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United States Department of State

Ambassador-at-Large for  
War Crimes Issues  
Washington, D.C. 20520

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December 12, 2003

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Yvan Peeters



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Dear Ms. Peeters:

Thank you for your letter of October 12 to Secretary Powell expressing concern related to juveniles detainees held under U.S. control at a U.S. Naval Base located in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Secretary Powell has asked me to respond to your letter on his behalf.

The detention of juveniles in accordance with the laws and customs of war is consistent with U.S. obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child. As with all detainees, these individuals are being held because they are enemy combatants who pose a threat to United States forces. The United States recognizes the special needs of younger detainees and the difficult circumstances surrounding their situation, and is treating young enemy combatants in a manner appropriate to their status and age.

Sincerely,

Pierre Prosper