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## **New Jersey lawmakers plan a trip to Gitmo**

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WASHINGTON -- A group of New Jersey lawmakers will travel to the U.S. Naval Station at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, today to look into accusations that detainees are being abused there.

Sen. Jon Corzine (D-N.J.), who will become a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee when the new Congress convenes next month, said he hopes to be able to ask detainees directly about accusations they have been mistreated by U.S. interrogators.

"There have been ... consistent reports of prisoner abuse and I'd like to understand what is or isn't the case ... What are we doing to make sure we are complying with international law and, really, our own standards?" Corzine said in a conference call with reporters yesterday.

He said he is troubled by the consistency of the reports of abuse, both at the Guantánamo prison for al Qaeda suspects and at battlefield holding centers in Iraq.

"Given the context of what has gone on in Iraq ... I think we have a reason to make sure that what's going on in Guantánamo makes sense," Corzine said. "We've seen a lot of legal consideration of the sergeants and corporals and privates, but it seems to be a systematic element of concern about abuse and how we've dealt with prisoners and detainees.

"There is a serious issue of accountability," he said.

Corzine scheduled today's trip some time ago to meet with New Jersey National Guard troops stationed there. But with recent allegations of abuse, he decided to broaden his mission. Corzine will be joined by Reps. Robert Menendez (D-13th Dist.) and Rush Holt (D-12th Dist.).

The American Civil Liberties Union recently released documents, obtained under court order, that appear to show that U.S. authorities used questionable interrogation techniques at Guantánamo, including exposing detainees to extreme temperatures, sleep deprivation, stress positions and the use of military dogs.

The White House said this week that it would look into the allegations and take steps to see that detainees are treated humanely.

"The president expects that any allegations of abuse are taken seriously and fully investigated, and that corrective measures are taken to make sure that abuse does not occur again," White House Spokesman Scott McClellan said.

Asked about the Guantánamo detainees during a White House press conference on Monday, Bush said U.S. authorities are reviewing the status of the prisoners and that more than 200 already have been released.

"You've got to understand the dilemma we're in," Bush said. "These are people that got scooped up off a battlefield attempting to kill U.S. troops."

