

January 28, 2009

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I write to express my opposition to any potential plans to transfer terror suspects to federal prison or military facilities in the state of Colorado. I understand that you desire to move forward with the Special Interagency Task Force on Detainee Disposition to determine the legal implications of your recent executive order directing the closure of the detention facilities at Guantanamo Bay. I must insist, however, that you not transfer these suspected terrorists into facilities in the State of Colorado, whether prior to trial or after conviction.

The United States Penitentiary Administrative Maximum (ADX) is a dedicated maximum security facility located in Florence, Colorado. ADX Florence can house 490 inmates and currently has a dedicated population of 489, leaving room for only one additional inmate. Therefore, transferring more than one detainee to ADX Florence is not possible unless criminals already located at the facility are transferred to other facilities, which are not as secure as ADX Florence. The next highest security institutions, known as United States Penitentiaries, would seem like the next logical civilian location for transferring federal inmates or detainees. In 2007, however, penitentiaries across the United States were operating at 55 percent above capacity, making them already overburdened and unable to house maximum security level criminals or suspected terrorists. The high security United States Penitentiary in Florence, CO, for instance, is operating at 164.69% of capacity.

Another concern involves the mixing of terror suspects and domestic inmates. Housing detainees in the general population could have negative consequences. In fact, in a letter dated September 10, 2007, Bureau of Prisons Director, Harley Lappin, stated that "due to the unique status of enemy combatants and the probable lack of information about these individuals' histories of violent behavior or disruptive activities . . . these enemy combatants would most likely be confined in special units, segregated from the general inmate population." Having to segregate these suspected terrorists from the general population will only increase the burden on the detention facility and will even further limit the ability of these facilities to house domestic criminals.

In addition, I am extremely concerned about security risks to the men and women who would guard suspected or convicted terrorists, many of whom have sworn to kill Americans whenever and wherever possible. The risk to the communities that house these facilities would also be unacceptable.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter. As you make future decisions regarding the status of these detainees, for the reasons stated above I urge you in the strongest possible terms not to move the terror suspects or convicted terrorists to any location in Colorado.

Sincerely,

Doug Lamborn