



March 23, 2007

The Honorable Dr. Robert M. Gates
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Gates:

I write to applaud your efforts, as reported today by the *New York Times*, to have the prison facility at Guantánamo Bay shut down and the prisoners held there transferred to the United States for trial.

The *Times* account makes it clear you realize that the travesty of Guantánamo has become a deeply rooted, world-wide embarrassment to the United States, and has become a symbol that both energizes the enemies of this country and causes growing concern among even our staunchest allies.

It was certainly no surprise that the *Times* report says that Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales is a strong opponent of closing down Guantánamo. In his days as White House counsel, Gonzales wrote in a 2002 memorandum that referred to some of the restrictions of the Geneva Convention as “quaint” and the portion on questioning enemy prisons “obsolete.” That’s exactly the sort of attitude that has led him, in both his White House and Justice Department roles, to subordinate and twist the law in order to offer up flimsy, transparently indefensible justifications for torture.

It is now more than five years since the first detainees were sent to Guantánamo, with no access to courts, no meaningful contact with their families and no prospect of being charged and tried. Detainees are treated this way:

- They lose habeas corpus, the right to seek release from unlawful imprisonment.
- They lose the right to due process under the law.
- They are subject to having testimony used against them that was derived from abusing or beating witnesses.
- They lose the right to be told why they are being held indefinitely without being charged or even of what they are being accused of having done.

At Guantánamo, this treatment goes on and on for an indefinite period. The detainees are locked up and out of sight, out of communication and left to rot in the equivalent of a modern day detention camp.

AMERICAN CIVIL
LIBERTIES UNION
NATIONAL OFFICE
125 BROAD STREET, 18TH FL.
NEW YORK, NY 10004-2400
T/212.549.2500
WWW.ACLU.ORG

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS
NADINE STROSSEN
PRESIDENT

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

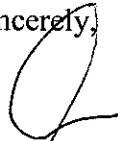
RICHARD ZACKS
TREASURER

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These actions are an anathema to the core values of our country. Many of the detainees are believed to be innocent – victims of Afghan and Pakistani bounty hunters who rounded them up and sold them to U.S. forces for large rewards. But regardless of how heinous a crime someone is suspected of committing, we diminish ourselves and our nation when we fail to provide rudimentary defense rights to the accused.

Thank you for having both the insight to recognize the serious damage Guantánamo is doing to our country's reputation around the world and the courage to act on that insight.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. Romero', written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

Anthony D. Romero
Executive Director