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Attachments:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The American Legion: Enforce laws against classified leakers

INDIANAPOLIS (July 26, 2010) - In the wake of the publication of more than 90,000 secret military documents by a Web site, the leader of The American Legion called upon Justice Department officials to vigorously prosecute any American who knowingly leaks classified information.

“As the old saying goes ‘loose lips sink ships,’ but today’s sad reality is that the Worldwide Web can lead to worldwide mayhem if certain Web sites do not practice better discretion,” said The American Legion National Commander Clarence E. Hill, a retired U.S. Navy captain. “Anyone who serves or has served in the U.S. military knows that the penalties for revealing classified information are extremely serious. The penalties are high because some information can clearly put our servicepeople and our national security at risk. We don’t get to decide which documents are likely to do so. It is a crime to reveal classified information. Enforce the law.”

National Security Advisor James Jones, a former commandant of the Marine Corps, expressed similar concerns. “The United States strongly condemns the disclosure of classified information by individuals and organizations which could put the lives of Americans and our partners at risk and threaten our national security.”

Hill recalled that The American Legion strongly condemned last year’s planned release of photographs of alleged prisoner abuse because it could endanger U.S. troops. “To its credit, the White House denied the ACLU’s request for the photographs because it knew that the people’s ‘right to know,’ should not needlessly endanger the lives of troops. I am not saying that these documents will do the same, but I do not have a lot of faith in the discretion of WikiLeaks, which has made its anti-war agenda quite clear.”

With a current membership of 2.5-million wartime veterans, The American Legion was founded in 1919 on the four pillars of a strong national security, veterans affairs, Americanism, and youth programs. Legionnaires work for the betterment of their communities through more than 14,000 posts across the nation.

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