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King and Homeland Security Republicans Demand Answers on Obama Administration Plans for Guantanamo Detainees

Washington, D.C. (Friday, April 24, 2009)— Today, U.S. Rep. Peter T. King (R-NY), Ranking Member of the Committee on Homeland Security, and Committee Republicans sent a letter to Attorney General Eric Holder and Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano requesting the Administration release information on how it plans to transfer, prosecute, and possibly release Guantanamo detainees. In February, King led the first House delegation to the Guantanamo Bay detention facility since the President's decision to close the facility within a year.

“One of President Obama's first actions in office was to announce closure of the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba,” King said. “He made this decision without an exit strategy, without a plan of what to do with these 245 enemy combatants once Guantanamo is closed. The Executive Order to close Guantanamo was signed over three months ago, and the American people are still waiting to learn what their government plans to do with these deadly terrorists.”

According to the letter sent to Holder and Napolitano, multiple sources within the Federal government have claimed that the decision has already been made to transfer High Value Detainees from Guantanamo Bay to the United States. In addition, on March 26, 2009 Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair stated that detainees deemed “non-threatening” could be released into the United States and possibly given monetary support from the U.S. government.

“Even President Obama has acknowledged, it is very difficult to determine which detainees, if any, are not truly dangerous individuals,” King said. “As a result, the Department of Defense estimates that over 60 former Guantanamo detainees returned to the battlefield after release. To ensure this does not happen in the future, we are asking the Administration for more information. There are still too many questions and too few answers.”

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