

May 18, 2016

Ashton B. Carter
Secretary of Defense
Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC

Dear Secretary Carter,

We are professors and teachers from a variety of disciplines. We are writing to convey our interest in the forthcoming Periodic Review Board hearing of Mohamedou Ould Slahi, the author of *Guantánamo Diary*, and our hope that those proceedings will bring an end to Mr. Slahi's ordeal in United States custody.

Many of us have assigned *Guantánamo Diary* to our students and discussed it in our classrooms. We have done so because, as a Pentagon spokesman acknowledged shortly after *Guantánamo Diary* was published, "it's part of our country's history." We have also done so because it is an important and often surprising work of literature—one that, like other notable works of prison literature, draws a complex portrait of life in captivity and testifies to the resilience of dignity and the human spirit.

When students read *Guantánamo Diary*, they are troubled by the ordeal Mr. Slahi recounts, and they are moved by his candor, wit, and willingness to recognize the humanity of his guards and interrogators. They are also full of questions, as we are, about why Mr. Slahi is in United States custody at all, and how the treatment he recounts accords with our most basic notions of fairness, due process, and justice.

Because it takes readers deep into some of the most wrenching experiences of our post-9/11 history, Mr. Slahi's *Guantánamo Diary* will almost certainly be read for generations. But how it is read in the future will depend in large part on how and when Mr. Slahi's time in United States custody ends.

We hope the Periodic Review Board will resolve Mr. Slahi's profoundly troubling story. *Guantánamo Diary* reminds us vividly that justice is both a universal concept and an individual matter. As educators and as readers, we sincerely hope that Mr. Slahi's faith in the United States' fair administration of justice will at last be repaid.

Sincerely,

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