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ERIN C. CONATON, STAFF DIRECTOR

February 11, 2008

The Honorable Pete Geren  
Secretary of the Army  
Department of the Army  
Pentagon  
Room 3E650  
Washington, DC 20310

Dear Secretary Geren:

I am writing to express the sincere disappointment I felt upon reading the article in today's New York Times entitled, "Army Buries Study Faulting Iraq Planning." I find it inexcusable that the Army would apparently allow itself to become politicized in such a manner.

The United States Army has a long and honorable tradition of carrying out the nation's business in a professional, nonpolitical, and extremely competent manner. This makes it all the more important that when the Army finds itself involved in a situation that has not gone according to expectations, it undertake a critical assessment of what went wrong, even if that assessment reflects poorly on the Army, the Department of Defense, the Executive Branch, or Congress. We cannot improve future results without studying past failures any more than we can wish that the war in Iraq had proceeded as outlined in some of the rosier scenarios laid out before the war started.

In September 2002 and March 2003, before the invasion of the Iraq, I wrote to the President to express my serious concerns about the lack of planning for post-war Iraq. The news reports about the unreleased RAND study seems to confirm that my concerns were on the mark. The New York Times article, if accurate, suggests that the RAND study points out a variety of failures, some by military personnel, some by civilians, and some, such as the lack of coordination between agencies, more worryingly, seem to be systemic problems. Such an analysis would not only be useful to the Army going forward, but would seem to be useful to the Department of Defense and the government of the United States at large. To try to not release such a useful report, seemingly to avoid political problems, is not in the fine tradition of the United States Army and should not be acceptable to you.

Again, I write to express my disappointment regarding the Army's refusal to release the RAND study on Iraq. I would hope that you would take this opportunity to rectify this mistake, to release the full, classified version of the report to the appropriate committees in Congress, and to allow the publication of the unclassified summary of the report.

Very truly yours,



IKE SKELTON  
Chairman

IS:mcc