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April 1, 2009

The Honorable Eric H. Holder, Jr.
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Room 5111
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Holder,

I am writing regarding President Obama's executive order to close the terrorist detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. As Ranking Member of the Homeland Security Committee I have previously made clear my opposition to this decision. The purpose of this letter is to express my concern over recent news reports that unspecified numbers of the 240 suspected terrorists and enemy combatants at Guantanamo may be tried in and housed by the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York which is located in lower Manhattan.

I would strongly oppose transfer of any of these Guantanamo detainees to New York City. Lower Manhattan is, of course, a prime terrorist target – having been attacked in 1993 and 2001 and been the target of a number of foiled plots in recent years. As you know, the Southern District Court House is within walking distance of Ground Zero, City Hall, the Brooklyn Bridge, NYPD Headquarters, Wall Street and the Battery Tunnel. Gratuitously transferring Guantanamo detainees to the Southern District will make New York City that much more of a target. Terrorists have been tried in the Southern District before and likely will be tried there again. But it is reckless to impose the risk of these trials on New York for no good reason.

Because of the gravity and imminence of this matter I request that you advise me at the earliest date as to the plans you have formulated regarding the extensive security, financial and logistical costs associated with the transfer of any of these terrorist/enemy combatants to civilian court districts in New York and throughout the United States.

I understand that my colleague Rep. Frank Wolf has made a similar request to you. I strongly concur in Rep. Wolf's request.

I look forward to your response to these concerns.

Sincerely,

PETER T. KING
Member of Congress

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