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Readers React

# Bringing home an American -- it's complicated

Politics Prisoners and Detainees Wars and Interventions Taliban Qatar John McCain Guantanamo Bay Detention Camp

Informed Americans are split down the middle on most important policy issues. So it is hard to win statewide or national elections on policy grounds — charisma counts, negative ads count, and all the other things most of us hate about politics count. ("Obama adamantly defends Taliban prisoner swap that freed U.S. soldier," June 3)

But the rash of recent controversies involving the Obama administration may have the salutary effect of focusing us on competence.

Whatever one thinks of the recent decision to swap those particular Guantanamo Bay detainees for this particular American prisoner of war, there is little dispute that it was handled incompetently. So now we all have to face the kind of loud politics most of us detest, our elected officials are distracted and will engage in expensive hearings that in the end won't much matter, and stuff that needs doing simply won't get done.

We could do with a lot more competence, and maybe all the recent controversies will focus us on that instead of what we know are always pretty empty policy promises.

*Jeffrey C. Briggs*

*Hollywood*