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## Behind the Wire at Guantanamo Bay

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Guantanamo Bay -- The journey into Guantanamo Bay takes you deep into the dilemmas of wartime.

This place is part US naval outpost, part comfortable American suburb, and part penal colony for the 21st century.

Behind the wire are about 550 prisoners - enemy fighters, says the US government, in the global war on terrorism. The evidence against them, though, is secret.

A white uniform means the prisoner is compliant. He'll have some privileges and can mix with others.

The orange uniform means he is resistant, and held in isolation.

The guards complain that some prisoners hurl insults and excrement at them.

"We're taking abuse from faeces, the urine, the spit - and we can't do nothing about it," said one.

"We have to look at them and smile and act professional. And to know that he probably killed one of our soldiers. That's not good."

### **'High intelligence value'**

The camps are now taking on a very permanent look.

In some of the cells are the detainees who the US military and US intelligence feel are among the most hardcore of all those detained in its war against terrorism.

Segregated from other prisoners, their cells are absolutely Spartan - a basic toilet and a sink, a mattress, a towel, a copy of the Koran.

The men who are kept in these cells are still deemed to be of high intelligence value. Some now face military trials and indefinite detention.

But a major legal offensive on their behalf is under way. Lawyers are challenging the detentions in American courts.

Tom Wilner argues that Guantanamo Bay violates the US constitution.

"The way we have treated these people has put us to the whole world as a hypocrite," he said.

"Someone who preaches human rights and civil liberties but who won't stick to them when our own security is tested. It's been terrible."

His clients allege serious mistreatment by the US military. The claims are unproven, and the military insists that Guantanamo is vital in the war on terrorism.

"We are collecting information here that will help us fill in all the operational techniques of al-Qaeda, and many of the detainees currently being held here have information that can help us fill in that giant mosaic of information," said Brig Gen Jay Hood.

It is an old dilemma. The needs of war versus the rights of the individual. And it is playing out once again in these camps at the very edge of American democracy.