

**STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD OF  
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BEFORE THE  
HOUSE HOMELAND SECURITY SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT &  
MANAGEMENT EFFICIENCY  
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**US PRISONS CAN SAFELY HOLD GUANTANAMO BAY DETAINEES**

Chairman Perry and Ranking Member Watson Coleman, thank you for allowing me to share my views with you. The Obama Administration recently released a comprehensive plan for closing the prison at Guantanamo Bay. The plan necessarily requires the government to move some prisoners to the United States for continued detention. To listen to some of rhetoric, one might think that the U.S. prison system is woefully unprepared to handle dangerous terrorists. This is categorically untrue.

U.S. corrections systems, both military and civilian, already hold extremely dangerous people, including terrorists, and have done so for years. Mass murderers, professional assassins, serial killers: they all reside unthreateningly in American penitentiaries run by professionals who generally have been in the business a lot longer than Gitmo has existed.

Take "Blind Sheik" Omar Abdel Rahman. A close associate of Osama bin Laden and spiritual leader to terrorists responsible for attacks in several countries, he was involved in the 1993 World Trade Center bombings. Convicted by a jury in a federal trial in 1995, he's serving a life sentence in a federal prison in North Carolina. Even though Al Qaeda still calls for his release and has made him part of hostage demands, there have been no jailbreak attempts or attacks on nearby communities since he was locked up more than 20 years ago.

The son-in-law of Osama bin Laden, Sulaiman Abu Ghaith, and Zacarias Moussaoui, the 20<sup>th</sup> 9/11 hijacker are also currently held in the United States. There is Ahmed Abu Khattala, who participated in the 2012 attack on the Benghazi embassy. There are the eight men involved in the 1998 bombings in Kenya and Tanzania. Finally, we safely hold Dandeny Munoz Mosquera, once the chief assassin of Colombia's Medellin Cartel.

All of these men are dangerous criminals, and U.S. corrections facilities keep them safely away from the public, out of sight and out of mind. Hundreds of convicted terrorists have gone to prison in the United States since 9/11. None has escaped. None has created security threats for the communities near the prisons. Few, if any, Americans even realize when a dangerous criminal arrives at a prison in their city, county, or state because politicians aren't drawing attention to this occurrence, telling them they ought to be afraid.

Under President Obama's plan, the government will send many of the Guantanamo detainees home or to a third country. A small number of detainees would be transferred to the United States, and no matter how dangerous they are, U.S. correction system professionals, military and civilian, have the

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ability, training, and capacity to take them on. To imply otherwise is insulting to the men and women of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, U.S. military detention officers, and civilian corrections professionals charged with keeping communities safe and guarding the nation's most dangerous individuals.

The Guantanamo prison has been a source of debate since its inception. But there should be no debate about the U.S. corrections systems' ability to hold Guantanamo detainees should they be transferred stateside.

The American Correctional Association takes no position on closing the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay. But those that are opposed to closing it shouldn't try to win people to their side by stoking irrational fears. It's important for the American people to know that when it comes to housing Guantanamo detainees, we're not afraid—and they shouldn't be, either.