

JAMES M. INHOFE
OKLAHOMA

WASHINGTON OFFICE
453 RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3603
(202) 224-4721

TULSA OFFICE
1924 SOUTH UTICA, SUITE 530
TULSA, OK 74104
(918) 748-5111

OKLAHOMA CITY OFFICE
1900 N.W. EXPRESSWAY, SUITE 1210
OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73118
(405) 608-4381

COMMITTEES:
ARMED SERVICES
ENVIRONMENT AND
PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3603

October 5, 2009

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

Dear Mr. President:

Since June, reporters travelling to Gitmo to report on the military commission hearings have been denied the ability to also report on the detention facility while at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba (Gitmo). While the past policy has been to arrange tours on a "not-to-interfere" basis with military commissions, it now appears that members of the media must plan, schedule, and fund separate trips to cover either the military commissions or the detention facility. This additional requirement directly impacts worldwide press access to Gitmo.

I understand these tours involve a significant amount of coordination and generally cannot be done during commission proceedings. However, these media tour requests were made in advance of their visit to Gitmo and requested on days when no military commission hearings were scheduled. Under what appears to be a new policy, journalists will now be forced into an unnecessary "either-or" situation. Either they cover the military commission or they cover the camps. The end result will be less transparency. Additionally, there appears to have been a change in the notification of upcoming media visits to Gitmo. The notifications have either been late or non-existent.

You said, "Transparency promotes accountability and provides information for citizens about what their Government is doing." Because news organizations are cutting costs at every available opportunity, duplicative trips to Gitmo will likely not be funded. Again, the end result is a lack of transparency.

To help me understand this situation, I respectfully ask if there has been a change in policy relating to media coverage at Gitmo. If so, I request a clarification of the new policy, the reasoning behind the change, and who authorized the change.

Sincerely,



James Inhofe
United States Senator