

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 11, 2010

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We are writing to express our serious concern over the high rate of released Guantanamo detainees returning to terrorism against the United States.

On January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010, it was reported that the Department of Defense believes that up to 20 percent of released Guantanamo detainees are now joining terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda. That percentage has reportedly increased from 11 percent in December 2008. In light of these new figures, our strong opposition to the Administration's plan for transferring Guantanamo detainees to the United States or potentially unreliable partners abroad has increased. Should detainees be transferred to the United States, they will almost certainly accrue more legal rights, raising the likelihood of their release. And if they are transferred to the wrong countries overseas, as has happened before, they may well be released by their host government.

Released detainees have proved themselves to be a serious danger to Americans at home and abroad. For example, the deputy head of al Qaeda in Yemen, Said Ali al-Shihri, was released from Guantanamo into the custody of Saudi Arabia. Yemen has now become a major focal point in the war against Islamic extremism, with its al Qaeda network supporting terrorists like Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, who attempted to destroy an airplane flying to Detroit on Christmas Day. The recent decision to stop transferring detainees to Yemen is commendable but woefully inadequate. Should more detainees eventually be released, from detention centers in the US or abroad, it is likely the threat to the United States and other countries will correspondingly rise from increased al Qaeda personnel and expertise.

There are almost 200 detainees remaining in Guantanamo Bay. Based on these new recidivism numbers, and the trend of increased recidivism that is emerging, we believe you should stop the process of closing down Guantanamo. At the absolute minimum, it is critical that it is stopped until we have a better understanding of why released detainees are increasingly returning to terrorism. It would be highly irresponsible to give these detainees a greater chance of walking free when more and more of them are once again taking up arms against us.

In light of this report, we strongly urge you to halt the process of transferring or releasing detainees.

Sincerely,

Mike Johnson

Mike Crogo

Jim Clark

Tom Jones

Jim DeMent