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## **Biden says U.S. Needs to Shut Down Guantanamo Prison**

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WASHINGTON - A leading Senate Democrat said Sunday the United States needs to move toward shutting down the military prison camp at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

"This has become the greatest propaganda tool that exists for recruiting of terrorists around the world. And it is unnecessary to be in that position," said Sen. Joseph Biden, D-Del.

A Pentagon report released Friday detailed incidents in which U.S. guards at Guantanamo desecrated the Quran. Last month, Amnesty International called the detention center for alleged terrorists "the gulag of our time," a charge Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld dismissed as "reprehensible."

The chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, GOP Sen. Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania, plans hearings this month on the treatment of foreign terrorism suspects at the prison camp.

Biden, the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, proposed that an independent commission take a look at Guantanamo and make recommendations.

"But the end result is, I think we should end up shutting it down, moving those prisoners," he told ABC's "This Week."

"Those that we have reason to keep, keep. And those we don't, let go."

He added, "I think more Americans are in jeopardy as a consequence of the perception that exists worldwide with its existence than if there were no Gitmo."

There are about 540 detainees at Guantanamo Bay. Some have been there more than three years without being charged with a crime. Most were captured on the battlefields of Afghanistan in 2001 and 2002 and were sent to Guantanamo Bay in hope of extracting useful intelligence about the al-Qaida terrorist network.