Exactly four months after a ruthless gang of Islamic extremists crashed hijacked airliners into the Twin Towers, Pentagon and a field in Pennsylvania, several dozen of their brothers-in-arms captured in Afghanistan and Pakistan arrived at U.S. Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay. Though essentially left off the national radar, January 11th marks the 10th anniversary of holding and interrogating Al Qaeda and Taliban-linked militants in remote southeastern Cuba, including some of the world’s most notorious terrorists like 9/11 Mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed. As a nation, we should be grateful to the troops who have served at Gitmo for protecting America. One of the reasons this anniversary is so quiet is because one of the former critics-in-chief, is now the Commander-in-Chief – and President Barack Obama simply wishes the place would go away. While his administration has characterized Gitmo as one of the darkest chapters in U.S. history, Amnesty International went even further, dubbing it the “Gulag of our times.” These radical views have grossly distorted reality and have done a disservice to those who have fought so hard to protect this country. A quick comparison of Guantanamo, where a total of roughly 780 terror suspects were detained in what visiting European Parliamentarians described as “a model prison,” is in stark contrast to the Soviet Gulag penal system where 14 million people were sentenced to hard labor – causing over a million deaths over four decades. Irresponsible proclamations like these came to typify the left-wing hysteria surrounding Guantanamo and damaged our national reputation overseas. Contrary to myths spun by some in the mainstream media and embellished even further on late night TV, detainee abuse was rare. Numerous investigations show less than 1% of detainees were abused at Guantanamo, and those cases were primarily the result of desperate interrogations against a fanatical and highly secretive enemy bent on our destruction. And of the only three detainees ever subjected to waterboarding – Khalid Shiekh Mohammed, USS Cole bomber Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri, and Al Qaeda senior operative Abu Zubaydah, none underwent that experience there. Though admittedly the detention facilities could have been more transparent, there were legitimate reasons for its approach to public information in the chaotic post-9/11 security environment. Efforts to protect the country from a second mass-casualty attack involved a war fought in the shadows – therefore counter-terrorism measures had to rely to a large degree on secrecy. This was designed to protect the lives of intelligence operatives in the field while denying terrorists the knowledge of whom among their friends had been captured – and who may, or may not, be cooperating. While also true that about 5% of detainees held at Gitmo should never have been sent there in the first place – and proved difficult if not impossible to repatriate and resettle, the great majority of those held were actually quite dangerous. According to the Defense Intelligence Agency, at least 25% of those released are confirmed or suspected of having returned to terrorism. This includes a suicide bomber in Iraq, and several who re-emerged as leadership figures with Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and the Taliban in Afghanistan. With the Obama

administration still committed to Guantanamo closure – yet unable to do so over Congressional roadblocks and an apparent desire to move to the political center on security topics before the next election, it remains to be seen what’s next for the current population of 171 detainees should Mr. Obama be re-elected. Signs have been all over the map. Though the administration has wisely formalized the right to hold our nation’s most dangerous enemies indefinitely without trial, at the same time top officials have been in discussions about possibly releasing former high-level Taliban leaders from Guantanamo as a bargaining chip in opening a Taliban political office in Qatar. And while the Obama administration fought unsuccessfully to move the 9/11 trial out of a military commission and into a lower Manhattan civilian court, it has since defaulted back to the Bush administration’s plan. In other words, back to Plan A – only several years later while countless 9/11 victim family members wait painstakingly long for justice. So although Mr. Obama has rightly adopted the Bush administration’s policies on Gitmo, it has not been for lack of trying on his part to do otherwise. As we reach this milestone in fighting a protracted war against Al Qaeda, the Taliban and their sympathizers, we should all be reminded of the role that thousands of troops and intelligence agents have played in keeping our worst enemies at bay – and off the streets. It would be nice for Mr. Obama to acknowledge this fact and thank them for their service. Read the original article at FoxNews.com.