



AMERICAN CORRECTIONAL ASSOCIATION
4380 Forbes Blvd. • Lanham, MD 20706 • (301) 918-1800 • Fax (301) 918-1900

MEMORANDUM

TO Thomas W. O'Connell
Assistant Secretary of Defense
(Special Operations/Low Intensity Conflict)

FROM James A. Gendles, Jr. *James A. Gendles, Jr.*
Executive Director

RE ACA Operational Assistance Visit
JTF-GTMO

DATE May 27, 2004

• **BACKGROUND**

Commander Joint Task Force Guantanamo Bay (JTF-GTMO), Cuba requested senior officials of the American Correctional Association (ACA) conduct an operational assistance visit of the US confinement facility for enemy combatants captured as part of the Global War on Terror (GWOT). The ACA is an internationally recognized professional association that establishes standards for correctional/confinement facilities, for training and staff development and accredits facilities according to established correctional standards. The Deputy Secretary of Defense, Doctor Paul Wolfowitz approved the invitation and the visit. The mission for the ACA delegation included observation and receipt of information to consider in the validation of the confinement operations and to provide appropriate suggestions where improvements might be made.

From 15 thru 17 September, a senior leaders delegation of the ACA visited the JTF-GTMO. The team received an operational brief from MG Miller and his staff on day one and a comprehensive tour of the JTF-GTMO confinement operation on day two. The team out briefed MG Miller and departed the island on day three.

• **OBSERVATIONS**

From our observations, the facility at JTF-GTMO appeared to provide a safe, secure and humane environment for those enemy combatants being confined as part of the GWOT. Although the standards of confinement, which are part of the ACA and Commission on Accreditation for Corrections, as well as other international guidelines, are not applicable to this mission environment, the spirit of those standards is being maintained whenever possible.

The confinement policies, standard operating procedures and practices observed by the delegation were designed to ensure the integrity, dignity, health and appropriate privileges of the detainees and to protect them from ill treatment. The delegation did not witness an environment conducive to cruel or degrading treatment of any detainee.

Physical Conditions

The facility conforms to a basic block design providing housing in a 6'x8' individual living space including an off-the-floor sleeping surface and individual water and toilet facilities. The open-air design was adapted for the climate of Cuba and provides adequate protections from the elements.

Sanitation and Cleanliness:

The facility is extremely well maintained. Upholding high standards of cleanliness despite the open-air design and corrosive nature of the sea air, the on-going maintenance program ensures that the facility remains clean and sanitary.

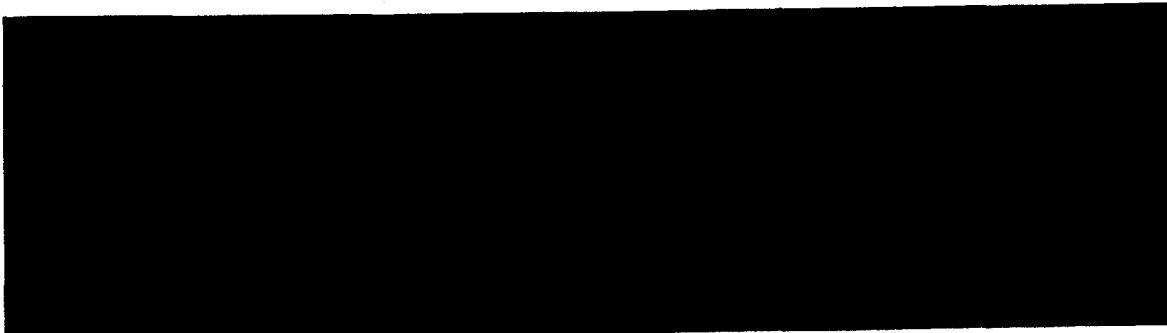
Physical and Mental Health:

Medical facilities were found to be exceptionally good. Detainee medical care far exceeded local community standards of care the detainees would likely have access to, but for their detention. The mental health facility provides appropriate segregation and treatment for those detainees identified having mental health issues. The mental health block, and the services provided there, has resulted in a reduction of self-harm attempts and meets the present needs of the detainee population from the team's observation.

General Living Accommodations

The detainees are provided adequate hygiene and recreational opportunities, as well as an opportunity for a communal and less restrictive living environment. The detainees have their religious and cultural needs met through a variety of methods, including availability of religious texts, scheduled prayer, prayer rugs, special diets and Chaplain liaisons to ensure that appropriate practices are maintained.

- **Recommendations**



3. The confinement operation of JTF-GTMO, although unique in its population and purpose, is not so different from any other confinement operation where liberties are restrained as a result of a detainee's actions or suspected actions. Despite the unique population the leadership and guard force seem to understand basic confinement concepts of predictable behaviors. That is, after a period of acclimation a confined person or population will begin to act within certain predictable patterns of behavior. Capitalizing on this knowledge and applying proven correctional practices the culture of a facility can be controlled to ensure a safer and more secure environment for all. The Cadre and leadership have done well in establishing a humane, safe and secure environment for the detainees. Sound practices such as assistance visits by the Army's correctional subject matter experts have contributed to the operation and should be continued.

4. As the long-term planning unfolds it is important to identify and rely upon diverse sources of information. No one person, state or system has the exact algorithm for this operation. Looking to various systems and applying the needs of the JTF-GTMO operations against multiple solution samples achieves a higher probability of success. The Army possesses experience and expertise at both the headquarters and facility levels, as illustrated by the exceptional operational attention of the action orientated [REDACTED] Army experts, those from other services and federal and state agencies, can also provide insight on everything from facility design, staffing pattern planning to detainee program planning. The JTF-GTMO should utilize a number of different resources in its planning and operations to achieve a higher potential for efficiency and success. The cadre and leadership of JTF-GTMO should be engaged in the overall field of confinement/corrections. There are numerous sources of training and information available to provide insight and keep the innovative mind inspired in developing their solution sets for day-to-day confinement issues and long-term operational challenges.

Memo to Thomas W. O'Connell
May 27, 2004
Page 4



CONCLUSION

The ACA team was both impressed and proud of the professionalism and work ethic exhibited by the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen from all aspects of the JTF-GTMO mission. We were also impressed as correctional experts by the quality of the confinement operation, and particularly as Americans watching our County's sons and daughters unwavering dedication and spirited resolve to protect us, their families and their country. We salute and offer our heartfelt thanks to them all.

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