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16 September 1948

Dear

As you may know, the Secretary of Defense has appointed a Committee to draft, in time for submission to the 81st. Congress, a Code of Military Justice which will be uniform in substance and uniform in interpretation and application. He has indicated that in its application to the Departments of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force, this uniform code should protect the rights of those subject to the code with the view of increasing public confidence in Military Justice, without impairing the performance of military functions.

The membership of the Committee on a Uniform Code of Military Justice in addition to myself as Chairman, is as follows:

Gordon Gray, Assistant Secretary of the Army  
W. John Kenney, Under Secretary of the Navy  
Eugene M. Zuckert, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force

Mr. Felix E. Larkin of the legal staff of the Office of the Secretary of Defense serves as the Committee's Executive Secretary -

For several months now, a working staff, composed of representatives of the three services, has been engaged in preparing a comprehensive comparative analysis of the Articles of War and Articles for the Government of the Navy as well as assembling the legislative history of the two systems of military justice including the studies made in recent years for the Departments by independent groups.

Our purpose in writing you at this time is to ask your assistance in the important task assigned to the Committee. We are most anxious to have before us the impartial and objective views of those organizations and individuals who have an interest in the work of this Committee. We should like, therefore, to have the benefit of your ideas on those matters which you feel deserve our particular attention and which in your mind convey deficiencies in the present methods of dispensing military justice. May we emphasize here that we would like not only criticisms, but also suggestions for changes to eliminate these criticisms.

The Committee prefers to have the benefit of your experience and views without delimiting areas which we feel are of a controversial nature. After additional study, it may well be that the Committee will want to further impose on you by propounding questions concerning particular problems.

In order that we may have the advantage of your thoughts and to enable us to complete our study within a reasonable length of time, we would appreciate it very much if you could send us your written comments at your earliest convenience. If practicable, it would be most helpful to the members of the Committee if you would furnish us with five copies of your reply.

Very truly yours,

Edmund M. Morgan, Jr.  
Chairman, Committee on a Uniform  
Code of Military Justice