

Talking Points for the Top Counterterrorism Issues



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Polling from early September 2016 shows national security and terrorism is a top priority for voters.¹ In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in Orlando, Paris, San Bernardino, Brussels, and Nice, countering terrorism will continue to be a major issue of concern and one that needs to be effectively addressed. As the election season goes on, policymakers must respond to the fundamental questions on U.S.

counterterrorism policy. In this memo, we provide answers to and talking points on the most pressing questions likely to be asked on U.S. counterterrorism efforts. This memo reviews some of the same questions from our “Talking Points for the Top National Security Issues” memo, but focuses more specifically on counterterrorism. Also included in the Debate Book under the “Politics of National Security” section is a memo that explains what public opinion is on these questions.

#1: Strategy to Defeat ISIS

Q: ISIS has built up its forces and gained ground in Iraq and Syria since 2014. What is the best strategy to defeat ISIS?

A: Americans are rightly concerned about ISIS and the awful things they do and stand for. As Americans see and hear more about this terrorist group, here is what they also need to know: The U.S. has a tough and smart strategy to degrade and defeat ISIS. Strikes against ISIS continue to increase, the Iraqi government has regained the key cities of Ramadi, Sinjar, and Tikrit from the terrorists, and U.S. forces have killed or captured key ISIS leaders.

- The U.S. is leading a 66 nation coalition against ISIS through airstrikes and assisting local ground forces.
- Coalition forces are averaging 20 airstrikes per day against ISIS in Iraq and Syria, killing more than 45,000² ISIS fighters since strikes began in 2014.
- Going forward, the U.S. must accelerate its efforts in leading the coalition against ISIS through airstrikes on ISIS targets, as well as assisting Iraqi security forces and vetted Syrian opposition groups to push back ISIS on the ground.

These efforts are working, but it will take time. On the other hand, there is a reckless way to go: Donald Trump wants to indiscriminately bomb the Middle East and send U.S. troops into a civil war. This hasn't been done since World War II. These ideas would unnecessarily put our military servicemen and women in harm's way and would result in civilian casualties in the Middle East.

2: U.S. Ground Troops Against ISIS

Q: ISIS continues to hold significant areas of Iraq and Syria and it's clear that airstrikes alone are not making enough of an impact to destroy them. Should the U.S. send in ground troops to dismantle and defeat ISIS?

A: The question is: should the U.S. get entangled in a civil war? Americans are angry and fearful of ISIS because they are despicable terrorists. But here is what they need to know: The U.S. is enforcing a tough and smart strategy by leading coalition airstrikes, training local ground forces to take the

fight to ISIS, and using U.S. special operations forces for targeted raids. Getting involved in a civil war just won't work. It's expensive, costs lives, and will leave us in worse shape. We should continue attacking ISIS from the air and enabling local forces to defeat ISIS on the ground.

- We can target and eliminate terrorist threats without getting dragged into a civil war.
- This is not our fight alone. Our Arab partners must also provide the resources to stabilize the region against terrorists.
- Combined with increased U.S. special operations forces and intensified coalition airstrikes, regional ground forces will have the tools necessary to push back and defeat ISIS on the ground.

I oppose the reckless position of Donald Trump, who wants to send U.S. ground troops into a civil war and leave our military without an exit strategy.

#3: Homegrown Terrorists

Q: Recent domestic terrorist attacks, like in Orlando, New York, and New Jersey, have caused alarm about the threat ISIS can play in influencing homegrown terrorists. What should be done to prevent future terrorist attacks in the United States?

A: We will continue to do everything possible to seek out and stop homegrown terror in its tracks. We'll cut off ISIS propaganda, prevent terrorist recruitment, and partner with local leaders to safeguard their communities.

- Our number one priority is protecting Americans. Of course we have to improve our defense of the homeland. State and local law enforcement agencies on the frontlines need increased resources, training, and better coordination to fight domestic terrorism.
- We need a strategy, working alongside social media companies, which prevents ISIS recruitment and blocks their online propaganda.

- We should also develop a local partnership strategy that brings together community leaders, law enforcement, and civil society to prevent homegrown terrorism in at-risk communities.
- We must remember that the numbers of Americans becoming influenced by ISIS ideology and traveling to Iraq and Syria are few – about 250 – especially compared to how many Europeans are joining ISIS – at about 5,000.³

Now, there are some other ideas, like Donald Trump's reckless position to ban Muslims from entering our country, that not only betray U.S. principles, but will not work. It's extreme at a time when we need to be smart. Muslims make up nearly one quarter of the global population. Banning them would alienate this entire group and potentially lead to radicalization. It would make it impossible to use diplomacy and work with important Muslim allies like King Abdullah of Jordan and activist Malala Yousafzai from entering our country. We need allies like these to win this fight against ISIS; we can't make it impossible to work with the U.S. Citizens from major Muslim countries like Malaysia and Indonesia would also be banned. His support for proposals to require Muslim-Americans to carry identification labeling them with their religion would make our Founding Fathers spin in their graves. His reckless ideas are against our principles, against our Constitution, alienate allies, and won't defeat ISIS.

#4: No-Fly Zone

Q: Some experts have suggested a no-fly zone over Syria would advance U.S. efforts to defeat ISIS. Do you believe the U.S. should enforce a no-fly zone?

A: Yes, I support it if the current attempts at a ceasefire fail and the peace process collapses. It's a perfect example of a tough and smart strategy. A no-fly zone over northern Syria allows civilians to get access to humanitarian assistance. That helps us in this fight against ISIS because chaos and starvation in Syria is what the terrorists want.

- Enforcing a no-fly zone would let civilians get humanitarian care that has been blocked by Russia and the Assad regime. This could also potentially reduce the refugee flow into Europe.
- A no-fly zone must be coordinated with local ground forces to prevent ISIS and government forces on the ground from blocking access to humanitarian assistance.
- In addition, a no-fly zone could provide the U.S. leverage over Russia and Assad in ending the civil war during the peace process.

The alternative from Donald Trump is reckless and ineffectual: indiscriminate bombing, sending U.S. ground troops into a civil war, and making no distinction between innocent civilians and combatants.

#5: Syria

Q: The ongoing Syrian civil war and arrival of various militia groups and proxy fighters has allowed the region to deteriorate even further into chaos. How can we stabilize Syria? Should Bashar al-Assad leave power?

A: Neither ISIS nor Assad can be allowed to hold power in Syria. We have to be tough and smart in dealing with them. We must intensify existing U.S. efforts to defeat ISIS and pave the way for a political transition away from Assad.

- The U.S. should not become directly entangled in Syria's civil war, but there are many ways it can help stabilize the country and destroy ISIS.
- The civil war in Syria has claimed over 250,000 lives, created more than 4 million refugees and left 6.6 million displaced within Syria. It is becoming increasingly more complex.
- The U.S. must first accelerate its efforts to defeat ISIS, which is a threat to regional stability and U.S. national security.

- UN-led peace talks provide an opportunity for a political and peaceful resolution to the conflict in Syria. However, if they collapse, creating safe corridors through a no-fly zone will provide innocent Syrians access to humanitarian assistance, while providing the international community the time and space needed to find a political solution.

I oppose Donald Trump's reckless suggestion to let ISIS and Assad fight each other and let the U.S. pick up the pieces. He fundamentally misunderstands foreign policy, arguing he would "bomb the hell out of ISIS" ⁴ and that Russia would go after ISIS in Syria. Russia's withdrawal from Syria shows it is interested only in propping up Assad, not attacking ISIS.

#6: AUMF

Q: The President has called on Congress to pass a new Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) against ISIS. But Congress has stalled on this front, and the President continues to rely on the authority provided by previous authorizations. Should Congress pass a new AUMF to address ISIS?

A: Yes, this is essential to whether our future policy will be tough and smart or reckless and ineffectual. Here's the way we should do it: we should specifically authorize U.S. action against ISIS, limit it to the battlefield, include reporting requirements to Congress, and have an expiration date with the possibility of renewal.

- ISIS is a serious threat to the U.S. and its allies. The Administration has said defeating ISIS will be a long-term effort and it is important that Congress weighs in.
- Congress must pass a new AUMF, one that specifically addresses ISIS. Our troops in the field need to know that Congress has their backs against ISIS and that the country is united in this effort.

- Congress should also include a broader set of policy objectives in the region to accompany the AUMF so the U.S. has a plan to ensure long-term stability in the region after the defeat of ISIS.

I oppose the reckless position of Donald Trump, who wants to indiscriminately bomb the region, kill innocent civilians, and send U.S. ground troops into a civil war. He ignores the rule of law and has no strategy in place to defeat ISIS, encourage stability in the region, or work with Congress in authorizing U.S. action.

#7: Iraq

Q: After the Obama Administration withdrew troops from Iraq, the country spiraled into sectarian violence. Iraq was unable to defend its cities against ISIS and is still struggling to take back territory. What should the U.S. do to stabilize Iraq?

A: We must lead coalition partners against ISIS with airstrikes and providing military assistance and training to Iraqi forces to take back territory from ISIS – which is what we are doing now. Going forward, the U.S. must increase security assistance, get the Iraqi government to stop discriminating against certain Muslim sects, and help build Iraq's capacity to defend its borders.

- ISIS's hold on Iraqi territory shrunk by 45%, with losses in Ramadi, Sinjar, and Tikrit, and they have not retaken any more land.
- U.S. and coalition forces have been training Iraqi military forces against ISIS since 2014. There are currently about 5,000 U.S. military advisers and special operation forces on the ground in Iraq, providing the necessary training to Iraqi forces to take back territory from ISIS, and mounting attacks on ISIS leaders.

- The Iraqi central government must maintain and encourage inclusive policies that don't alienate Iraqi Sunnis and Kurds. The U.S. has been providing Iraq with significant aid to boost their military forces and promote good governance. This assistance will have to be increased to ensure Iraq doesn't fall along sectarian divides and has the capacity to secure its people going forward.

I oppose the reckless position of Donald Trump, who supports sending U.S. ground troops in Iraq and putting our military in harm's way. His reckless policies unnecessarily alienate and insult our Muslim allies who are fighting ISIS alongside the U.S.

#8: Arming Moderate Forces Against ISIS

Q: There are many forces fighting against ISIS, like the Kurdish Peshmerga and moderate opposition groups, who can be the driving force behind ISIS's defeat. Why isn't the U.S. doing more to arm these groups against ISIS?

A: The U.S. is arming many of those groups, but only those who have been vetted, implementing a tough and smart strategy by providing them weapons, equipment, and training. Once again, Republicans argue we need to do things we are already doing.

- The U.S. is currently providing weapons and equipment to vetted Syrian opposition groups and arming Kurdish Peshmerga forces in coordination with Iraq and other coalition forces.
- There are many groups on the ground fighting ISIS, but the U.S. needs to be careful in vetting which forces receive arms and training. Some opposition groups have extremist elements and varying priorities in Iraq and Syria.
- The U.S. must continue to provide these carefully vetted groups the resources they need to defeat ISIS.

I oppose the reckless suggestions made by Donald Trump to indiscriminately bomb the region and inflict civilian casualties. I do not support his call for putting U.S. ground troops in the Middle East to take out ISIS.

#9: Refugees

Q: The terrorist attacks in Paris ignited fears in the U.S. that ISIS could use refugee status to travel and carry out attacks here. Should we stop allowing refugees to enter the U.S.?

A: We can do this right and we can do this safely. Already, the U.S. thoroughly vets refugees to enter the country, including a stringent 18-24 month vetting process. It's important that Americans know that we don't do this in any way like Europe.

- It's understandable that Americans are afraid. The Paris attacks were a heinous and reprehensible attack on innocent civilians.
- The U.S. has an incredibly robust vetting system for processing refugee applications. Refugees go through an 18 to 24 month screening process with several U.S. agencies, including the National Counterterrorism Center, the FBI's Terrorist Screening Center, the State Department, the Defense Department and the Homeland Security Department.
- Terrorists are highly unlikely to use the refugee system to enter the U.S. – it would take too long and the vigorous vetting system would prevent them from getting in.

Donald Trump's proposed ban on Muslims is meant to incite hysteria, not solve any problems. These are desperate people, fleeing near certain death, rape, and torture at the hands of our real enemy: ISIS. Almost one-quarter of the global population is Muslim. We must not alienate an entire religious group, one that also happens to be our most important ally in fighting terrorism.

#10: Visa Waiver Program

Q: The Visa Waiver Program allows terrorists in Europe to easily travel to the U.S. without a visa. What is being done to address this gap in security?

A: We've tightened this up. The U.S. is implementing, through recent changes in the Visa Waiver Program, a requirement for certain dual citizens to apply for a visa and go through additional screening before being allowed to enter the country. We recognized the problem and we didn't get hysterical – we got smart and formed a bipartisan solution.

- After the Paris attacks, Congress changed the Visa Waiver Program to close these gaps.
- These changes prevent travelers with dual citizenship from Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Syria, Libya, Somalia, and Yemen, or travelers who have visited these countries in the last five years, from entering the U.S. without a visa and additional screening. This will ensure the Department of Homeland Security does a thorough investigation of these travelers who wish to enter the U.S when they apply for a visa.
- The Department of Homeland Security and State Department must continue to be vigilant in screening all visa applicants to ensure potential terrorists do not enter our borders.

I oppose Donald Trump's reckless ban on Muslims from entering the country. Banning Muslims would disrupt U.S. diplomacy, hurt tourism, go against our principles, and prevent Muslims like King Abdullah of Jordan and activist Malala Yousafzai from entering our country. Citizens from countries like Malaysia and Indonesia would be banned from entering the U.S. Donald Trump's reckless ideas will only hurt U.S. interests

#11: ISIS in Libya

Q: ISIS has spread to Libya, with estimates of 6,500 fighters. Do you support U.S. action against ISIS in Libya?

A: We must deny ISIS safe havens from which they can attack the U.S. Right now we are hitting ISIS in Libya with airstrikes and drone operations in order to prevent just that.

- U.S. and coalition forces should continue targeted airstrikes to destroy ISIS training camps and prevent them from carrying out attacks across the region and establishing a safe haven in Libya.
- ISIS cannot be allowed to jeopardize Libya's political unification process. The UN-backed unity government is key to Libya's stability and will contribute to ISIS's ultimate defeat in Libya.
- This strategy has proven to be successful in pushing back ISIS gains in Libya, especially in the ISIS stronghold, Sirte. The U.S. and unity government forces must continue this momentum to fully defeat ISIS in Libya.

This is another country that Donald Trump would be indiscriminately bombing to get at ISIS, further draining U.S. resources across the Middle East and North Africa, and likely hitting innocent civilians. It's reckless and ineffectual.

#12: Terrorists and Guns

Q: Do you support changing our gun laws to prohibit anyone on a terrorist watch-list from purchasing or receiving a firearm?

A: If you buy a gun, you should go through a background check. What's so hard about that? Nearly 24 million people underwent one last year. It doesn't infringe on anyone's rights; let's close the loophole that allows terrorists and criminals to sidestep it. That is completely consistent with Second Amendment rights, which I support strongly.

- Right now, a known or suspected terrorist can purchase a gun from a dealer, at a gun show, or online. Al Qaeda has called on potential recruits in the U.S. to exploit this weakness, telling them “You can go down to a gun show at the local convention center...what are you waiting for?”⁵
- No fly, no buy: If we think someone is too dangerous to fly, we should not let them buy a deadly weapon.
- Congress must pass a law preventing those on terrorist watch-lists from buying weapons, and close loopholes that allow them to buy them online or at gun shows without background checks.

Unlike Donald Trump, I don't believe the Second Amendment extends to terrorists, criminals, and those who are dangerously mentally ill.

#13: Al Qaeda

Q: The Administration claims we've nearly defeated al Qaeda, but the organization maintains a strong presence in Yemen, has an affiliate amid the civil war in Syria, and may have inspired the recent New York City bomber. Is al Qaeda still a threat against the United States?

A: Yes, al Qaeda is a threat and we can't let up, but let's be clear: al Qaeda has been diminished. It is a shadow of its former self because we've been tough and smart. Bin Laden is dead. We've taken out many of their top leaders. We've riddled them with drone strikes. But we're not going to let up on them or on ISIS.

- Since 9/11, the U.S. killed Osama bin Laden, detained 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheik Mohammed, and neutralized many al Qaeda lieutenants. Effective military action against al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan has wiped out its core leaders and destroyed their safe havens.

- The U.S. continues to carry out operations against al Qaeda around the world. In February, a U.S. drone strike killed several Al Qaeda fighters in Yemen, including a leading field commander. In 2015, the U.S. killed several al Qaeda leadership figures, including the second in command, Nasir al-Wuyashi, who was in charge of al Qaeda's operations in Yemen.
- We must continue to increase the pressure and conduct operations against al Qaeda and their affiliates.

Donald Trump's reckless remarks against Muslims is hurting us. He is now a recruitment tool for al Qaeda and other terrorist groups. He fundamentally misunderstands foreign policy, arguing he would "bomb the hell out of ISIS,"⁶ which would treat civilians and terrorists alike, and actually strengthen ISIS by driving more recruits to their cause.

#14: Afghanistan

Q: The White House recently announced that 8,400 U.S. troops would remain in Afghanistan instead of decreasing to 5,500. Should the U.S. withdraw troops from Afghanistan?

A: We have a small number of troops remaining in Afghanistan at the advice of our military commanders who are certain that the security situation requires it. We're winding down the war, but we have to be smart about it and continue monitoring the security situation and listening to our military leaders.

- Taliban insurgents have been increasingly successful in their attacks and the security situation in Afghanistan has been worsening.
- In the past few months, U.S. military officials assessed the security in Afghanistan and recommended that the U.S. maintain troops in Afghanistan.
- We need to closely observe the security situation in Afghanistan to fully assess security needs on the ground.

I oppose the reckless calls by Donald Trump to “bomb the hell out of ISIS,”⁷ which would likely result in civilian deaths and alienate our most effective allies in the fight against ISIS.

#15: Drones

Q: There are reports that the Obama Administration has been using drones to eliminate terrorist targets in Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia for several years. Do you support the continued use of targeted drone strikes to kill terrorists?

A: Yes, because it is tough and smart. We have the surgical ability to take out terrorists without killing civilians. That’s because we have the greatest and most sophisticated military in the world. It’s putting our enemies on the defensive. Let’s stick with it.

- Drone strikes, in combination with good intelligence, are an effective way to kill terrorists and limit civilian casualties.
- These strikes are entirely different from the indiscriminate carpet bombing Republicans are calling for, which would incur civilian casualties.
- Drone strikes allow us to keep our troops out of harm’s way while ensuring U.S. national security, limiting civilian deaths, and saving U.S. taxpayers money.
- We do need more transparency, and so I believe drone operations should be moved from the CIA to the Defense Department.

I oppose the reckless call by Donald Trump to indiscriminately bomb ISIS – which would likely result in civilian deaths – and put U.S. ground troops in harm’s way. Trump fundamentally misunderstands U.S. military capabilities and how modern weapons have evolved.

#16: Defense Budget

Q: Cuts in the defense budget made by the Obama Administration have made the U.S. vulnerable to terrorist

attacks. Budget cuts have gutted the military and put our nation in harm's way. Do you support cutting the defense budget?

A: What defense cuts are you talking about? This year's budget is bigger than last year's. The President is proposing bigger defense budgets than President Reagan did. This talk about a weak military is an absolute myth. We have, by leaps and bounds, the largest, ablest, and most sophisticated military in history.

- I fully support the military's request for a 50% increase in funding for the fight to defeat ISIS. We have to use every tool at our disposal to defeat ISIS and keep Americans safe. That's why, in addition to the military, I'll fight for more funding for counterterrorism programs at the Department of Homeland Security, State Department, and the FBI.
- I believe that sequestration is terrible. While Congress has used band-aids to lessen the pain to the military, I would fight to eliminate sequestration altogether, and give our military the financial resources and certainty they need to keep protecting the nation.
- The bottom line is we must continue to maintain a strong defense and ensure our forces have the resources to protect the homeland and defeat terrorists.

First, Donald Trump is wrong about our military and the defense budget. Second, Republican sequestration efforts are the biggest danger to future spending. Third, Donald Trump's reckless ideas to build the military with less money are a fallacy. In a time of competing threats ranging from ISIS, to North Korea, to Russian aggression in Ukraine, now is not the time to be cutting our defense budget.

#17: Torture

Q: Donald Trump has said he'd encourage the use of waterboarding and other harsh interrogation methods against terror suspects. Do you support torture?

A: Of course it's torture and we should never use it to gather intelligence. Torture works in movies, but it doesn't work in real life. That's not my opinion, that's what our intelligence and military experts say. People who have been tortured have given false information to make the torture stop. And we don't find out the information is bad until after we've spent millions of dollars and lost lives chasing false leads.

Whether it's on humanitarian grounds or just being smart about winning the war on terror, I'm opposed to torture.

- Water-boarding is torture because it inflicts "severe mental pain or suffering,"⁸ which distorts memories and is unnecessarily cruel. I agree with our military and intelligence experts that we should never use it to gather intelligence.
- Torture doesn't work. We get much more reliable information from standard interrogations conducted by our experienced career interrogators.
- In addition, torture fundamentally contradicts the Constitution and our values. It harms our worldwide reputation, which is a key component of American strength. By torturing, the U.S. throws its lot in with Russia, Iran, and North Korea.

#18: Benghazi

Q: Administration critics claim the White House and Secretary Clinton misled the public about the Benghazi attacks that killed four Americans, including the U.S. Ambassador. Do you think there was a cover-up?

A: I think it's a shame that this tragedy has become so political. There was no cover up. The U.S. State Department has implemented independent recommendations to improve security for our diplomats and prevent this from happening again. It takes a lot of courage to be in our diplomatic corps around the world. We must do everything possible to keep our people safe.

- There was no cover-up. Ten congressional committees have investigated the Benghazi attacks and provided reports and recommendations. There have been 32 hearings in Congress addressing the issue.
- An independent group of experts – the Accountability Review Board – provided recommendations to the State Department in the aftermath of the Benghazi attacks to ensure the safety of American diplomats and enhance the security of our diplomatic facilities abroad.
- The State Department implemented every single one of these recommendations right away. It's time to move beyond partisan finger-pointing and focus on solutions that prevent a future attack.

These excessive investigations into the Benghazi attacks is evidence that Washington is broken and too partisan. We should focus on everything we can do to prevent this from happening. Enough of the hearings.

#19: Clinton Intervening in Libya

Q: Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton advocated for intervention in Libya and now it's a mess. U.S. intervention in Libya has led to chaos, infighting among different groups, and now there are over 6,500 ISIS fighters based there. Is Secretary Clinton to blame for the chaos in Libya now?

A: Let's be clear: the Libyan people rose up against a vicious dictator who tried to massacre his own people. We did not turn our backs on the Libyan people. The U.S. doesn't stand by and let evil leaders get away with that, but we have to be tough and smart about it.

- In 2011, the Libyan people joined the wave of popular uprisings in the Middle East, but dictator Muammar Qaddafi threatened to kill all opposed to him.
- To prevent this, the U.S. and NATO allies enforced a no-fly zone over Libya and attacked Qaddafi's military positions.

- The U.S. has been carrying out airstrikes to destroy ISIS training camps and prevent them from setting up a new base in Libya while Libyan forces have been advancing against ISIS on the ground.

Donald Trump says he wanted to leave Qaddafi in place. Tell that to the Pan Am Flight 103 families and the victims of the Berlin nightclub attack. His criticism of Secretary Clinton is baseless. Donald Trump should listen to his own advice when he argued in favor of intervening in Libya in 2011 on humanitarian grounds. ⁹

20: Iranian Sponsored Terrorism

Q: Iran received billions in sanctions relief under the nuclear agreement. Won't Iran use these unfrozen assets to finance terrorist proxies and promote regional instability? Why did the U.S. pay Iran ransom for American hostages—providing money that could be used to sponsor terrorism?

A: The U.S. is still holding Iran accountable for its terrorism activities. Iran is still listed as a state sponsor of terrorism and will continue to be under extensive terrorism sanctions from the U.S. We have to remain vigilant, enforcing a tough and smart strategy to hold Iran accountable for its destructive regional activities.

- Recent elections in Iran are a small step forward on a long path to opening moderate voices.
- Iran's economy is struggling. Most of this money will sit in foreign banks to prevent inflation in Iran.
- The country owes more than \$50 billion of this to debt payments and various infrastructure projects. Iran simply doesn't have the capacity to funnel all this money to terrorists at the expense of its own economic recovery.

- The U.S. owed Iran money from a 1970s dispute. An international tribunal was bound to rule in Iran's favor, likely making the U.S. pay billions in interest. Instead, the U.S. settled the dispute and paid only \$1.7 billion. Because Iran can't touch the U.S. financial system, the money was paid in foreign currency. The bottom line is that we got the better end of the deal, and we were able to use this leverage to make sure Americans came home.

Trump's reckless call to break the Iran nuclear agreement could be a prelude to the next disastrous and expensive ground war in the region. And it would blind the U.S. to what Iran is doing, allowing it to acquire a nuclear weapon and threaten our allies, especially Israel.

21: Closing Guantanamo

Q: The Administration has sent Congress its plan to close the Guantanamo Bay detention facility. There are many concerns over where these detainees should be transferred to, their potential return to terrorist activities, and whether they should be transferred to U.S. prison facilities. Should the U.S. close the Guantanamo Bay detention camp?

A: We should close Guantanamo Bay and prosecute detainees in federal courts, which are far more effective than the current process of trying detainees through military commissions. Detainees who are transferred to other countries or are released must not be able to rejoin the battlefield, but if they do, the U.S. will reserve the capability to take them out.

- Only 61 detainees remain at Guantanamo. The annual cost to keep one prisoner at Guantanamo is more than \$7 million, compared to \$78,000 for a prisoner at a maximum security prison.¹⁰
- Indefinite detention at Guantanamo is not a sustainable policy and the Administration must work with Congress to develop safe means to close the facility and protect the homeland.

- Robert Hood, the former warden of the supermax security prison in Florence, Colorado, has said if the detainees were transferred to this facility from Guantanamo, they would be secure, stating, “From a former warden’s point of view, it would be secure, they could be handled and there will be no impact on the community.”¹¹

Guantanamo Bay is a recruitment tool for terrorists and keeping it open will put Americans at risk, cost taxpayers money, and run counter to our values.

END NOTES

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