

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 09, 2017

The President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to share our perspective regarding the future operations of Joint Task Force Guantanamo Bay (JTF-GTMO) and the vital mission GTMO has served and should continue to serve in detaining terrorists who engaged in, aided, or abetted, or conspired to commit, acts of international terrorism and other adverse acts against the United States. As you consider policies and actions that may affect GTMO, we want to express our support for maintaining and expanding the utilization of the detention facility during your administration by detaining current and future enemy combatants who pose a threat to our national security.

As you know, Congress has continuously opposed and prohibited the closure of GTMO as well as the transfer of GTMO detainees to U.S. soil since 2010 in response to the previous administration's attempt to fulfill a campaign promise. Despite the growing number of threats to our nation from terrorists around the globe, the Obama administration demonstrated a blatant disregard for the safety of the American people and the will of Congress by dramatically reducing the number of detainees housed at GTMO to justify those few remaining be transferred to the U.S. Since 2010, we have been appalled by a disturbing lack of judgment and transparency with the repeated release of detainee terrorists, totaling approximately 197 detainees transferred from GTMO to foreign nations. According to the Director of National Intelligence, since 2002 the confirmed and suspected recidivism rate of GTMO detainees reengaged in terrorist or insurgent activities is more than 30 percent. This troubling intelligence is indicative of the subjective and insufficient threshold used to assess the transfer of a detainee regardless of the threat level they pose to Americans at home and abroad — a threshold Congress has attempted to strengthen.

We believe the Periodic Review Board (PRB), which was established in 2011 to assess and determine the transfer of detainees at GTMO, should be suspended immediately. The standard and threshold by which the PRB has made their determinations to transfer detainees from GTMO to foreign nations, particularly those in peril – Yemen, Oman, Afghanistan and Sudan – is dangerously flawed by subjectivity and broad interpretation. Additionally, the PRB determined that five or more detainees are eligible for transfer; however, we request an immediate suspension on these actions and any other action that would permit the transfer or release of detainee terrorists held at GTMO.

We also encourage a full and judicious review of the PRB's role and responsibilities by examining the insufficient criteria that informs the inadequate standard and threshold to transfer

GTMO detainees. It is our belief that the transfer of any GTMO detainee must be prohibited until additional measures and policies are established that unequivocally certify the detainee does not pose a threat to our national security. As part of the transfer determination, we believe that military value analysis and recommendations by senior military leaders such as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces should be considered, particularly in assessing the impact a released GTMO detainee may have on our Armed Forces serving abroad.

During your campaign and transition to the Presidency, we were pleased to learn you share our perspective that enemy combatants affiliated with ISIS, Al Qaeda, the Taliban or other Foreign Terrorist Organization captured during conflicts involving our Armed Forces should be housed at GTMO. As we continue to engage in conflicts and combat operations around the world, the critical mission that GTMO serves in detaining terrorists who threaten the lives of not only our servicemen, but all Americans cannot be stressed enough.

As you know, we cannot afford additional risk to our national security and we are committed to working with you to strengthen and reinforce the policies that make GTMO an invaluable asset in the fight against terrorism and defense of our nation.

Sincerely,



Roy Blunt
United States Senator



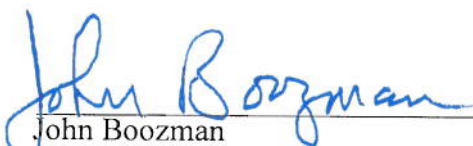
Jerry Moran
United States Senator



Tom Cotton
United States Senator



James Inhofe
United States Senator



John Boozman
United States Senator



Tim Scott
United States Senator



Thom Tillis
United States Senator



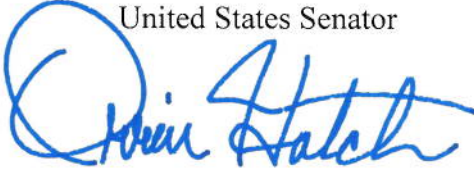
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Pat Roberts
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Steve Daines
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Orrin Hatch
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