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December 7, 2010

The Honorable Silvestre Reyes
Chairman
House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
Capitol Visitor Center HVC-304
U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-6415

Dear Chairman Reyes:

Over the past few weeks, hundreds of thousands of classified documents from various U.S. agencies have been released to the public by the internet website WikiLeaks. Various U.S. officials have stated unequivocally that this release will put American lives in danger. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen has been quoted stating, "the truth is [Julian Assange, WikiLeaks founder] might already have on [his] hands the blood of some young soldier or that of an Afghan family." Secretary of State Hillary Clinton echoed Admiral Mullen's sentiments: "Let's be clear: This disclosure is not just an attack on America's foreign policy interests."

Despite the grave nature of these leaks, no information has been given to Members of Congress regarding this issue. As lawmakers who will be setting intelligence policy and will need to review whether laws governing the classification procedure need to be updated in light of these leaks, Members must be given access to the full story surrounding this issue. Issues of such importance to national security cannot be taken lightly.

I respectfully request you hold a House-wide, Members-only briefing with relevant officials from various Intelligence agencies affected by this situation. Like previous national security issues, such as the release of photographs of detainees at Abu Ghraib, Members should be fully briefed on an issue that affects every American citizen, and certainly every American soldier.

As Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, I am sure you are well aware of the seriousness of this matter. I look forward to working with you to ensure every Member of the House of Representatives is provided full and comprehensive information on this matter so that we may fulfill our elected responsibility of protecting our national interests.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Burgess".

Michael C. Burgess, M.D.