



## **Ambassador Thomas R. Pickering Testifies on Civil Liberties and National Security Issues Facing the New Congress**

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WASHINGTON – On Thursday, December 9, 2010, Ambassador Thomas R. Pickering [testified](#) before the Sub-Committee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, of the House Committee on the Judiciary. The Sub-Committee is chaired by Representative Jerrold Nadler (D-NY).

Ambassador Pickering, the former Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs and a former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, provided insight on such civil liberties and national security issues as the ability of traditional federal criminal courts to handle terrorism trials, and the foreign policy implications of instituting a policy of indefinite detention without charge for Guantanamo detainees.

During his testimony, Ambassador Pickering remarked, “A system of indefinite detention would raise a serious divergence on a major issue of principle with our international allies and other communities around the world. This would tend to discourage critical cooperation, especially in the fight against terror, by those allies and others whose assistance is important in our joint fight against terrorism.” The Ambassador also observed, “I do not believe that our national security and protection of our civil liberties are mutually exclusive. In fact, I believe that they are intimately tied together. The key task is to work together to find ways to assure both priorities in the interest of our people and their government.”

Ambassador Pickering is a member of The Constitution Project (TCP) Liberty & Security Committee and is a signatory to TCP’s [Beyond Guantanamo: A Bipartisan Declaration](#), a statement supporting the use of our federal criminal courts for trying Guantanamo detainees and opposing the use of indefinite detention without charge.

Established in 1997, TCP is renowned for its ability to bring together unlikely allies—experts and practitioners from across the political spectrum—in order to promote and safeguard America’s founding charter. TCP is working to reform the nation’s broken criminal justice system and to strengthen the rule of law by undertaking scholarship, policy reform and public education initiatives. TCP was born out of the belief that we must cast aside the labels that divide us, in order to keep our Constitution and our democracy strong.

