



UNITED STATES ARMY

THE CHIEF OF STAFF

JUL 09 2014

The Honorable Carl Levin
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Levin:

I was not consulted in any way, either in my role as Chief of Staff of the Army or as member of the Joint Chiefs, prior to the decision to release SGT Bergdahl. I firmly believe the recovery of any American Service Member held as a captive, hostage or prisoner of war, regardless of the circumstances, is both a moral imperative and vital to keeping faith within our Army. As such, every means possible of securing their release should be thoroughly explored.

Having been thoroughly briefed on all actions regarding military options I do not believe a viable military rescue operation existed. I also do not believe one would exist anytime in the near future.

It is clear the Five Taliban detainees exchanged for SGT Bergdahl posed a real threat at the time of their capture, time has reduced that threat. Each of the "Taliban 5" has been replaced from within the Taliban Organization some years ago. Additionally the nature of the fight has continued to fundamentally evolve since their incarceration 12 years ago. This will significantly reduce their tactical relevancy. In the future, one or more might attempt to return to the fight but I believe effective protocols and options are in place should any of these five pose a direct threat to the United States or our interests again.

Given the above, I concur with the decision to exchange five Taliban detainees for the release of SGT Bowe Bergdahl.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ray T. Odierno", is positioned above the printed name.

Raymond T. Odierno
General, United States Army

