



ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
2900 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-2900

FEB 5 2009

GLOBAL SECURITY
AFFAIRS

Mr. Larry Cox
Executive Director
Amnesty International USA
5 Penn Plaza
New York City, New York 10001

Dear Mr. Cox:

As you are aware, the President has directed the Secretary of Defense to undertake an immediate review to ensure that all detainees at Guantanamo are held "in conformity with all applicable laws governing the conditions of such confinement, including Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions." The President directed that this review be completed within 30 days.

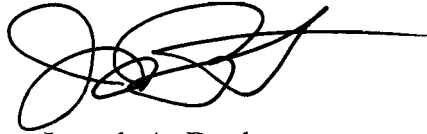
Secretary of Defense Gates has directed Admiral Patrick Walsh, Vice Chief of Naval Operations, to conduct this review and to provide him a report of his review by February 17. Admiral Walsh has formed his team and its efforts are well underway. As part of his review, Admiral Walsh has asked that I offer you an opportunity to submit in writing your specific views and/or concerns regarding detention operations at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

I appreciate that your organization has a number of concerns regarding Guantanamo Bay and the detention of combatants in the war on terror generally, but please understand that many of those concerns are beyond the scope of this review – Department of Defense compliance with all applicable laws governing the conditions of confinement at Guantanamo, including Common Article 3. Should you wish to provide comments, I respectfully request that they be limited to this issue and that they be as specific as possible. Given the current time frame of this review, I ask that you provide these comments to my office no later than 5:00 pm on February 6. For expediency, you may provide your response electronically to Ms. Sandra Hodgkinson, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Detainee Affairs, at Sandra.Hodgkinson@osd.mil, and to Mr. Alan Liotta, the Principal Director of the Office of Detainee Affairs, at alan.liotta@osd.mil. They will ensure that your comments are provided immediately to Admiral Walsh's team.



The Department of Defense looks forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Joseph A. Benkert