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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-6035

ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

March 10, 2010

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ERIN C. CONATON, STAFF DIRECTOR

The Honorable Robert Gates
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Gates:

We believe that the American people have a right to know the full extent of the information gathered by former Secretary Togo West and retired Admiral Vernon Clark about the attack by Major Nidal Hasan on soldiers and civilians at Fort Hood. This was an attack by a U.S. citizen, an officer who swore to uphold and defend the Constitution against all enemies foreign and domestic, who became an enemy of the United States. The restricted annex of the West-Clark investigation provides important insight and background for Americans to understand how such a transformation could have taken place. We, therefore, request the immediate release of that full restricted annex.

The measures you have taken to prohibit the release of the restricted annex are highly unusual. The annex is not a classified document, yet for Members of Congress to view it and read it you have imposed conditions and requirements in excess of those for the handling of Top Secret documents. Furthermore, the reasons you give for prohibiting the public release of the restricted annex – protecting the ability of the government to prosecute Major Hasan – are undermined by the avalanche of existing media reports, including that of the *Boston Globe*. Finally, the material covered by the restrictive annex has no direct bearing on the criminal assault that occurred at Fort Hood. So we remain baffled why a full public recounting of the facts of Major Hasan's case could be construed as being prejudicial to future prosecutions, unless there is some concern that the facts developed by the West-Clark investigation are in doubt.

The progression of Major Hasan's radicalization, which resulted not just in an attack on the people at Fort Hood, but on all Americans, is a crucial element in the ability of the American people to understand how and why this brutal assault took place. The government has no justifiable basis, in this case, for withholding all the facts from its citizens.

We therefore, strongly urge you to publicly and immediately release the restricted annex of the West-Clark investigation.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Howard P. "Buck" McKeon
Howard P. "Buck" McKeon
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gentle thanks
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