

Published in the San Diego Union Tribune. □ Congressman Hunter was asked to respond to the following questions:

***For opposing the possible move of □ Guantanamo detainees □ to Camp Pendleton or Miramar Marine Corps Air Station, you were criticized in a Union-Tribune editorial for having insufficient confidence in the Pentagon's good judgment and its concern about the public safety of San Diego County residents. What is your response?***

It's not a matter of whether I have confidence in the Pentagon's judgment and ability to coordinate an orderly transfer, because I do. In Iraq and Afghanistan, our military men and women continue to effectively manage many of the day-to-day security and government operations. Last week's successful provincial election in Iraq, which occurred in coordination with our military forces, is proof of that fact. We are winning in Iraq because of the good judgment of our military leadership and the collective efforts of all those who have contributed to the Iraq mission.

I'm most concerned with President Obama's judgment in closing Guantanamo Bay and transferring terrorists to American soil. The decision to close the facility was made without any consideration for the security risks and legal consequences that will undoubtedly arise. Equally concerning is the fact that Camp Pendleton and Miramar are on the short-list of terrorist relocation sites. Both bases have an important wartime mission, preparing sailors and Marines for combat. Transferring terrorists to either Camp Pendleton or Miramar would create an enormous distraction and interfere with the important training operations that occur at each base every day.

***Do you understand why some people might look at your stand and see it as being inconsistent with your strong views about deferring to the military on such issues as whether to put a civilian airfield at Miramar?***

The decision to close Guantanamo Bay was made by President Obama, not our military. It was not a tactical or strategic decision - it was purely political. If it weren't, President Obama would have more closely examined the issue before rushing to a decision on his first day in office.

***Do you think President Obama's economic stimulus plan and related measures are more likely to save the economy or ruin it?***

At a time when job creation must be our focus, the stimulus plan advanced through the House of Representatives last week falls short of providing long-lasting and sustainable employment to American workers. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office reports that only 7% of the funding for public works projects, such as roads and bridges, can be spent this year. At the same time, billions of dollars are being directed to create new government programs and expand others. The plan also spends taxpayer dollars on programs that have no direct relationship to the performance of our economy, such as climate change research and digital TV coupons.

The best way to get our economy back on track is to provide much-needed tax and regulatory relief to businesses and families -- the real economic engines of our economy.

***Do you have much confidence in Obama's national security team?***

President Obama's national security team will most certainly be tested over the next four years. In anticipation of the challenges that lie ahead, it is critical that our nation's security interests are put clear ahead of political expediency.