

January 29, 2015

Senator John McCain
United States Senate
241 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Jack Reed
United States Senate
728 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator McCain and Senator Reed,

For over six years we, a group of retired flag and general officers of the United States Armed Forces, have advocated for the responsible closure of the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay. We have always believed that our nation's policies should adhere to the rule of law and that we are more secure when they do. Unfortunately, the abuses that occurred at Guantanamo have made the facility a symbol to the world of a United States that is unconstrained by our Constitutional values. It is past time that we close the prison and deny our enemies its value as a propaganda tool.

We are only too aware that Guantanamo seems to defy an easy solution, and that the debate over its closure often generates more heat than light. We were therefore heartened by Senator McCain's recent response to a question about working with the administration to close Guantanamo: "I am prepared to and I think it can be done." We strongly concur that with the right leadership and a strong plan, it can be done.

There is an opportunity to elevate the conversation surrounding this issue next month during the hearings for the Honorable Ashton Carter to serve as the next Secretary of Defense. We encourage you to seize this moment. In your roles as the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Armed Services Committee you should question Mr. Carter about the Obama Administration's plan to responsibly close the detention facility at Guantanamo. The administration should be expected to share more fully about its specific plans for shuttering Guantanamo, and officials, including Mr. Carter, will be encouraged to do so if Congress presses the issue. We encourage you to ask Mr. Carter about his commitment to following through on the President's stated priority of promptly and responsibly closing the detention facility.

It is hard to overstate how damaging the continued existence of the detention facility at Guantanamo has been and continues to be. It is a critical national security issue. It complicates our diplomacy with allies, including with regard to counter-terrorism operations. Many of us have been told on repeated occasions by our friends in countries around the world that the greatest single action the United States can take to fight terrorism is to close Guantanamo. Repressive governments use it to deflect criticism of their own policies by charging hypocrisy. Violent extremists use it as a recruiting tool, not to mention that detaining prisoners at Guantanamo is now costing the American taxpayers over \$3.5 million per detainee per year.

Closing Guantanamo is about reestablishing who we are as a nation. We stand ready to assist in any way on this important issue for our country's national security.

Sincerely

General Joseph P. Hoar, USMC (Ret.)
General Paul J. Kern, USA (Ret.)
General Charles C. Krulak, USMC (Ret.)
General David M. Maddox, USA (Ret.)
General Merrill A. McPeak, USAF (Ret.)
General William G.T. Tuttle, Jr., USA (Ret.)
Vice Admiral Richard H. Carmona, USPHS (Ret.)
Lieutenant General John Castellaw, USMC (Ret.)
Lieutenant General Robert G. Gard, Jr., USA (Ret.)
Vice Admiral Lee F. Gunn, USN (Ret.)
Lieutenant General Richard L. Kelly, USMC (Ret.)
Lieutenant General Claudia J. Kennedy, USA (Ret.)
Lieutenant General Charles P. Otstott, USA (Ret.)
Lieutenant General Norman R. Seip, USAF (Ret.)
Lieutenant General Harry E. Soyster, USA (Ret.)
Lieutenant General Keith J. Stalder, USMC (Ret.)
Major General John Batiste, USA (Ret.)
Major General Christopher Cortez, USMC (Ret.)
Major General Paul D. Eaton, USA (Ret.)
Major General Eugene Fox, USA (Ret.)
Rear Admiral Donald Guter, JAGC, USN (Ret.)
Rear Admiral John D. Hutson, JAGC, USN (Ret.)
Major General Carl B. Jensen, USMC (Ret.)
Major General Michael R. Lehnert, USMC (Ret.)
Major General J. Michael Myatt, USMC (Ret.)
Major General William L. Nash, USA (Ret.)
Major General Thomas J. Romig, USA (Ret.)
Major General Walter L. Stewart, Jr., USA (Ret.)
Major General Antonio M. Taguba, USA (Ret.)
Brigadier General John Adams, USA (Ret.)
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Brigadier General Stephen A. Cheney, USMC (Ret.)
Brigadier General James P. Cullen, USA (Ret.)
Brigadier General Evelyn P. Foote, USA (Ret.)
Brigadier General Alan K. Fry, USA (Ret.)
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Brigadier General David R. Irvine, USA (Ret.)
Brigadier General John H. Johns, USA (Ret.)
Brigadier General Keith H. Kerr, CSMR (Ret.)
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