

National Security Leaders Support Closing Guantanamo

- ✓ **John Brennan, CIA Director.** “The prison at Guantánamo Bay undermines our national security, and our nation will be more secure the day when that prison is finally and responsibly closed. For all of the reasons mentioned above, we will not send more individuals to the prison at Guantánamo. And we continue to urge Congress to repeal these restrictions and allow our experienced counterterrorism professionals to have the flexibility they need to make individualized, informed decisions about where to bring terrorists to justice and when and where to transfer those whom it is no longer in our interest to detain.”¹
- ✓ **Ash Carter, Secretary of Defense.** “I’ve said from the day I was nominated to be secretary of defense I think, on balance, it would be a good thing to close Gitmo.”²
- ✓ **John Kerry, Secretary of State.** “The continued operation of the Guantanamo facility damages U.S. diplomatic relations and our standing in the world. It undermines America’s indispensable leadership on human rights and other critical foreign policy and national security matters. In particular, the Guantanamo detention facility consistently impedes joint counterterrorism efforts with friends and allies.”³
- ✓ **Former Secretaries of State.** Former U.S. Secretaries of State, Henry Kissinger, James Baker, Warren Christopher, Madeleine Albright and Colin Powell, said the president should move quickly to close the military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. All agreed that closing the prison would bolster America’s image abroad.⁴
- ✓ **General Colin Powell, former Secretary of State.** “I wish that President Obama had been able to close Guantanamo right away and not asked the Congress for permission. We still are caught up with these trials in Guantanamo that I think would have been handled in civilian courts with the proper authority.”⁵
- ✓ **Chuck Hagel, former Secretary of Defense.** “The President’s goal is to cease detention operations at the detention facilities at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. I fully support that goal.”⁶
- ✓ **Robert Gates, former Secretary of Defense.** “I think it is possible to close it. It should be a high priority.”⁷
- ✓ **Admiral Dennis Blair, former Director of National Intelligence.** “I agree with the President that the detention center at Guantanamo has become a damaging symbol to the world and that it must be closed. It is a rallying cry for terrorist recruitment and harmful to our national security, so closing it is important for our national security.”⁸
- ✓ **General Martin Dempsey, former Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff.** “I’ve been in the group that believes it’s in our national interest to close Guantanamo. It does create a psychological scar on our national values.”⁹
- ✓ **General David Petraeus, former CIA Director, former Commander, CENTCOM.** “Gitmo has caused us problems, there’s no question about it. I oversee a region in which the existence of Gitmo has indeed been used by the enemy against us. We have not been without missteps or mistakes in our activities since 9/11. And again, Gitmo is a lingering reminder for the use of some in that regard.”¹⁰

¹ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/09/16/remarks-john-o-brennan-strengthening-our-security-adhering-our-values-an>

² <http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/ash-carter-closing-guantanamo-bay-would-be-a-good-thing/article/2581311>

³ <https://www.scribd.com/doc/185248726/Kerry-letter-on-GTMO-NDAA-November-2013>

⁴ <http://articles.latimes.com/2008/mar/28/nation/na-advice28>

⁵ <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1205/26/sitroom.01.html>

⁶ <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-113hrg80754/html/CHRG-113hrg80754.htm>

⁷ <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/defense-secretary-robert-gates-closing-guantanamo-bay-prison-priority-article-1.355127>

⁸ http://www.dni.gov/testimonies/Nomination_1.pdf

⁹ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/01/11/martin-dempsey-guantanamo_n_6451668.html

¹⁰ <http://thinkprogress.org/security/2009/05/29/43073/petraeus-values/>

- Admiral Mike Mullen, former Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff.** "I've advocated for a long time now that it needs to be closed ... Well, the concern I've had about Guantanamo in these wars is it has been a symbol, and one which has been a recruiting symbol for those extremists and jihadists who would fight us. So and I think that centers -- you know, that's the heart of the concern for Guantanamo's continued existence, in which I spoke to a few years ago, the need to close it."¹¹
- Major General Michael R. Lehnert, former JTF Guantanamo Commander.** "Guantanamo was a mistake. History will reflect that. It was created in the early days as a consequence of fear, anger and political expediency. It ignored centuries of rule of law and international agreements. It does not make us safer and it sullies who we are as a nation. The goal of terrorism is to change us. As long as we allow Guantanamo to continue, our enemies can claim that they accomplished that goal. It is time to close Guantanamo. American values, not Guantanamo, will defeat terrorism in the end."
- Colonel Terry Carrico, former JTF Guantanamo Commander.** "I think it should be closed because it served its purpose."¹²
- General Jim Jones, former National Security Advisor.** "The Obama administration inherited a situation that - Guantanamo - that was intolerable. The President is absolutely committed to making sure that we recognize the rule of law principle, that we don't make America less safe."¹³
- Brent Scowcroft, former National Security Advisor.** "We have come across as unilateral and authoritarian," he said. "And the psychology surrounding the Guantanamo Bay subject may be the worst blow to the image of the United States, ever."¹⁴
- President George W. Bush.** "The difficulty of conducting trials made it harder to meet a goal I had set early in my second term: closing the prison at Guantanamo in a responsible way. While I believe opening Guantanamo after 9/11 was necessary, the detention facility had become a propaganda tool for our enemies and a distraction for our allies. I worked to find a way to close the prison without compromising security. By the time I left office, the number of detainees at Guantanamo had dropped from nearly 800 to fewer than 250. My hope is that many of those remaining will stand trial for their crimes."¹⁵
- Senator John McCain (R-AZ).** "I've always been in favor of closing Guantanamo because of the image that Guantanamo has in the world."¹⁶
- Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA).** "I know what is happening. I also know that Guantanamo contributes nothing positively. It contributes nothing that a federal prison could not do better. It contributes nothing that a federal court could not do better."¹⁷
- Senator McCain and Senator Feinstein.** "We continue to believe that it is in our national interest to end detention at Guantanamo, with a safe and orderly transition of the detainees to other locations."¹⁸
- Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC).** "Four-hundred thousand German prisoners were housed in the United States during World War II. ... I just don't buy the argument that our nation cannot deal with 250 [Guantanamo detainees]."¹⁹

¹¹ <http://abcnews.go.com/ThisWeek/story?id=7664072&page=1#.UebEaKz0-xM>

¹² <http://readersupportednews.org/news-section2/328-121/9322-gitmo-commander-close-it-down>

¹³ <http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2009/s2570916.htm>

¹⁴ <http://bangordailynews.com/2009/02/21/news/foreign-policy-adviser-scowcroft-says-us-isnt-done-yet/>

¹⁵ <https://books.google.com/books?id=iUJTvsUGWOcC&pg=PA166&lpg=PA166&dq=%22decision+points%22+guantanamo&source=bl&ots=11WdyhQV mL&sig=6LlcEOKNdV3eIVTvg1DnCLE4NU&hl=en&sa=X&ei=V6LKVN2ZN9O6ogS09IDgDg&ved=0CCwQ6AEwAg#v=onepage&q=%22decision%20points%22%20guantanamo&f=false>

¹⁶ <http://www.defenseone.com/politics/2015/05/mccain-brokers-compromise-that-would-let-obama-close-gitmo/112867/>

¹⁷ <http://www.c-span.org/video/?314167-1/senators-debate-closure-guantanamo-bay-prison&start=4148>

¹⁸ http://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2013/06/08/McCain-Feinstein-call-for-closing-of-Guantanamo/UPI-20351370726313/

¹⁹ <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0509/22843.html>