

**Statement of Commander Kirk S. Lippold, USN (Ret)**  
**Hearing on Guantanamo Bay: The Remaining Detainees**  
**Before the**  
**U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform**  
**Subcommittee on National Security**

**May 24, 2016**

**I. Introduction**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Lynch, my name is Commander Kirk S. Lippold and I appreciate the opportunity to testify before the Subcommittee. In my 26-year career in the Navy, I was a surface warfare officer serving on five different ships, including guided missile cruisers and destroyers to protect U.S. national security interests across the globe. Foremost among those missions was to safeguard the sea-lanes of communication, or SLOCs, that facilitate and safeguard national security interests critical to the United States. I have experienced firsthand – particularly in my command of the USS *Cole* when it was attacked by Al Qaeda terrorists – the devastating effects of acts of terrorism when our forward-deployed assets are placed in harm's way.

The attack on the USS *Cole* was fundamentally different than the attacks on either the World Trade Center in 1993 or the African Embassies in 1998. In both cases, those attacks were against targets that housed or represented U.S. interests in the Middle East. The attack on USS *Cole* was a direct attempt to limit or eradicate the U.S. presence in the Middle East. When a nation or a non-state actor such as al Qaeda attacks a military target that projects power and defends our national interests on the high seas, it is in fact a direct challenge to our ability to defend our national interests across the globe. The attack on USS *Cole* was an act of war.

The attack on USS *Cole* was followed by the 9/11 attacks and put the Department of Defense on a war footing. That war effort continues today and rather than abating and slowing, it is picking up in pace and lethality on an unprecedented scale. The utility that was envisioned for Guantanamo Bay as an intelligence facility has been cast aside for political expediency. The failure to use Guantanamo Bay has made the U.S. less safe and more vulnerable since we no longer have a facility with its unique capabilities to leverage the intelligence advantage that our nation could possess with its use. In fact, the United States has given up a critical strategic advantage in surrendering to the political expediency to close Guantanamo Bay while failing to give due consideration to how we can replace it with a facility under U.S. control that can be guaranteed to remain operational for the duration of the ongoing conflict. For this reason and more, keeping Guantanamo Bay open is more important now than ever before in the war effort.

## **II. Background**

The U.S. Navy has a unique role in the world in cooperation with our allies to ensure the safe transit of vessels throughout the oceans of the world to ensure the economies of the world can adequately function. Unfortunately, over the past three decades, the lack of a coherent national and military strategy that is directly tied to force structure has forced the U.S. Navy to slowly decrease the size of the fleet and the number of operational ships to a point where our nation is no longer capable of conducting sustained operations at sea without the need to refuel many of our ships in various ports of call across the globe.

On October 12, 2000, when USS *Cole* pulled into the port of Aden, Yemen, for a brief stop for fuel while on a solo transit from the Mediterranean to the Middle East, the United States failed to realize we were in an undeclared state of war with al Qaeda, a war that Osama bin Laden had announced in an August 1996 Fatwa. Even before his formal declaration of war, al Qaeda affiliated terrorists conducted the first large-scale successful attack in the United States with the February 26, 1993 attack on the North Tower of the World Trade Center. Five years later, after an even more lethal and capable al Qaeda attacked two U.S. Embassies in Africa – Dar es Salam, Tanzania and Nairobi, Kenya - there was a stubborn and willful refusal to grasp the dangers of the growing threat of terrorism. The attack on USS *Cole* pointed out the failure of the nation to understand that a new form of warfare had been imposed on us that fateful day.

Unfortunately, neither the Clinton nor Bush Administrations responded to the attack on USS *Cole*. Investigations ensued, statements of support for the families and crew were made, and in the end nothing was done. The attack on USS *Cole* was viewed as a political liability by both Administrations since it crossed that awkward line with a Democrat Commander in Chief about to cede power to a Republican Commander in Chief. Once the investigations into the attack were complete, the Clinton Administration washed their hands of the incident and turned their backs. By the same token, when the Bush Administration assumed office, they took the attitude that we are “forward looking not backward acting.” The attack on USS *Cole* was even referred to by Deputy Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz as “stale.” Seventeen U.S. Navy sailors died in vain for their nation.

By doing nothing, the stage was set for the 9/11 attacks eleven months later.

## **III. Why Guantanamo? The History Behind the Creation of the Detention Facility**

Following the attack on USS *Cole*, in July 2001 I was assigned to the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the Directorate for Strategic Plans and Policy (J-5) working on matters pertaining to the United Nations and multilateral affairs. After 9/11, this office was tasked to develop the policies for how the U.S. military would conduct these detainee operations. It was neither our role nor was my office tasked to develop policies for other government agencies or organizations that may have been involved in hunting down and capturing high-level terrorist suspects.

Almost immediately after the 9/11 attacks, the United States responded with a quickly, but carefully orchestrated plan to topple the Taliban from power in Afghanistan, seek out and capture or kill high-ranking member of al Qaeda, and work to ensure the U.S. homeland was safe from further attack. The operational plan for how, when, and where to introduce forces into Afghanistan was a closely guarded secret. During the initial surge toward the war front in and near Afghanistan, one part of that plan was obvious – U.S. forces would be capturing terrorists as part of their operations.

As the Pentagon focused on military operations in the rapidly expanding Global War on Terrorism, four main questions had to be addressed:

1. Who would the United States capture and then maintain in long-term detention?
2. Where would the captured terrorists be held in Afghanistan and then long-term?
3. What authorized interrogation techniques would the U.S. military use on captured, unlawful enemy combatants?
4. What was the process for repatriation of the detainee back to their home country?

Neither the President nor Secretary of Defense wanted a large military footprint in Afghanistan or any of the surrounding and supporting countries; therefore, the scope of who would be detained long-term had to be limited. The result: U.S. military forces would seek out and detain members of al Qaeda and high-level Taliban leaders. The U.S. military would specifically not detain the average foot soldier supporting either al Qaeda or the Taliban. These battlefield detainees would be transferred to either pro-U.S. Afghan or Northern Alliance forces.

The major hubs that could support detention operations of fighters captured on the battlefield and who possessed the logistics required for this part of the operation dictated a small number of locations including Kandahar and Mazar-e Sharif. These facilities had to be secure enough to allow an adequate assessment of who had been captured before their further transfer to a long-term facility or repatriation back to local military forces.

The issue of long-term detention of al Qaeda terrorists and their hosts, the Taliban, was a much more difficult and thornier legal issue that underwent considerable review at the highest levels of the U.S. government. In the end and after considerable review, Guantanamo Bay was chosen as the best place for long-term detention of captured al Qaeda and high-level Taliban unlawful combatants for a host of legal, operational, and logistical reasons.

With these alleged terrorists coming into the custody of the military, the issue of what interrogation techniques could be used had to be resolved. As part of this policy debate within the Department of Defense, I was assigned as the Joint Chiefs of Staff Representative to the Interrogation Techniques Working Group. The group reviewed and considered a detailed list of over 30 techniques, including waterboarding. Based on the Group's final recommendations, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff decided that only those techniques listed in Army Field

Manual FM 34-52, Intelligence Interrogation, would be used on the unlawful enemy combatants in the custody of U.S. military forces.

Throughout this process, it was always a consideration that despite the best efforts of battlefield commanders and their staffs to assess who met the criteria for transfer to Guantanamo Bay, there would be a number of detainees that did not meet detention criteria and required repatriation back to their home countries. Policy was issued by the Secretary of Defense in coordination with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to initiate a process whose bottom line was to make as accurate a determination as possible that the individual under consideration for repatriation no longer was of intelligence value to the United States and that they no longer represented a threat to the U.S., our allies or our interests. Once these criteria were met, the process of repatriating an individual was coordinated with the Department of State working with the individual's country of citizenship.

#### **IV. The Intelligence Opportunities and Pitfalls Assessed at Guantanamo Bay**

Immediately following the 9/11 attacks, the Joint Chiefs of Staff was tasked by the Secretary of Defense to develop policies to deal with the expected capture of enemy combatants taken on the battlefield once U.S. forces engaged in combat operations in Afghanistan. In theater, the Combatant Commander, General Tommy Franks was adamant that detainees be removed away from the battlefield as quickly as possible citing the security situation, lack of adequate facilities, and lack of adequate personnel to ensure the safety of the detainees or U.S. personnel guarding them. Initial policy considerations included the following:

1. Combatants captured on the battlefield would undergo immediate assessment to determine if they were either high-level (battalion-level and above) Taliban commanders or members of al Qaeda. U.S. forces would detain only those unlawful enemy combatants that met these strict criteria. Other combatants would be turned over to friendly Afghan forces for repatriation operations.

2. Unlawful enemy combatants detained by U.S. military forces and that met the screening criteria would be held in Afghanistan until transfer to Guantanamo Bay could be arranged. On both the battlefield and at the detention facility in Guantanamo Bay, the only interrogation techniques that could be lawfully used on the detainees were those enshrined in the U.S. Army Field Manual for Interrogation Operations.

3. As soon as the facilities could be renovated or constructed at Guantanamo Bay, the detainees who had already been assessed and prioritized according to their intelligence value and the threat they posed by keeping them in the operational theater were transferred to the facility. Through this deliberate and carefully vetted process, only the most valuable and dangerous were transferred to Guantanamo Bay.

#### **V. Guantanamo Bay – Why Was It Picked?**

While the need to detain unlawful enemy combatants was a given consideration for the creation of Guantanamo Bay, there was a much more valuable strategic consideration –

intelligence. Guantanamo Bay was designed to be an intelligence center for excellence in the Global War on Terror. During the deliberations regarding where to put a facility to house the limited numbers of al Qaeda and high-level Taliban expected to be sent there, several considerations went into the decision-making process:

1. Only those detainees who were assessed to possess much needed intelligence or were at an organizational level that their capture heightened the threat posed to U.S. forces, were transferred to Guantanamo Bay.

2. The detention facility was far removed from the battlefield, which reduced the chance and opportunity for an attack that would result in the escape of the terrorists.

3. The facility was close to the United States mainland, which would facilitate the integration and processing of critical intelligence activities.

4. The naval base already had existing detention facilities that had been built during Operation Sea Signal when the U.S. military conducted humanitarian operations in the Caribbean in response to an influx of Cuban and Haitian migrants attempting to gain asylum in the United States. These temporary facilities could be reinforced and upgraded to safely incarcerate the terrorist detainees until more permanent and suitable facilities could be constructed to house them under more humane conditions.

5. The naval base had an airfield, maritime piers, housing, and on-base transportation infrastructure that were either immediately available or could be quickly renovated and upgraded to support the influx of personnel to run the facility while also permitting movement of detainees into and out of the facility.

6. The naval base had land available that could be adapted and made ready to build and house detainees in a humane and secure environment. The same area could also support the necessary security, support, and intelligence staff that would man and operate the detention facility.

7. Guantanamo Bay was located on a legally unique piece of land – a naval base that was on Cuban territory, but under U.S. control and supervision. It was initially assessed that since the base was on foreign soil, the normal Constitutional protections, like Miranda warnings, that would be afforded U.S. citizens could not be triggered for the detainees held at this location.

All of these factors contributed to why Guantanamo Bay was chosen as the best facility to detain unlawful enemy combatants captured in the Global War on Terror. While many may disagree about its efficacy, it served a strategic and critical purpose – get the terrorists off the battlefield and detain them in a facility specifically designed to leverage their intelligence value to ensure the United States, our allies, and our interests remained safe. At its height, Guantanamo Bay housed 680 detainees in a safe, secure, and humane environment, while also gaining the critical intelligence necessary to keep the nation safe.

## **VI. Why Keeping Guantanamo Bay Open Is In The Interest of U.S. National Security**

When final consideration of Guantanamo Bay was under deliberation by the Department of Defense, in addition to being a detention facility, one of the foremost policy considerations was intelligence. Clearly, the attacks of 9/11 had once again pointed out the woeful state of the intelligence community as well as the leadership of the nation to appreciate and prepare for the threat posed by transnational terrorist groups like al Qaeda. One way to help cover this shortfall would be to leverage the intelligence gained from the terrorists held at Guantanamo Bay to build a picture of how al Qaeda.

It was intuitive to those working in the Pentagon and the intelligence communities during the initial stages of the Global War on Terror that these captured terrorists would be central to regaining the intelligence advantage we had lost over years of underappreciating the threat and failing to develop human intelligence sources within their organizations. If the U.S. could gain a comprehensive understanding of how al Qaeda manned, trained, equipped, financed, and conducted terrorist operations, that process could be targeted for disruption and defeat. The key to a broader and more dynamic intelligence picture the United States was now scrambling to build contained several critical points:

1. How does al Qaeda recruit members for its ranks and develop the leadership structure to carry out tactical through strategic-level terrorist activities?
2. How and where does al Qaeda train their recruits and what sources and methods do they use to operationally prepare them for and execute terrorist operations?
3. How does al Qaeda equip their fighters for terrorist operations? What transit methods and modes are used and can the material be interdicted or stopped at the source or enroute?
4. What are the sources and methods of financing used by al Qaeda for their operations and how can those sources be identified and targeted?
5. What methods and operational security does al Qaeda use in the process of executing and carrying out terrorist operations?

Today, many people demand that the detention facility in Guantanamo Bay be closed. Some of the more socially popular points are: Guantanamo Bay serves as a recruiting tool for al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations, Guantanamo Bay is too costly and is a poor return on investment, Guantanamo Bay serves no meaningful intelligence purpose this many years after 9/11, Guantanamo Bay is a human-rights embarrassment to the United States, and Guantanamo Bay detainees have a right to a trial or they should be set free. Key reasons for keeping Guantanamo Bay open include:

1. Guantanamo Bay has the facilities and capabilities necessary to be the crown jewel in the intelligence effort to defeat transnational terrorist groups like al Qaeda and ISIS. Several years ago, the Department of Defense spent over \$325 million to build a state-of-the-art headquarters and intelligence fusion center on Guantanamo Bay. It was specifically designed to

take the real-time intelligence gleaned from interrogation of detainees, then integrate and construct a robust and capable intelligence picture of their worldwide tactics, techniques, and procedures. Every intelligence agency in the U.S. government could use the facility to protect and defend the United States against attack. Unfortunately, this facility goes virtually unused because of the political decision to attempt to close the detention facility.

2. Guantanamo Bay is not used as a recruiting tool for terrorist organizations. While Guantanamo Bay is occasionally cited in terrorist propaganda, over the past few years the intelligence community assessed its impact as almost negligible. While many who want Guantanamo Bay closed use the pictures of orange jump suits and pictures of detainees from Guantanamo Bay as proof that it is a recruiting tool, the facts do not support this contention. Correlation is not causation. Numerous interviews and after-action intelligence has shown that just because Guantanamo Bay is featured in recruiting propaganda, it does not prove why recruits join terrorist organizations any more than a movie spurred the attacks in Benghazi, Libya.

3. Guantanamo Bay is of economic value for what it is capable of providing the nation in our fight against terrorists. While President Obama has oft-cited the cost of \$3 million per detainee to house and detain them in Guantanamo Bay, that price is manipulated to achieve a political objective, not a national security imperative to keep the nation safe. To date, no accurate cost calculations exist to justify closing Guantanamo Bay and bring the remaining unlawful enemy combatants to the United States. Some critical cost calculations that must be figured into these estimates include:

(a) What is the cost to find a location then build or refurbish a detention facility that meets or surpasses all current constraints that would be imposed on any correctional facility built in the United States, including requirements such as environmental impact statements, transportation infrastructure creation and improvements, communications capability, electrical and other energy sources?

(b) Guantanamo Bay is physically isolated from threats that would exist if the detention facility were moved to the United States. What has not been addressed in the ongoing debate includes: What is the cost to the surrounding communities that now have a terrorist target painted on their cities and towns? Who will provide the financial support the communities will need to protect their citizens in the event of an escape or worse, an attack to either facilitate an escape or an attack carried out just because the facility exists in that location?

(c) Who pays for the additional cost of manning, training, and equipping the police, medical, fire fighting, and other support sources necessary to monitor and contain the inevitable protests that will occur as a result of the facility being located in that community?

(d) Who is responsible for the cost of training and preparation that would have to be considered as part of coordinating the response to a terrorist attack on the community or the facility? How will training be conducted and who will pay for the expected exercises between the U.S. military forces operating the detention facility and local police, firefighting, and medical

personnel? Who has priority in directing resources in the event of an attack? Will civilians have to come under military control in an emergency?

(e) How are the U.S. military forces running the facility going to be housed? If they live on the outside economy, they could be vulnerable to being operationally monitored and spied on by terrorists who can then target them and/or their families. Additionally, identity protection becomes very problematic for the military personnel working at the facility and potentially their families since no process has been addressed to safeguard and ensure their security if they live off the local economy, send their children to local schools, and interface with the local community. These issues alone could cost billions of dollars for construction of a self-contained base with all the necessary support facilities to house and support these military forces.

(f) The impact on the U.S. Constitution has not even been considered in this debate. What are the constitutional issues that will inevitably be raised concerning U.S. military forces deployed within the borders of the United States for the wartime mission of enemy combatant detention operations? Our nation's laws have evolved since World War II and with our nation unwilling to issue a declaration of war against a non-state entity like al Qaeda, the legal basis for this type of detention within the U.S. crosses into untested legal waters that have not been ruled upon by the Supreme Court. Will these forces be totally self-contained or will they have extra-judicial powers over civilians in the local community in the event of an emergency at the detention facility? Can military forces be deployed outside their compound or base in the event of an escape or terrorist attack? Who can order and who will be in charge of the military's operations if they need support and assistance from local authorities on any issue? Can these military forces detain U.S. citizens for their "safety" or on the basis of a "suspicion" of colluding with or supporting terrorists without a declared state of emergency or martial law? Until these legal issues can be addressed and ruled upon by the Supreme Court, moving the remaining detainees to the United States could ultimately result in their being released due to legal technicalities.

In addition to the foregoing, U.S. Navy ships are being deployed as floating prison ships for temporary detainee operations. A recent example of the massive waste of taxpayer money came when the USS *New York* was ordered on a short-notice deployment to sail from her homeport of Mayport, Florida, to sit off the coast of Libya and wait for a classified military operation to be conducted that would result in the capture of Ahmed Abu Khattala, a high-value detainee and the alleged ring-leader of the brutal and sophisticated attacks on the U.S. diplomatic compound in Benghazi, Libya.

Taking a naval warship worth an estimated \$2.0 billion and sending it on a disruptive short-notice deployment to serve as a logistics platform and prison ship is not an efficient or effective use of a strategic asset when the nation has already built and manned a state-of-the-art facility that could serve the same purpose – Guantanamo Bay. Once again, the decision not to use Guantanamo Bay is a political decision not one based on the national interest of the United States and the safety of the American people.

The list of complex and still unaddressed problems associated with closing Guantanamo Bay and transferring the detainees to the United States could go on for pages. At the end of the



day, however, the Administration's purported cost cutting measures and "savings" will not equate to savings for our society and those who will live with the consequences of the decision to close this facility.

## **VII. Recidivism – An Unacceptable Compromise**

At the forefront of the debate on who the United States should maintain in custody at Guantanamo Bay and who should be repatriated back to their country of citizenship are the issues of recidivism and the potential of that individual to return to the battlefield to fight against the United States or our allies.

As stipulated under The Geneva Conventions and the Law of Armed Conflict, the United States has a right under international law to detain combatants captured on the field of battle until the end of the conflict. In the case of unlawful enemy combatants, such as al Qaeda and the Taliban, there was insufficient legal guidance or precedence to provide a definitive answer about what nations can do with these types of non-state combatants. In the case of the 9/11 attackers, these combatants did not comply with The Geneva Conventions that defined a combatant; and therefore, these unlawful enemy combatants acted in a manner that made them not subject to the protections normally afforded a combatant in a state-on-state conflict.

Additionally, under the Law of Armed Conflict, there is not a requirement for a trial or legal proceeding to assess the guilt or innocence of unlawful enemy combatants engaged in armed conflict against the United States. A review of the circumstances of their capture, the equivalent of an Article V tribunal under the Geneva Conventions, is today, a Periodic Review Board for unlawful enemy combatants, is convened to determine if the information regarding the basis for detention is still accurate and valid. In keeping with the spirit of The Geneva Conventions, however, the United States has followed the principle that we are engaged in a legally recognized armed conflict to which the laws of war apply. Using that point as a guide, the United States rightfully contends that we may hold al Qaeda and Taliban unlawful enemy combatants until the end of the conflict.

Al Qaeda and the Taliban started this war, not the United States. We were attacked, not just on 9/11, but also on several other occasions including the attack on USS *Cole*. They continue to wage war on us.

Any unlawful enemy combatants captured by the United States should be screened following the same guidance used when the Global War on Terror started after 9/11. Those who meet the screening criteria should be transferred from wherever they are captured in the world to Guantanamo Bay for long-term detention. Current unclassified projections estimate that about 30% of the detainees released from Guantanamo Bay have returned to the fight in one form or another. Classified estimates put that number even higher. These terrorists have chosen to continue to fight against the United States, our allies, and our interests. When it comes to the repatriation process of releasing confirmed terrorists who engaged in combat against the United States, both the Bush and Obama Administrations have failed the American public in this regard.

At its height, Guantanamo Bay held 680 detainees who were assessed to be unlawful enemy combatants. Clearly, the process worked to screen a large number of individuals who were truly misclassified and deserved repatriation back to their country of citizenship. In some cases, however, the intelligence process failed to detect either the individual's true identity, their actual extent of involvement in terrorist activities, their true level of support or involvement with al Qaeda or the Taliban, or their propensity to return to the fight because of their firm belief in the tenets of radical Islamic terrorism and the use of violence to achieve jihad objectives.

In both Administrations, but especially the Obama Administration, the criteria for release has been lowered and degraded time and again to a point where the detainees that are currently being released will in all likelihood return to the battlefield to fight and kill again. Today, the Department of Defense, who should be in charge of fighting the war against these terrorists, has abrogated their responsibility to oversee and control the detainee process at Guantanamo Bay. The responsibility for detainee releases is now controlled and coordinated through the Department of State's Special Envoy for Guantanamo Closure.

Political pressure to force nations around the world to accept detainees from Guantanamo Bay has become a routine tactic used to empty out the facility in an effort to achieve a political objective not maintain the safety of the American public or those who serve to defend our nation. Once a country agrees to accept a detainee, it is usually not because of their humanitarian nature. The United States pays them off. To date, we have paid millions of dollars to a broad spectrum of nations to accept detainees being transferred to their country.

In addition to these outright payments, additional costs are also being borne by the American people. Never considered when calculating the true value of keeping Guantanamo Bay open and operating are the costs associated with the intelligence and security agreements used to ensure the detainees will be maintained under strict surveillance, which of course, is usually paid for by the United States; the cost of housing and other support services required by the nation for the detainees and usually compensated for by the United States; the decision by our nation while at war to allow detainees to refuse transfer from Guantanamo Bay if they do not like the country they may be potentially be transferred to (case in point, the Chinese Uighurs); and, while the gaining country is under agreement to ensure the detainee does not return to terrorist activities, there is no punishment or accountability if the terrorist escapes and kills again. This final issue should disturb the American public the most: There is no accounting for the cost of American lives and the lives of other innocent people that have died as a result of detainees returning to the battlefield after their release from Guantanamo Bay.

The United States is a nation at war. No detainee who has undergone a review of the circumstances of their capture and confirmed an unlawful enemy combatant engaged in armed conflict against the United States should be released from our custody. They should be held in indefinite detention under the Law of Armed Conflict, or if they meet the criteria for a trial by Military Commission, be charged, tried and convicted for their crimes and held accountable for their actions. In this long war on terrorism, the United States government has a moral responsibility to the American people and the world to ensure that not one more American or any citizen from any nation dies at the hands of an unlawful enemy combatant released from Guantanamo Bay.

## **VIII. Conclusion**

Keeping the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay open is in the best interest of the United States and the American people. The threat of ongoing terrorist operations against the United States militates that as a nation we should continue using the facilities that have already been built there and expand their use to ensure that another terrorist attack is not carried out against the United States. When scrutinized and evaluated on their purported value to keep the nation safe, arguments for closing Guantanamo Bay do not bear up under the light of day and the facts, classified and unclassified, confirm this analysis.

## Biography of Commander Kirk S. Lippold, USN (Ret)

Commander Kirk Lippold, USN (Ret.) was the Commanding Officer of the USS Cole when it came under a suicide terrorist attack by al Qaeda in the port of Aden, Yemen. During his command, he and his crew distinguished themselves by saving the American war ship from sinking. This event is widely recognized as one of the most brazen acts of terrorism by al Qaeda prior to September 11, 2001.

Into addition to his distinguished service as the Commanding Officer of USS Cole, Commander Kirk Lippold, USN (Ret.) had numerous assignments including Executive Officer of USS Shiloh, an Aegis-class guided missile cruiser. His department head tour was unique in his assignment to the crew that commissioned USS Arleigh Burke, the Navy's first Aegis guided missile destroyer. He served as the Operations Officer responsible for the training and operation of a next generation \$1 billion warship with a crew of over 300 Sailors. He had two division officer assignments, which included a tour on USS Yorktown, an Aegis class guided missile cruiser. There, he completed a lengthy seven and a half month deployment to the Mediterranean, where he participated in the Achille Lauro aircraft seizure, Black Sea Freedom of Navigation operations against the Soviet Union, and Attain III combat operations in the Gulf of Sidra off Libya that followed several Libyan sponsored terrorist attacks in Europe. His initial division officer tour was in USS Fairfax County, a tank landing ship, where he completed a deployment to Beirut, Lebanon, in support of the US Marine Corps and the Multinational Peacekeeping Force when terrorists attacked the American Embassy and severely damaged it.

After graduation from Carson City High School, Commander Lippold graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy and received his commission in the Navy in 1981. He attended the Navy Postgraduate School from 1987 to 1989 where he received a Masters of Science in Systems Engineering (Joint Command, Control and Communications). He is a 1994 graduate of the United States Army Command and General Staff College and is also a 2001 graduate of the Joint Forces Staff College. He has also served as the Administrative Aide to the Secretary of the Navy. He subsequently served on the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Directorate for Strategic Plans and Policy (J-5), where he was instrumental in crafting detainee policy for the war on terrorism during its initial stages following the 9/11 attacks. His last assignment was in the International Strategy Division in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (N5IS). Commander Lippold retired from the Navy in June 2007.

Commander Kirk Lippold's personal awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit (three awards), Meritorious Service Medal (three awards), Combat Action Ribbon, Navy Commendation Medal (two awards), Joint Service Achievement Medal, Navy Achievement Medal (two awards), in addition to various campaign and service ribbons.

With this unique and invaluable experience in this seminal event in the war on terrorism, Commander Lippold moved back to Nevada following retirement and is actively involved in the future of his home state. Currently, Commander Lippold is the president of Lippold Strategies, LLC, a consulting firm specializing in executive leadership development and crisis management. He serves on the Board of Advisors for Halo Maritime Defense Systems and the National Security Roundtable. He has also appeared on every major news network speaking about critical national security issues including the Iran Nuclear Agreement, radical Islamic terrorist groups including al Qaeda and ISIS, Guantanamo Bay, and the ongoing nuclear threat from North Korea.

**Committee on Oversight and Government Reform**  
**Witness Disclosure Requirement – “Truth in Testimony”**  
**Required by House Rule XI, Clause 2(g)(5)**

Name: **Kirk S. Lippold**

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1. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) you have received since October 1, 2012. Include the source and amount of each grant or contract.

**None**

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2. Please list any entity you are testifying on behalf of and briefly describe your relationship with these entities.

**None**

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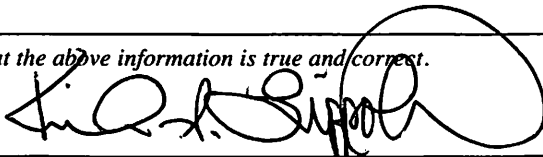
3. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) received since October 1, 2012, by the entity(ies) you listed above. Include the source and amount of each grant or contract.

**None**

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*I certify that the above information is true and correct.*

Signature:



Date: **20 May 2016**

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