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DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1010 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1010

SEP 26 2007

The Honorable Carl Levin
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This responds to your letter to the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff about Admiral Vernon Clark's testimony at the April 8, 2004 Senate Committee on Armed Services hearing concerning the national security benefits of U.S. accession to the Law of the Sea Convention. The Department confirms that Admiral Clark's testimony remains accurate and continues to reflect the position of the Department of Defense. As you are aware, on May 15, 2007, President Bush urged the Senate to act favorably on U.S. accession during this session of Congress, stating that: "Joining will serve the national security interests of the United States, including the maritime mobility of our armed forces worldwide."

As Deputy Secretary of Defense and former Secretary of the Navy, and as former Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security, I am well acquainted with the Convention and strongly support U.S. accession. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee has scheduled hearings on the Convention and has asked me to appear. A copy of my written statement to the Committee is attached, which notes that Secretary Gates, the Military Department Secretaries, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, all the Combatant Commanders, and the Commandant of the Coast Guard fully support accession to the Convention. The Department appreciates the support of the Senate Committee on Armed Services on this important treaty.

enclosure:
as stated

cc: The Honorable John McCain
Ranking Member

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