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GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION



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15 August, 2002

Mr. Glyn Davies
Minister
Embassy of the United States
24 Grosvenor Square
London W1A 1AE

RELEASED IN FULL

Dear Mr. Davies,

I am writing in my capacity as Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Human Rights Group further to the Group's continuing concerns relating to the treatment of prisoners held by US Forces in Guantanamo Bay.

I understand that almost 600 people are being detained in Guantanamo Bay at the present time, with plans to build facilities for even greater numbers of prisoners. I, and other members in the Group, am particularly concerned about the legal limbo in which these prisoners are currently ensnared. The U.S. Government has denied that the Geneva Conventions apply, and it has recently been ruled that the United States Courts have no jurisdiction over prisoners there. That more than half a year of intensive interrogation has not enabled U.S. officials to establish that most, if, in fact, any, of the prisoners are high-level Al-Qaida operatives or senior Taliban officials must put pay to the argument that all these detainees must be denied their fundamental rights because of the extreme risk they pose to U.S. and Western security.

Although there have been reports that the U.S. Government is planning to bring these prisoners before a military tribunal to face charges at some point in the future, there has as yet been no indication of when such proceedings will begin. In fact, it would seem that the U.S. authorities are singularly focused on the continued interrogation of the captives, with the detainees facing detention for an indeterminate period.

Not surprisingly, given this complete lack of uncertainty as regards their status and fate, many prisoners are allegedly suffering from severe depression, with some 30 suicides reportedly having been attempted. Those against whom there is no evidence of terrorist

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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involvement or connection with the upper echelons of the Taliban regime should be released as soon as possible.

More generally, it is time that the U.S. Government give a clear lead as to how long all of these prisoners will be detained and when each of them is likely to be brought before a tribunal to face specific charges. That the U.K. authorities have had to release Mr. Lofti Rassi following the lack of evidence forthcoming from the FBI and that the initial suspicions about the activities of Mr. Padilla, a U.S. citizen held in military detention, appear to have been unfounded would seem to emphasize the importance of having the detention of all suspects subject to proper judicial scrutiny.

I am hopeful that the U.S. Government will realize how damaging their stance as regards the prisoners is to their international standing as protector of fundamental rights and freedoms and to the fate of those being held arbitrarily by a number of dictatorial regimes. Ultimately, its stance may also undermine the fight against terrorism itself and the security of all Americans.

I look forward to receiving your comments on the matters raised in this letter.

Yours sincerely,

pp Ann Clwyd
ANN CLWYD MP

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