

Dr. Burgess Weekly Video Address June 12, 2014 “Prisoner Swap”

Hello, this is your Congressman, Michael Burgess. It’s been two weeks since President Obama announced the exchange of Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl for five Taliban figures detained at Guantanamo Bay.

This was shocking news at first. After all, the United States has always had an unwavering policy of never negotiating with terrorists. But what was even more troubling is the fact that once again, President Obama acted without any input from Congress. And once again, they openly celebrated their so-called victory from the Rose Garden for all the world to see.

This news was disturbing, but it wasn’t just House Republicans who were concerned. Senator Dianne Feinstein, a Democrat who chairs the Senate Intelligence Committee, spoke out against the president’s actions. In fact, she stated publicly that she had serious doubts about the Obama administration’s assertion that Bergdahl’s health was in immediate danger. She said, and I quote, “there is no intelligence to support that.” She added that his physical state and rapid recovery would indicate that he was not close to death at all.

Senator Feinstein isn’t the only member of the President’s party who has raised questions about this unprecedented prisoner swap. Earlier this week, I attended a classified briefing on this topic. In our briefing, the Democrats seemed almost more angry than the Republicans. In fact, a powerful, top-ranking Democrat said that during his time in Congress, he has observed that most presidents become more insular as they approach their final two years in the White House. They tend to consult with Congress less and less. Yet the Obama administration has already displayed this behavior, despite having more than two years left.

As for me, I believe that there is no doubt that there is tremendous value in our armed forces’ devotion to leaving no man behind. The question, however, is at what price? And further, what precedent is the Obama administration setting by acting independently without consulting Congress on its plans, especially on an issue that could compromise our national security?

As always, I appreciate your questions and comments on this issue. Thank you for taking the time to listen. May God bless you and your family, and as always, may God bless Texas.