



General Charles C. Krulak, USMC (Ret.)

February 23, 2016

Dear Member of Congress:

I represent a coalition of more than 60 retired generals and admirals of the United States Armed Forces who have for years advocated the responsible closure of the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay. I write to urge you to give serious consideration to the recently submitted Department of Defense plan to close the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Closing Guantanamo is in our national security interest, and with the submission of the DOD plan, there is a unique opportunity for Congress to lift the remaining restrictions on transferring detainees so that Guantanamo can be closed.

Guantanamo continues to impose significant costs to our national security. As an offshore detention facility that—rightly or wrongly—represents to the world an image of detainee abuse and violations of the rule of law, Guantanamo undermines counterterrorism cooperation with allies and unnecessarily bolsters the propaganda and recruiting narratives that terrorists seek to advance. It is a travesty that the trial of the perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks remains bogged down at Guantanamo nearly 15 years after 9/11.

The issue of what to do with Guantanamo is not a political issue. There is near unanimous agreement from our nation's top military, intelligence, and law enforcement leaders that Guantanamo should be closed. Even President George W. Bush, who opened Guantanamo after the 9/11 attacks, tried to close it, noting that "the detention facility had become a propaganda tool for our enemies and a distraction for our allies."

We understand that some fear bringing even a small number detainees to the United States as part of the plan to close Guantanamo. However, we are confident that those detainees can be held safely and securely stateside. Hundreds of terrorists are already being held in U.S. prisons—including one former Guantanamo detainee who is serving a life sentence. Rather than trying to invoke fear, we should applaud these communities that have successfully and safely detained society's worst without incident. In any event, the risks of keeping Guantanamo open far outweigh any risks associated with closing it.

In the coming days and weeks, we plan on more closely studying the Department of Defense's plan to close Guantanamo, and we hope you will do the same. Closing Guantanamo is not just a national security imperative, it is about reestablishing the core values of who we are as a nation, and we believe strongly that there must be a bi-partisan approach to achieving that objective.

Semper Fidelis,

Charles C. Krulak
General, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.)