SAM JOHNSON
THIRD DISTRICT, TEXAS

1211 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515–4303
(202) 225–4201

www.samjohnson.house.gov

2929 NORTH CENTRAL EXPRESSWAY
SUITE 240
RICHARDSON, TX 75080
(972) 470–0892

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515–4303

COMMITTEES:
WAYS AND MEANS
EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE
DEPUTY WHIP
COMMISSIONER:
U.S.–RUSSIAN JOINT COMMISSION ON POW/MIAs
REGENT:
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

Open Letter: Former POW Sam Johnson on terrorist trade

Dear Colleague:

As you may know, I spent nearly seven years as a Prisoner of War (POW) in Vietnam, more than half of that time in solitary confinement in a place so desolate and isolating it could only be called Alcatraz. I served with many brave Americans. I lived through those filthy, atrocious and inhumane conditions. I know what it is like to pray to God that the enemy will kill you right then and there to end the long periods of torture and excruciating pain. Today, I humbly write this letter as a decorated combat veteran of two wars and as a sitting Member of Congress.

My sense of duty compels me to speak out against the recent terrorist-trade because this news impacts every single American.

While U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) and I don't agree on much, we agree that President Obama broke the law when he released the five top terrorists in exchange for a detained American soldier and did not inform Congress. Our mutual outrage over the President's destructive and unilateral action proves that this is not a Democrat issue or a Republican issue. It is an American issue.

Make no mistake, I am pleased to hear an American citizen and soldier will come home to the pure blessing of freedom and family. As a former POW, I can guarantee there's no greater feeling. That said, the conditions under which the exchange occurred are deplorable and worrisome. We are America. We do not negotiate with terrorists. Unfortunately, our Commander-in-Chief compromised that long-held policy. A protection that has saved countless lives, made America stronger and the world a safer place.

Time magazine now reports that the Taliban feels inspired, empowered and emboldened to capture American soldiers. "It's better to kidnap one person like Bergdahl than kidnapping hundreds of useless people. It has encouraged our people. Now everybody will work hard to capture such an important bird."

Our worst enemies just confirmed that President Obama's unilateral decision, in effect, put a price on the head of each soldier, sailor, airmen, coast guardsmen and Marine serving abroad in defense of freedom. From here on out, every single American, both military and civilian, has a right to be fearful. The President failed us miserably with his ill-advised, inappropriate and immature actions. This leaves innocent Americans and our brave men and women in harm's way to bear the consequences of such failure.

Americans deserve a Commander-in-Chief who is wise and mature. As long as I continue to serve this great nation in Congress, and I hope that's for many years, I will continue to stand with our veterans and those on the front lines. I hope we can stand together in this effort, our country demands it of us. America and our armed forces want, need and deserve better.

God bless you and God bless America.

Sam Johnson

Sam Johnson
Member of Congress

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER