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THE HILL'S Congress Blog

Where lawmakers come to blog

President Obama should press on with Guantánamo closure and repatriate innocent men cleared for release

By Center for Constitutional Rights's Leili Kashani - 01/04/10 06:24 PM ET

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After the Flight 253 attack, does it still make sense to close Guantanamo?

It is crucial to remember that the vast majority of the men at Guantánamo should never have been detained in the first place, and that over 550 have been released and are peacefully rebuilding their lives. Most of the nearly 800 men who were brought to Guantánamo were not captured by the American military on any battlefield, but seized in broad sweeps during the chaos of the Afghan war or in other locations around the world and sold to the U.S. in exchange for substantial bounties. We know from the military's own records that most of the detainees at Guantánamo have no link to terrorism.

CCR has always maintained that the men at Guantánamo should either be charged with a crime or released. Today, more than half of the men who remain at Guantánamo have been cleared for release after scrutiny by the Obama Administration's year-old Guantánamo Review Task Force. It is therefore particularly troubling that several senators have used this occasion for political ends and pressed President Obama to stop transfers of all Yemenis, citing a report that alleges two men formerly detained at Guantánamo joined a group in Yemen which claims responsibility for plotting the failed airplane bombing.

Halting the repatriation of Yemeni men cleared by the Task Force after months of careful review is unconscionable. It will also effectively prevent any meaningful progress towards closing Guantánamo, which President Obama has repeatedly argued will make our nation safer. Former Navy General Counsel Alberto Mora testified to the Senate Armed Services Committee in June 2008 that "there are serving U.S. flag-rank officers who maintain that the first and second identifiable causes of U. S. combat deaths in Iraq — as judged by their effectiveness in recruiting insurgent fighters into combat — are, respectively the symbols of Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo." Opportunistic calls to keep Guantanamo open into its ninth year will do nothing to make America safer.

Comments (11)

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Are you willing to put the lives of millions of Americans at risk by releasing the terrorists

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being held at Gitmo to countries such as Yemen??? I certainly would not want that resting on my shoulders knowing those who are set to be releases could potentially plot future attacks on American soil. The closing of Gitmo will definitely not do anything to keep America safe!

BY **JEREMY SWARTZ** on 01/04/2010 at 19:17

Idiots like the poster have no conception of what these fanatics are capable of. Let's hope they move into their office building and take them out.

BY **BALONEY GUY** on 01/04/2010 at 19:27

Why sure we just bought that prison in Thomson Ill. We have room for them. Why not put Americans at more risk than they already are?

BY **MOKKIE** on 01/05/2010 at 01:07

I am afraid that some people will be killed by the emotional nut cases in this country. You cannot ignore the will of the people without suffering serious physical consequences.

BY **ANNIEK** on 01/05/2010 at 02:06

"...over 550 have been released and are peacefully rebuilding their lives."You lose all credibility when you say things like this. You have no way of knowing what those men are doing at this time, so this is for all intents and purposes a fabrication and a lie.Closing Guantanamo will satisfy and please only liberals like you, Mr. Kashani. We've already seen that cozying up to the Islamic world has no effect upon the behavior of Islamic terrorists - they're still breaking things and killing innocents - and closing this facility will have no positive effect whatsoever. And frankly, Mr. Kashani, satisfying and pleasing you and liberals like you is not enough reason for the rest of us to place our lives in jeopardy.

BY **DISENLIGHTENED** on 01/05/2010 at 08:07

"BY disenlightened" YOU ARE SO FULL OF CRAP!30% have been proven to take up Jihad again. Why don't you volunteer to be BHO's Representative in Yemen if you believe this not to be true! Put your soul on the line you armchair coward!

BY **BT GREENE** on 01/05/2010 at 08:18

I apologize...I meant Mr. KASHANI, not "Disenlightented"

BY **BT GREENE** on 01/05/2010 at 08:20

In response to the comments on Ms. Kashani's article, it is unfortunate that such reactive vitriol still continues. It is this kind of responding that has gotten us into our present mess. As for the alleged risk to Americans-your chances of being killed in a car accident are 100's of times greater, so why not lock up everyone else with a driver's license for our own protection? Further, the author is referring to those who have been cleared for release therefore by our own government's judgement, they pose no risk. If we have truly become a nation that locks people up without cause, then we have already lost the America you claim to want to protect.Frankly, in the present context, I think the Ms. Kashani is being more courageous than those reacting out of fear.

BY **RICHARD SROCZYNSKI** on 01/05/2010 at 11:58

Leave the dirtbags at Gitmo, hopefully they'll rot!!! We'll all be safer.

BY **RM63** on 01/05/2010 at 12:15

I can see by most of the post here, alot of these socalled folk are scared little WATB. They whine and cry about being scared of the big bad terrorist and that they want total security. Well you little cry babies, there is no one who can guarantee your safety. By the way, those that would give up liberty for security deserve neither.

BY **MIKE COLEMAN** on 01/05/2010 at 15:05

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