

May 4, 2010

Dr. Robert M. Gates  
Secretary of Defense  
United States Department of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We write to thank you for your outstanding leadership in promoting increased transparency in nuclear weapons policy, including the recent publication of the Nuclear Posture Review Report in an entirely unclassified format and the disclosure of the size of the U.S. nuclear stockpile.

We believe that the public release of the unclassified NPR Report is a significant and long-overdue step in the maturation of our national nuclear policy. For the first time, government officials and members of the public are able to deliberate over the same text, to ask and answer questions about it, and to express their various criticisms and concerns. International audiences, also, will have access to the full policy and be confident that they can base their deliberations on the full facts. Release of the unclassified NPR Report will not resolve the continuing debate over the future of nuclear weapons policy, but it will enable it to proceed on a more informed basis. And that is as it should be.

Similarly, the declassification of the current nuclear stockpile is an historic milestone both in nuclear weapons policy and in classification policy. It establishes a framework for understanding changes in the size of the nuclear arsenal, and sets a benchmark for changes yet to come. We believe this disclosure will serve to strengthen what should be an international norm of increasing transparency on nuclear matters. By leading through example, we hope the U.S. action will elicit a response in kind from other nuclear nations.

We recognize that all changes to established practices can be difficult, and that the national security classification system can be particularly resistant to reform, even when such reform is urgently required. For that reason, we wanted to express our gratitude for your successful efforts to achieve these positive changes.

We also look forward to further steps, including the Department's future implementation of the Fundamental Classification Guidance Review that was required by the President's executive order 13526, section 1.9. This initiative should help to eliminate other obsolete or unnecessary classification restrictions.

Respectfully,

Kevin Z. Smith  
Society of Professional Journalists

Danielle Brian, Executive Director  
Project On Government Oversight (POGO)

John Isaacs, Executive Director  
Council for a Livable World &  
Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation

Prue Adler, Associate Executive Director  
Federal Relations and Information Policy  
Association of Research Libraries

Charles D. Ferguson, President  
Hans M. Kristensen, Director Nuclear Information  
Project  
Federation of American Scientists

Susan Gordon, Director  
Alliance for Nuclear Accountability

Tom Clements  
Friends of the Earth

David Krieger, President  
Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, Santa Barbara, CA

Lynne Bradley, Director  
Office of Government Relations  
American Library Association

Bobbie Paul, Executive Director  
Georgia Women's Action for New Directions

Patrice McDermott, Director  
OpenTheGovernment.org

Marylia Kelley, Executive Director  
Tri-Valley CAREs (Communities Against a  
Radioactive Environment), Livermore, CA

Kate Martin, Director  
Center for National Security Studies

Michael Ostrolenk, President  
American Conservative Defense Alliance

Anne Weismann, Chief Counsel  
Citizens for Responsibility & Ethics in Washington  
(CREW)

Kevin Knobloch, President  
Union of Concerned Scientists

Cc: Ellen Tauscher, Under Secretary, Arms Control and International Security, Department of State