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## **Closing of Guantanamo Urged**

Prison discredits U.S., British official says

Associated Press

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LONDON - The U.S. prison camp at Guantanamo Bay is a discredit to the American tradition of freedom and should close, Britain's attorney general said Wednesday.

"The existence of Guantanamo Bay remains unacceptable," Attorney General Lord Goldsmith said in a speech.

"It is time in my view that it should close. . The historic tradition of the United States as a beacon of freedom, of liberty and of justice deserves the removal of this symbol."

Goldsmith's criticism was far stronger than that of Prime Minister Tony Blair whenever he is asked about Guantanamo, where about 500 terrorism suspects have been detained without charge or trial for as long as four years.

In Washington, State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said that "at some time in the future we would like nothing better" than to close the prison. But the United States does not want to release dangerous people prematurely only to have them resume attacks on U.S. and other personnel, he said.

Blair has often said the prison is an anomaly that will eventually have to close, but he will go no further. He always prefaces his criticism by saying it is important to understand the threat America faces and the fact that many of those imprisoned were picked up on battlefields in Afghanistan.

Goldsmith, whose job is to advise the British government on legal matters, made no such qualifying comment.

"Not only would it in my personal opinion be right to close Guantanamo as a matter of principle, I believe it would also help to remove what has become a symbol to many - right or wrong - of injustice," he said.