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Guantanamo Non-Enemy Combatant to Be Freed

STEVENSON JACOBS
Associated Press
January 21, 2005

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico - A third terror suspect held at the U.S. prison camp in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, is to be released after a panel found that he was not an enemy combatant, while 73 others were ordered to remain in custody, officials said Friday.

No details were given on the detainee, who will be freed following preparations between the United States and his government, said Navy Capt. Beci Brenton, a Pentagon spokeswoman.

The 73 other prisoners were declared "enemy combatants," bringing to 327 the number of suspects who have been given that classification, one that affords fewer legal protections than that of prisoner of war.

Meanwhile, a review panel on Friday heard the case of an alleged al-Qaida member captured in Afghanistan after the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks in the United States.

The 25-year-old, who has been held at Guantanamo since January 2002, was absent from the hearing and gave no statement, said Navy Lt. Terry Green, a spokesman for the Combatant Status Review Tribunals.

The man traveled from Saudi Arabia to Afghanistan after the Sept. 11 attacks, and was injured when he stepped on a land mine in Afghanistan, Green said. The man was transported to a hospital in Quetta, Pakistan, with four other detainees.

The tribunals, which began last year, are intended to determine whether more than 550 detainees at the U.S. naval base should be freed or were correctly classified as enemy combatants. Another 227 cases are pending.

Only one tribunal remains and is scheduled for Saturday, Green said.