

**FRANK R. WOLF**  
10TH DISTRICT, VIRGINIA



241 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-4610  
(202) 225-5136

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEES:

RANKING MEMBER - COMMERCE-JUSTICE-SCIENCE

TRANSPORTATION-HUD

CO-CHAIR - TOM LANTOS  
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

13873 PARK CENTER ROAD  
SUITE 130  
HERNDON, VA 20171  
(703) 709-6800  
(800) 945-9653 (IN STATE)

110 NORTH CAMERON STREET  
WINCHESTER, VA 22601  
(540) 667-0990  
(800) 850-3463 (IN STATE)

wolf.house.gov

# Congress of the United States House of Representatives

November 2, 2009

The Honorable Barack H. Obama  
The President  
The White House  
Washington DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I write to share my special order statement, delivered on the House floor earlier today, regarding the dangers of releasing detainees from Guantanamo Bay to unstable countries, such as Yemen. This is a dangerous proposition and I am concerned that such a release will ultimately endanger the U.S. and American lives -- military and civilian.

According to a recent *Time* magazine article, "About two-thirds of [Yemen] is out of government control," and "under pressure in Saudi Arabia and Iraq, al-Qaeda is turning the lawless mountain areas of Yemen into a new staging area." Another AFP report last month stated that 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 also recall that in September 2008 al-Qaeda terrorists in Yemen attacked the U.S. Embassy with 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 the 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.

*The Christian Science Monitor* reported last month of the rising threat to Saudi Arabia from the deteriorating security situation in Yemen. Saudi police prevented a bomb attack on October 13, and one of the perpetrators was a former Guantanamo detainee who entered the country from Yemen.

I have read one of the biographies of the Yemeni detainees held at Guantanamo Bay and it was frightening. I urge you to halt the transfer or release of detainees to Yemen immediately.

Additionally, I respectfully request an update with the regard to the status of Yemeni detainees held at Guantanamo Bay as soon as possible. Please do not hesitate to contact me in my Washington, D.C. office at 202-225-5136.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

Frank R. Wolf  
Member of Congress

*Please look into who we are sending back to Yemen. They are dangerous.*

**The Hon. Frank R. Wolf**  
**Five Minute Special Order on Yemen**  
**November 2, 2009**

To meet the President's deadline for closing Guantanamo, there has been a rush during the past two months to transfer as many detainees as possible to their home countries, or to third countries that would accept them.

On September 26, the Administration announced that a detainee named Alla Ali Bin Ali Ahmed was transferred to Yemen. The announcement did not reveal the terms of his transfer, but said that the United States has coordinated with the Yemeni Government to ensure that the transfer took place under "appropriate security measures".

There is an ongoing, and VERY REAL concern about detainees returning to terrorism. According to data from the Department of Defense, at least 15 percent of former Guantanamo detainees have returned to terrorist activity.

The 15 percent that have returned to terrorism following release were merely those detainees who were perceived to be low security risks. That's why they were released years ago.

The detainees pending release now are the worst of the worst. Their recidivism rate may be much higher than 15 percent.

If these detainees are to be transferred, they should go only to governments that are willing and able to try, detain, rehabilitate or monitor them.

Yemen does not meet that standard.

An economic crisis, domestic security challenges, and Islamic terrorism are right now threatening to overwhelm the Yemeni government.

The FBI Director recently highlighted Yemen as an area of "persistent Al-Qaeda activity".

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula openly advertises their intent to attack the United States and our overseas interests, and is able to work in relative freedom in Yemen.

Counterterrorism measures in Saudi Arabia have forced extremists to seek refuge abroad, and many have relocated to Yemen's ungoverned areas.

Known al-Qaeda terrorists, including USS Cole bombers, have escaped from prison in Yemen to return to terrorism.

The Christian Science Monitor reported last month of the rising threat to Saudi Arabia from the deteriorating security situation in Yemen.

Saudi police prevented a bomb attack on October 13, and one of the perpetrators was a former Guantanamo detainee who entered the country from Yemen.

The bottom line is that terrorist detainees should NOT be sent to Yemen where Al-Qaeda operates freely and the Government appears unable to control their actions and movements.

Reuters has reported that the Obama Administration has already cleared 75 of the remaining detainees for transfer abroad, and that that list includes 26 detainees from Yemen.

Based on what we know now -- this Administration is planning to send MORE, PERHAPS MANY MORE, detainees to this lawless country, increasing the risk of future terrorist attacks on Americans.

The Administration should immediately terminate the return of detainees to Yemen, and the Congressional Committees of jurisdiction should investigate and demand a full justification.

The release of ANY detainee to Yemen represents a potentially serious threat to the United States and US citizens – both military and civilian.

Congress needs to hold hearings and be directly involved in the oversight of detention and release of dangerous detainees held at Guantanamo Bay.

As of now, the Administration is going down a dangerous road -- and Congress is idly allowing them to make these misguided decisions.