

Guantanamo: U.S. Policy on Detainees
May 5, 2003

Q. Can you comment on the memo sent from Secretary Powell to Secretary Rumsfeld on Guantanamo detainees?

Key Points

- A process is underway to reach a final determination on all detainees. Each detainee will be prosecuted or continue to be detained by the United States Government, will be transferred back to his home country for prosecution or continued detention, or will be released if he no longer poses a threat to the United States or our allies.
- Every relevant agency engages in this process to ensure the overall interest of the United States is represented.
- We are moving forward on this process. To date, we have released over two dozen persons who we determined no longer pose a threat.
- We are continuing discussions with a number of governments regarding appropriate forums for prosecution, the possibility of transferring their nationals back to them for some action, or the possibility that some detainees can be released.

Background: *U.S. News and World Report* and AP report that Secretary Powell recently sent Secretary Rumsfeld a "strongly worded letter." According to the media, the letter said that some detainees held in Guantanamo Bay should not be in custody and that the Pentagon's handling of detainees is undermining America's ability to win cooperation in the war on terror. Secretary Rumsfeld acknowledged that he had received a letter from Secretary Powell during an appearance on CNN's Late Edition on May 4, saying "The interagency process takes a great deal of time. Colin and I are trying to speed up that process."

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