Department of Defense Statement:

The Law of Armed Conflict allows parties to the conflict to capture and detain enemy combatants until the end of the conflict. The principal rationale for detention during wartime is to prevent combatants from returning to the battlefield to re-engage in hostilities.

Under international law, the United States is under no obligation to release or transfer a detainee out of detention while the conflict is ongoing. Nevertheless, the Department of Defense reviews a detainee's status to ensure that those whose threat can otherwise be mitigated can be transferred out of detention. More than 30 detainees who have left Guantanamo are confirmed or suspected of returning to the fight against the United States and our coalition partners.

The Department of Defense policy is clear – we treat all detainees humanely. To suggest that the young men and women of the U.S. military who serve honorably and under the world's microscope were engaged in regular and systematic torture of detainees cannot withstand even the slightest scrutiny.

The Department of Defense takes allegations of abuse or mistreatment very seriously and all credible claims are investigated thoroughly. We have no evidence to support the allegations in Mr. Kurnaz's book and no record that his claims were ever documented during his time in detention. The abuses Mr. Kurnaz alleges are not only unsubstantiated and implausible, they are simply outlandish.

In fact, many of his claims can be easily refuted based on publicly available documents. For example, Mr. Kurnaz claims that he was grossly underweight while at Guantanamo because he was deprived of quality food. In fact, according to the list of heights and weights of detainees released by the Department of Defense and available on the internet, Mr. Kurnaz stayed, for the most part, well above his ideal body weight contrary to his claims. Publicly available photos released from his reunion also visually indicate a man of robust health at the end of his detention.

During his Combatant Status Review Tribunal testimony, Mr. Kurnaz never mentions a single allegation of mistreatment, neither during his time in Kandahar nor in Guantanamo.

Detainees at Guantanamo are cared for by military medical professionals who treat their enemies with the same respect and care that they provide their fellow service members. Allegations that detainees are not treated properly by medical personnel are belied by the numbers of detainees who have been transferred back to their home countries in better health than when they arrived at Guantanamo.

According to publicly released records, Mr. Kurnaz was 5' 7.5" at the time of his inprocessing at Guantanamo. When he left, Mr. Kurnaz weighed over 200 pounds. His claim that he was malnourished is beyond implausible.

There are approximately 280 detainees currently held at Guantanamo – which means we have released or transferred more than 500, far more than we currently hold.

Through interrogations of detainees, we have learned:

- -- The organizational structure of Al Qaida and other terrorist groups;
- -- The extent of terrorist presence in Europe, the United States, and the Middle East;
- -- Al Qaida's pursuit of weapons of mass destruction;
- -- Methods of recruitment and locations of recruitment centers;
- -- Terrorist skill sets, including general and specialized operative training; and
- -- How legitimate financial activities are used to hide terrorist operations.
- -- The interrogation of high-value detainees has provided information that has allowed the coalition to disrupt specific terrorist plots in the United States and across the world, thereby saving the lives of innocent civilians. Specific examples include:
- -- Breaking up a cell of 17 Southeast Asian Jamal Islamia operatives who were being groomed for attacks inside the United States, possibly using airplanes
- -- Foiling a planned attack on the US Consulate in Karachi using car bombs and motorcycle bombs
- -- Stopping a plot to hijack passenger planes and fly them into Heathrow or the Canary Wharf in London