

Letter To Susan Crawford, Convening Authority, Office of Military Commissions (6/3/2008)

Susan J. Crawford
Convening Authority
Department of Defense
Office of Military Commissions
1600 Defense Pentagon
Rm. 3B652
Washington DC 20301-1600

June 3, 2008

Dear Ms. Crawford:

Many of us learned for the first time this week that only one relative of a 9/11 victim was invited to attend the proceedings at Guantánamo Bay. The Defense Department's belated disclosure that Debra Burlingame, a staunch supporter of this administration and the military commission system, was secretly invited to attend the arraignment of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed is but the latest example of a covert, politicized military commission system that has little hope of bringing any legitimate outcome.

As people who lost loved ones in the terrorist attacks of 9/11, we want nothing more than to see that justice is served in the prosecution of suspects. However, we know that no justice will come out of a system that has been compromised by politics and stripped of the rule of law. Unfortunately, the government insists on trying those accused of participating in the 9/11 attacks in military commissions that operate largely outside the realm of public scrutiny and rely on confessions derived by torture, secret evidence that a defendant cannot rebut, and hearsay.

The American public has every right to expect that prosecutions of 9/11 suspects will be conducted in a fair, open and honest manner that is not compromised by crass political considerations. Selectively inviting only 9/11 family members whose views are in alignment with those of the Bush administration is only one example of the repeated attempts to infuse politics into what should be an impartial process that has the goal of achieving justice.

We know that we are not the only ones who object to the illegitimacy of these proceedings. Respected military figures as well as law enforcement officials like Janet Reno and William Webster have spoken out. And in an effort to make this system more in line with our constitutional values, the American Civil Liberties Union has assembled civilian legal teams to assist the woefully under-resourced military defense counsel. If the prosecution of these suspects is carried out in a manner that is not in accordance with American values of due process, the rule of law, and transparency, any verdict will lack legitimacy and we will be left to wonder if those responsible for the deaths of our loved ones have really been brought to justice.

Sincerely,

Anne M. Mulderry
Mother of Stephen V. Mulderry

Adele Welty
Mother of Firefighter Timothy Welty

Mindy Kleinberg
Wife of Alan Kleinberg

Lorie Van Auken
Wife of Kenneth Van Auken

Patricia Perry
Mother of Police Officer John Perry

Monica Gabrielle
Wife of Richard Gabrielle

Patty Casazza
Wife of John F. Casazza

cc: Capt. Karen Loftus, DoD OGC