

# PRESS RELEASE

## Congressman John Conyers, Jr.

Fourteenth District, Michigan  
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary  
Dean, Congressional Black Caucus

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
**March 20, 2002**

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### **Conyers Criticizes Administration's Approach to Military Tribunal Regulations**

Congressman John Conyers, Jr., Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee issued the following statement in connection with the Administration's proposed military tribunal regulations and the introduction of the "Military Tribunal Authorization Act of 2002":

"The bill I am introducing today with Rep. Kucinich meets the responsibility of the Congress and exercises our constitutional authority to define and regulate the use of military tribunals. It would limit their use, prescribe procedures to ensure decent manner of confinement and procedures to ensure a fair trial and right of appeal. It contrasts sharply with the disturbingly vague and procedurally dubious regulations that the Administration has just released.

Like the initial presidential order, the regulations leaked today were released in a vacuum. No prior consultation with Congress. No effort to share responsibility on this critical civil liberties issue. Based on the accounts I have received, the regulations are short sighted and would likely to far more harm than good to the causes of justice and fairness, as well as place our own citizens at risk.

Most seriously, the regulations would still severely limit judicial review. For example, if convicted, a defendant could not go to a regular appeals court or the Supreme Court, the defendant would be forced to go to a special review panel of three judges, one of whom is a military judge.

In addition, it is our understanding that the leaked regulations do not address the most serious problems we had with the initial presidential order. Among other things, non-citizens in the United States could be tried before a military tribunal in the United States could be tried before a military tribunal. Nor have we heard that the regulations are in any way limited to terrorism or the events of September 11.

We also understand the regulations will continue to permit detention of suspects in secret without public scrutiny or monitoring. And would continue to permit indefinitely detain suspects without access to the judicial system.

The problem with many of these directives is that they will put our own soldiers and liberties at risk. When the United States short circuits the rules of justice, we risk subjecting our citizens and soldiers to the same procedures."