WASHINGTON, DC – The Justice Department's decision to prosecute an accused Somali terrorist in a U.S. federal court instead of a military tribunal is bad policy and sends an inconsistent message to the American people, Rep. Vern Buchanan, FL-13, said today. Buchanan is the author of the "Military Tribunals for Terrorists Act," House-passed legislation requiring all foreign terrorists to face trial before military tribunals instead of civilian courts.

"Foreign terrorists who attack our country should be treated as enemy combatants, not common criminals," Buchanan said. "Using military tribunals to prosecute and sentence foreign terrorists who conspire to attack the United States is the right policy."

Buchanan noted that under current law, the Justice Department can choose between military tribunals or civilian courts in prosecuting foreign terrorists. Buchanan said the United States should have a consistent policy of treating all foreign terrorists as enemy combatants to be dealt with by military tribunal.

"The indictment of this terrorist suspect by a grand jury is the latest example of why we need to enact my legislation into law," said Buchanan

The Obama Administration announced this week that Ahmed Abdulkadir Warsame, an accused Somali terrorist with ties to two Islamist Military groups, will be tried in a New York City federal court. A nine-count indictment unsealed by a federal grand jury in the Southern District of New York charges Warsame with conspiracy and providing material support to al-Qaeda and al-Shabab.

Buchanan's "Military Tribunal for Terrorists Act," eliminates the civilian court option. Military tribunals are preferable because: they only require a majority vote to convict, not a unanimous verdict as required in civilian court; sensitive intelligence data can be protected from public release and terror suspects can be held indefinitely.

Buchanan noted that last year, a civilian court jury in New York City found an al-Qaeda terrorist innocent on 279 of 280 felony terrorism charges even though his bombing of two U.S. embassies in Africa killed 224 people and wounded thousands more. Prosecutors were

restricted from bringing full evidence to bear in the trial, a limitation that would not extend to a military tribunal.

"We can and must distinguish between how our federal government responds to terrorist attacks and burglars," said Buchanan. "Military tribunals allows us to do just that.

President Obama has threatened to veto the Buchanan plan because he wants to retain the option of using civilian courts.