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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-0916

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The Honorable Chuck Hagel
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

Secretary Hagel

I am writing to ask how the Pentagon plans to ensure that the release of five high-level Taliban terrorists will not threaten American soldiers or civilians.

The release of these Taliban extremists from Guantanamo Bay, Cuba raises serious questions about negotiating with terrorists and, more immediately, the threat posed by these five high-risk terrorists.

Among the Afghan detainees released from Guantanamo include two senior militant commanders tied to operations that killed innocent Americans. In fact, according to assessments by the Pentagon in 2008, all five detainees were considered "*high risk, as they may pose a threat to the U.S., its interests and allies.*" It is no wonder why the Taliban has made several attempts over the past 10 years to free these terrorists from custody.

Why now are they no longer considered a high-risk threat and their release suddenly justifiable?

Therefore, I respectfully ask that the Department of Defense provide my office with answers to the following:

- 1) What measures have been put in place to ensure these terrorists don't simply return to the secret Taliban hideaways to plot reprisals against the United States and its allies?
- 2) How can we be certain they will not begin to recruit and replenish Taliban forces?
- 3) Do we understand the consequences for the rest of our forces of a policy based on negotiating with terrorists for the release of hostages or prisoners? And does that policy put in danger American troops stationed abroad?

It is imperative for the safety of Americans and our national security that the questions above be answered. I look forward to your response and thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Vern Buchanan
Member of Congress

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