

(marker sound)

- There were a number of individuals that were at Guantanamo that were cleared for release. But we recognized that they could not go back to their home country for whatever reason, but usually because of concerns about torture or mistreatment. I've already mentioned the Chinese Uyghurs that fell into this category. But there were a significantly larger group of people that fell into this category. So we were going out and trying to negotiate with countries that might be willing to accept them. Again because we were concerned about the human rights implications of sending these people back to their home countries. We were very concerned about the receiving country being a place that had stellar human rights records. So we were generally engaging European governments, some other governments in Africa, in Latin America, Australia, other places where we felt that they had a very strong record on human rights and there were no concerns about these people being abused. So as you pointed out, and the issue quickly became one, when I would start these discussions well why won't the United States take them? And there's no good answer to that question. And this is a point that I raised very early on in memos to Secretary Rice and to the Deputy Secretary of State saying this is the most significant hurdle to any type of diplomatic progress on these cases. In fairness to them, to Deputy Secretary Negroponte and Secretary Rice, they both recognized that. And Secretary Rice became very much a proponent for the US revising its policy, in this regard. It was quite delicate diplomacy because this was a very sensitive issue. And particularly because of the unpopularity of President Bush in Europe. It was a difficult sell. As we got closer to the Bush administration, to the end of the Bush administration, I think a lot of these governments were willing to talk to us about this but had already decided at that point, look we're not gonna make any decisions on this. We're gonna wait and if we're gonna do a favor, we're gonna do it for the new president. After President Obama's election, and the fact that he was quite popular in Europe, a lot of governments became much more receptive to this idea. When the administration did change, I came into my office on January 21st of 2009, I think I had five voicemail messages from different governments saying, "Okay, we're willing to talk now."