

9/11 Families: Thomson Prison Purchase First Step to Bring Gitmo Detainees to U.S. Soil

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New York, NY, October, 2, 2012—9/11 families strongly object to the Obama administration's plan to purchase Thomson Correctional Facility in Thomson, Illinois without Congressional approval. As stated in our July 27 letter, signed by more than 100 family members, to House Speaker John Boehner, 9/11 families believe this purchase is a back door effort to circumvent Congress and the will of the American people. Though Senator Dick Durbin and Attorney General Eric Holder have denied that the prison would be retrofitted to receive Guantanamo detainees, this would not be the first time the Department of Justice defied Congress in an effort to bring terrorists inside the Homeland.

Recent news that the terrorist attack on the American consulate in Benghazi was led by a former Guantanamo detainee has underscored the dangerous profile of current detainees. They continue to pose a serious national security threat to the U.S., and should not be viewed as political pawns which can be moved from a safe, secure off-shore military installation to the heart of America in order to satisfy a small, left-wing political constituency. This is the same constituency that agitated for the release of prior detainees who have returned to the battlefield and who engage in anti-U.S. propaganda and terrorist recruiting.

Mr. Durbin admitted in today's announcement that the purchase, made in open defiance of the House subcommittee which oversees federal prisons, was unprecedented. Coupled with President Obama's 2011 signing statement on legislation barring funds to transfer Gitmo detainees to the U.S.--calling the legislation "an extreme and risky encroachment on the authority of the executive branch"--we have no confidence that the Obama administration will defer to the wishes of the American people and their elected representatives on the matter of Guantanamo.

This misappropriation of funds and flouting of Congressional authority goes to the very heart of the public's distrust of the Obama administration and the ever-widening gap between what it says and what it does.