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Camp Shift Isolates Enemy Combatants:

The Pentagon is consolidating CampDelta captives under a plan that would increasingly isolate the enemy combatant population at Guantanamo

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GUANTANAMO BAY NAVAL BASE, Cuba -- Ahead of opening a new \$30 million, 220-cell concrete prison in August, U.S. military commanders are consolidating captives into smaller compounds, increasingly isolating Guantanamo's enemy combatant population.

The new consolidation plan comes in the fifth year of the Pentagon's offshore detention center, where the number of captives from more than 30 nations hovers around 500.

Under the scheme, guards are emptying cells in Camps 2 and 3 that contract laborers cut and welded from steel shipping containers in 2002, when the detention center was first established for suspects in the war against terrorism. Most captives are being moved to Camps 1 and 5.

Camp 1, the oldest camp in the style of Camps 2 and 3, is still operating, according to a prison camp commander who under Pentagon ground rules must be identified as "Colonel B," the pseudonym he adopted last week while testifying at the military commission of Algerian captive Sufiyan Barhoumi. Captives held at Camp 1 can see and speak with each other.

Camp 5 lets captives out of their cells, at most, two hours a day for solitary recreation inside open-air, 15-by-30-foot spaces surrounded by chain-link fences.

The commander of detention operations described the plan last week as part of the first-ever testimony at the military commission -- the war-crimes trials at Guantanamo that await a decision on their constitutionality from the U.S. Supreme Court.

In August, commanders expect to open a state-of-the-art, 220-prisoner, \$30 million cement-block building of single-occupancy cells. Work on the building, under a 2004 contract awarded to Haliburton subsidiary Kellogg, Brown and Root, began about a year ago but had sporadic setbacks during last year's active hurricane season.

Called Camp 6, it is anticipated to require fewer guards and less military supervision because of electronic surveillance and locking systems that can keep captives contained in the maximum-security cells.

The new prison camp is designed to prevent captives from seeing each other. However, Camp 6 will have recreation areas for up to 20 captives at a time, where those deemed safe enough and cooperative enough will be allowed to pray in groups.

Colonel B revealed the consolidation plan in the same week that a Navy spokesman for detainee review processes said that panels had approved the release or transfer to allied nations' prisons of about 140 captives among the 490 or so now held at the prison camps. No transfers are thought to be imminent, however.

Like another camp, CampX-Ray, Camps 2 and 3 will not be torn down. Instead, they will be "mothballed," as the colonel described it, meaning they will be available for use again.

As of last week, the colonel said, six prison camps arrayed near the sea on a once-empty bluff called RadioRange could accommodate 1,300 prisoners.

He also gave an unusual statistic at pretrial hearings for Barhoumi, who is missing much of his left hand from a land-mine explosion: Either 22 or 23 of the terrorism suspects are amputees who have special accommodations or equipment to let them manage their prison cell circumstances.