DC- U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio today renewed his calls for the Bush Administration to increase diplomatic relations with Iran to help avoid another unnecessary war.

DeFazio's comments came in response to the release of the new National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) for Iran which states that Iran halted its nuclear weapons program in 2003 and had "not restarted its program" as of mid-2007.

The NIE is the result of a consensus judgment by the U.S. intelligence community.

Today's intelligence report reverses the prior assertion that Iran's nuclear program is a weapons development program. The Administration has long claimed that they cannot negotiate with Iran because it's been actively pursuing a nuclear weapons program. Instead, President Bush has successfully pushed sanctions and hinted at military action against Iran.

However, in light of this most recent report, Congressman DeFazio is again urging President Bush to seek diplomatic solutions in Iran.

"This report shows that the Bush Administration has not been straight with Congress and the American public but rather has grossly over stated the threat posed by Iran," DeFazio said. "The encouraging information disclosed in this report is yet another reason to step up diplomatic efforts."

DeFazio has been actively encouraging the Administration to consider diplomatic attempts since 2001, and has proposed a detailed diplomatic strategy. DeFazio has also been working to prevent the President from taking military action against Iran without congressional approval.

Last April, DeFazio wrote a letter, cosigned by 62 members of Congress, to President Bush reminding him of his constitutional obligation to seek congressional approval before making any pre-emptive military strikes in Iran.

DeFazio also introduced, H.Con.Res. 33, a resolution that serves the same purpose.

In September 2006, he sent a letter to Secretary Rice regarding the negotiations between Iran, the E.U. and the U.S.

In May 2007, DeFazio offered an amendment to the fiscal year 2008 Department of Defense Authorization Act to prohibit the president from taking military action against Iran.

And, most recently, he requested a series of congressional hearings on the administration's plans for Iran in order to get answers to serious questions about those plans.

"Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution requires that the president get authorization from Congress before taking military action," said DeFazio. "The people elect their Members of Congress expecting them to participate in major decisions like initiating military action against other countries. It is an injustice to the American people to deny them that prerogative. Our founders crafted the Constitution so that only Congress could declare war for a reason:

they did not want the president to have the power of a king.

Any claim President Bush makes to the contrary is simply untrue."