



The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

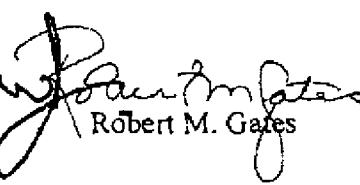
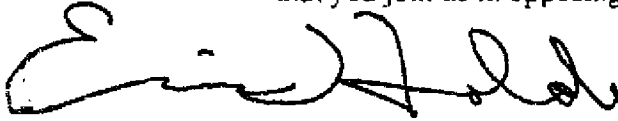
Dear Senators Reid and McConnell:

We write to oppose Senator Inhofe's amendment (No. 2774) to H.R. 3082, the Military Construction, Department of Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2010. This amendment would prohibit the use of funds appropriated or otherwise made available in H.R. 3082 to "construct or modify a facility or facilities in the United States or its territories to permanently or temporarily hold any individual who was detained as of October 1, 2009, at Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba."

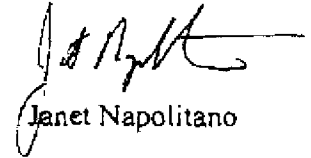
Like the President and numerous others, both Republicans and Democrats, we are convinced that closing the Guantanamo Bay detention center is in the national security interests of the United States. Al Qaeda has repeatedly used the existence of the facility as a recruitment tool. We are convinced that as long as the Guantanamo Bay detention center remains open, our enemies will continue to exploit its existence for this purpose.

We acknowledge that closing Guantanamo has proven difficult, but that is not a reason for the Congress to preclude this important national security objective. At present, we are making progress toward this goal. An interagency team is assessing the suitability of a maximum security prison in Thomson, Illinois, to serve as a detention center for certain Guantanamo Bay detainees who may be transferred to the United States. On Friday, the Department of Justice announced that it will prosecute the alleged 9/11 conspirators in federal court, while the Department of Defense will resume other cases against those allegedly responsible for the USS Cole bombing and other acts of terrorism in military commissions, which have been reformed as a result of the bipartisan passage of the Military Commissions Act of 2009.

We need to get on with the work of enhancing our national security by finally closing the Guantanamo Bay detention center. The Inhofe amendment would have the opposite effect and would likely prevent further progress on this important issue. We ask that you join us in opposing the Inhofe amendment.



Eric H. Holder, Jr. Robert M. Gates



Janet Napolitano