

March 1, 2016

Senator John McCain
Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee
Russell Senate Building, Room 228
Washington, DC 20510

Representative Mac Thornberry
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

Senator Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Senate Armed Service Committee
Russell Senate Building, Room 228
Washington, DC 20510

Representative Adam Smith
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members,

For over seven years we, a group of retired flag and general officers of the United States Armed Forces, have advocated the responsible closure of the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay. We have done this because it is what is best for our country. It is in our national security interests, and above all, it is about reestablishing who we are as a country.

Last week the administration presented its plan for closing the Guantanamo Bay detention facility. As the chairmen and ranking members of the House and Senate Armed Service Committees, yours is a solemn responsibility. We write to encourage you to use this plan as a foundation to come together and find a path to finally shutter the detention facility. This should not be a political issue. Former President George W. Bush determined that Guantanamo should be closed because, in his words, "...the detention facility had become a propaganda tool for our enemies and a distraction for our allies. I worked to find a way to close the prison without compromising security." The current plan similarly seeks to achieve that objective, following the advice of our nation's top military, intelligence, and law enforcement leaders.

Closing Guantanamo will not be easy, but it is the right thing to do, and we call on you to work together to accomplish it. We take heart that our nation has elected people who will exercise their conscientious judgment, but who will not allow politics to obscure courage. Compromise for the common good is the true exercise of leadership and courage.

Sincerely,

General Charles Krulak, USMC (Ret.)
Vice Admiral Richard H. Carmona, USPHS (Ret.)
Lieutenant General Robert G. Gard, Jr., USA (Ret.)
Lieutenant General Richard L. Kelly, USMC (Ret.)
Lieutenant General Charles Otstott, USA (Ret.)
Lieutenant General Keith J. Stalder, USMC (Ret.)
Major General Eugene Fox, USA (Ret.)
Rear Admiral John D. Hutson, JAGC, USN (Ret.)
Major General Michael R. Lehnert, USMC (Ret.)
Major General Eric T. Olson, USA (Ret.)
Major General Walter L. Stewart, Jr., USA (Ret.)
Major General Margaret Woodward, USAF (Ret.)
Brigadier General David M. Brahms, USMC (Ret.)
Brigadier General James P. Cullen, USA (Ret.)

General David M. Maddox, USA (Ret.)
Lieutenant General John Castellaw, USMC (Ret.)
Vice Admiral Lee F. Gunn, USN (Ret.)
Lieutenant General Claudia J. Kennedy, USA (Ret.)
Lieutenant General Norman R. Seip, USAF (Ret.)
Major General Paul D. Eaton, USA (Ret.)
Rear Admiral Don Guter, JAGC, USN (Ret.)
Major General Carl B. Jensen, USMC (Ret.)
Major General William L. Nash, USA (Ret.)
Major General Thomas J. Romig, USA (Ret.)
Major General Antonio M. Taguba, USA (Ret.)
Brigadier General John Adams, USA (Ret.)
Brigadier General Stephen A. Cheney, USMC (Ret.)
Brigadier General Evelyn P. Foote, USA (Ret.)

Brigadier General Alan K. Fry, USA (Ret.)
Brigadier General David R. Irvine, USA (Ret.)
Brigadier General Richard O'Meara, USA (Ret.)
Brigadier General Daniel P. Woodward, USAF (Ret.)

Brigadier General Leif H. Hendrickson, USMC (Ret.)
Brigadier General John H. Johns, USA (Ret.)
Brigadier General Murray G. Sagsveen, USA (Ret.)
Brigadier General Stephen N. Xenakis, USA (Ret.)