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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

October 1, 2009

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The Honorable Eric H. Holder, Jr.
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Ave NW Rm 5111
Washington DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Holder:

It has come to my attention that at least 27 detainees held at Guantanamo Bay have been cleared for release to Yemen. I received official notification about the release of one of these transfers, Alla Ali Bin Ali Ahmed, but was only made aware of the additional 26 Yemenis allegedly cleared for release after reading a Reuters report titled, "Obama team clears 75 at Guantanamo for release" on September 28, 2009.

I urge you to reconsider any pending or future releases of detainees to Yemen, particularly in light of the country's deteriorating security and growing al-Qaeda presence. Earlier this week, *Time* magazine reported that "about two-thirds of the country is out of government control," and that "al-Qaeda is turning the lawless mountain areas of Yemen into a new staging area." According to an AFP report today, U.S. counterterrorism officials believe that al-Qaeda's "presence in Yemen threatens to turn that country into a dangerous base for training and plotting attacks."

You will recall the September 2008 al-Qaeda attack on the U.S. Embassy in Yemen using vehicle bombs, rocket-propelled grenades and automatic weapons to mount a coordinated assault, killing 10 guards and civilians. Since that time, al-Qaeda's posture in Yemen has grown stronger with merger of the Saudi and Yemeni arms of al-Qaeda into one group -- al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula -- with Yemen as its base for training and operations.

We have seen the consequences of these developments. Last August, a Yemeni al-Qaeda loyalist denoted a suicide bomb in an attempt to kill Saudi Prince Mohammed bin Nayef. He was able to gain access to the prince by pretending to be an al-Qaeda defector before denoting the explosives. This case is particularly concerning because it demonstrates an evolution and sophistication in the type of attacks being planned and launched by al-Qaeda leaders in Yemen.

While I continue to be troubled that, according to the Reuters report, the detainees at Guantanamo Bay currently have more information about their release than do member of Congress or the American people, it is of particular concern that detainees who have spent the last eight years living among the most dangerous terrorists in the world, including Khalid Sheik

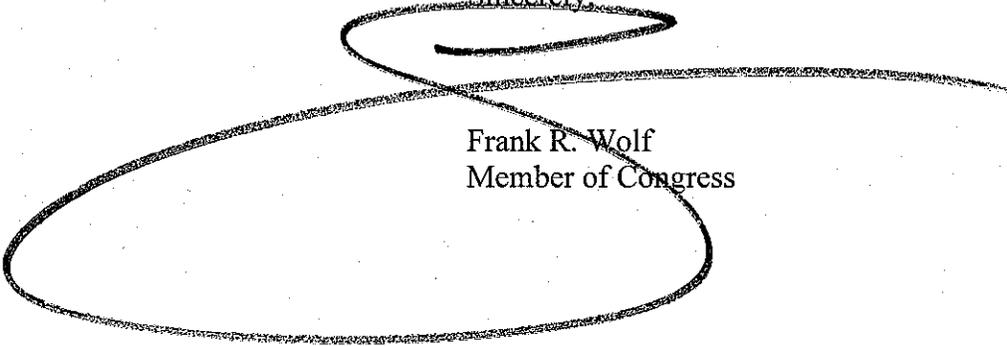
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Mohammed, the mastermind of the 9/11 attacks and who beheaded journalist Daniel Pearl, would be released into countries with a strong al-Qaeda presence. Such a disposition is only adding kerosene to a fire.

Although we have clear differences of opinion on how best to deal with the situation in Guantanamo Bay, I think we can both agree that a rushed release of terrorist detainees to countries with a strong al-Qaeda presence is not in America's best interest. I strongly urge you to halt all transfers of detainees to unstable countries, including Yemen, Afghanistan, and Algeria, until evidence is provided to this Congress demonstrating that the detainee can be properly received and monitored in the receiving country.

I look forward to your response, as well as your responses to my letters to you dated March 13, April 23, May 13, June 8, July 7, July 10, July 17, July 22, and July 31. Please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff member, Thomas Culligan, at 202-225-5136.

Sincerely,



Frank R. Wolf
Member of Congress

This is very important
for the safety of
our country.