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» CAIR Capitol Hill Panel Calls for Gitmo Closure

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Issues

(WASHINGTON, DC, 6/27/2006) - The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) today hosted a Capitol Hill panel entitled "Should the US Shut Down Gitmo." An audience that filled the room to capacity heard two speakers outline reasons for closing the Guantanamo Bay detention facility.

James Yee, a former Muslim Chaplain at Guantanamo Bay, discussed ways in which religion was used against detainees. He described how abuse of the Quran, and other behavior by guards and interrogators, was counterproductive to intelligence gathering because detainees protested abuse by refusing to cooperate.

Yee noted that American Muslims who were serving in Guantanamo, primarily as translators, were viewed with suspicion merely for practicing their faith.

Eugene Fidell, an attorney who has worked on cases involving Guantanamo Bay inmates, outlined several reasons to close the base, including concerns that many of the prisoners have not been charged with any crimes and the American judicial system is capable of handling the cases.

He noted that after four years, the value of any further intelligence garnered from these prisoners is probably minimal.

Fidell also raised questions about the future of the Guantanamo base in light of a probable change in Cuba's government, given Castro's advanced age.

"It is time to bite the bullet so that no further harm is done to our nation's reputation," said Fidell.

CAIR, America's largest Muslim civil liberties group, has 32 offices, chapters and affiliates nationwide and in Canada. Its mission is to enhance the understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding.

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