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## **US Military to Transfer a Third of Guantanamo Detainees**

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GUANTANAMO BAY US NAVAL BASE, Feb 28, 2006 (AFP) - US military authorities plan to transfer about a third of the detainees at the Guantanamo "war on terror" camp to their home countries after a review carried out over the past year, a US military officer said.

The Defense Department has concluded that 119 detainees did not need to be held at the US naval base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and would be taken into custody by countries where they hold citizenship, Navy Captain Tom Quinn told reporters here on Tuesday.

Another 14 detainees would be released outright because they no longer presented a threat to the United States and offered no "intelligence value," Quinn said.

"To put this into perspective, approximately one third of the current detainee population is eventually going to leave Guantanamo Bay once the US government has made discussions with the countries of transfer," he said.

Washington would seek assurances on "security" as well as how the detainee will be treated upon transfer, he said.

The US administration has come under mounting criticism over its treatment of detainees held as part the "war on terrorism" following the September 11, 2001 attacks on New York and Washington.

For four years, some 500 detainees have been held at Guantanamo but only 10 have been formally charged as alleged terrorists. Most were captured soon after the US-led war in Afghanistan against the Taliban regime.

With pressure mounting over Guantanamo, the government set up the administrative review board (ARB), comprised of three senior military officers charged with assessing whether prisoners should continue to be held.

The board held hearings in which reports from government agencies were examined as well as evidence presented by the detainees, who are allowed to appear before the panel. About 50 percent of the detainees chose to participate in the review, Quinn said.

The hearings loosely resemble parole board proceedings except the detainee enjoys fewer rights and has no legal representation, prompting criticism from human rights advocates.

"The administrative review board process is fundamentally flawed and is in some ways too late," Priti Patel of Human Rights First told AFP.

"The process is taking place three years after most of the detainees at Guantanamo were seized. And it doesn't afford detainees access to counsel to represent them. It fails to allow them to confront the evidence against them."