

Home

30 July 2006

- > News

14:54

- > World

- > **Americas**

New maximum-security jail to open at Guantanamo Bay

Far from winding down, the controversial US detention centre is expanding

By Andrew Buncombe in Washington

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The controversy over the US-run detention centre at Guantanamo Bay is to erupt anew with confirmation by the Pentagon that a new, permanent prison will open in the Cuban enclave in the next few weeks.

Camp 6, a state-of-the-art maximum-security jail built by a Halliburton subsidiary, will be able to hold 200 prisoners. Commander Robert Durand, a spokesman for Joint Task Force Guantanamo, said the \$30m, two-storey block was due to open at the end of September. He added:

The new facility is reported to be modelled on a jail in Lenawee County, Michigan. Commander Durand said Camp 6 will have better recreation and exercise amenities for detainees and integrated medical care. Other facilities at the US naval base on Cuba include Camps 1, 2, 3 and 5, which are maximum-security, single-cell blocks; Camp 4, which is a medium-security, communal living prison; and Camp Iguana, also medium security, which

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"Camp 6 is designed to improve the quality of life for the detainees and provide greater protection for the people working in the facility."

This development will refuel the controversy about the jail, which still holds 450 prisoners from President George Bush's "war on terror". Campaigners pointed to Mr Bush's claim earlier this summer that he would "like to close" Guantanamo. Just weeks after he made his comments in June, the Supreme Court ruled that the administration's system for trying prisoners using military tribunals breached United States and international law.

At the time, some campaigners predicted the decision marked the beginning of the end of Guantanamo Bay. Since then, however, the Bush administration has signalled its intention to

houses detainees cleared for release and awaiting transfer.

Of all the prisoners ever held at Guantanamo since it was established

in January 2002, only 10 have been formally charged. An investigation earlier this year by New Jersey's Seton Hall University showed that, based on the military's own documents, 55 per cent of prisoners are not alleged to have committed any hostile acts against the US, and 40 per cent are not accused of affiliation with al-Qa'ida.

The same documents suggested only 8 per cent of prisoners

are accused of fighting for a terrorist group, and that 86 per cent were captured by the Northern Alliance or Pakistani authorities "at a time when the US offered large bounties for

introduce new legislation that would circumvent the court's ruling. The revelation that Camp 6 is poised to open is proof that it intends to keep using the prison.

the capture of suspected terrorists".




Speaking in the Rose Garden in June following the suicide of three prisoners, Mr Bush

Amnesty International's UK campaigns director, Tim Hancock, said: "This appears to make a mockery of President Bush's statements about the need to close down Guantanamo Bay. In addition to strongly urging the President to step in to prevent any extension to this already notorious prison camp, we call on him to speed up the process of closing Guantanamo and of ensuring that all detainees are allowed fair trials or released to safe countries."

said: "I'd like to close Guantanamo, but I also recognise that we're holding some people that are darn dangerous, and that we better have a plan to deal with them in our courts."

Zachary KatzNelson, senior counsel with the group Reprieve, which represents 36 Guantanamo prisoners, argued that public opinion and the courts would ultimately force the US to close the

camp down. "If Bush had the choice, he would not shut it, and the men [held there] would never see the light of day, and neither would their stories come out," he said. "The reality is that the world knows too much. He has to shut it down."

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