

MOST POPULAR

Politics Video Blog White House Congress U.S. Government World Supreme Court Press Releases

POPULAR SEARCHES: american idol adam lambert kris allen richest people in the world Search All News Nev



OBAMA VS. CHENEY Who got the facts right on national security?

# Senate rebukes Obama, blocks Guantanamo shutdown

AP Associated Press

Buzz Up Send Share Print

Featured Topics: Barack Obama



AP - FILE - In this May 14, 2009, file photo, reviewed by the U.S. military, Guantanamo detainees pray before ...



Slideshow: Guantanamo Military Base



Barack Obama Video: Obama addresses Naval Academy graduates AP



Barack Obama Video: President Obama To Speak At Naval Academy WJZ 13 Baltimore

By ANDREW TAYLOR, Associated Press Writer – Wed May 20, 7:08 pm ET  
WASHINGTON – In a rare, bipartisan defeat for President Barack Obama, the Senate voted overwhelmingly Wednesday to keep the prison at Guantanamo Bay open for the foreseeable future and forbid the transfer of any detainees to facilities in the United States.

Democrats lined up with Republicans in the 90-6 vote that came on the heels of a similar move a week ago in the House, underscoring widespread apprehension among Obama's congressional allies over voters' strong feelings about bringing detainees to the U.S. from the prison in Cuba.

The president readied a speech for Thursday on the U.S. fight against terrorism, at a time when liberals have chafed at some of his decisions.

Obama has vowed to close the prison by January 2010, and the Senate's vote was not the final word on the matter. It will be next month at the earliest before Congress completes work on the legislation, giving the White House time pursue a compromise that would allow the president to fulfill his pledge.

But Obama's maneuvering room was further constrained during the day when FBI Director Robert Mueller told a congressional panel that he had concerns about bringing Guantanamo Bay detainees to prisons

in the United States. Among the risks is "the potential for individuals undertaking attacks in the United States," said Mueller, who was appointed by President George W. Bush in 2001 and is serving a 10-year fixed term in office.

Additionally, U.S. District Judge John Bates ruled this week that some prisoners — but not all — can be held indefinitely at Guantanamo without being charged, thus increasing the pressure on the administration to develop a plan for the men held there.

After the Senate vote, White House press secretary Robert Gibbs said, "The president understands that his most important job is to keep the American people safe and that he is not going to make any decision or any

## Top Stories

- Gates defends decision to cl prison
- Swine flu genes circulated u
- Obama vows not to send pe cause
- Terror plot suspects have le
- Pelosi says no further comm charge
- Mayanmar's Suu Kyi pleads n intruder case
- Israeli tourism poster withdra

## Featured



Just the fa Obama and C Gitmo. Do the » More from I



Key advise Biden is settl second in con » U.S. News:

## Updates

My Connections Everyone

Sign In to see what your to on Yahoo! New New User? Sign

Today



Paula buzzed up: Th "These Guys Picked Mess With" - Yahoo!

ago



Tina buzzed up: U.S.

judgment that imperils the safety of the American people."

He added Obama has not yet decided where some of the detainees will be sent. A presidential commission is studying the issue.

There was no suspense in the moments leading to the Senate vote, although Democrats maneuvered to take political credit for denying Obama funds he sought to close the prison. They hoped to negate weeks of Republican warnings about the danger involved.

Sen. Daniel Inouye, D-Hawaii, chairman of the Appropriations Committee, favors closing Guantanamo, and the legislation his panel originally sent to the floor provided money for that purpose once the administration submitted a plan for the shutdown.

In changing course and seeking to delete the funds, he said, "The fact that the administration has not offered a workable plan at this point made that decision rather easy."

All six opponents of the proposal were Democrats, including Sens. Dick Durbin of Illinois, Tom Harkin of Iowa, Patrick Leahy of Vermont, Carl Levin of Michigan, and Jack Reed and Sheldon Whitehouse of Rhode Island.

The administration asked for \$80 million to close the facility. Obama promised repeatedly as a presidential candidate to shut down the prison, calling it a blot on the international image of the United States.

Even in voting to deny him the funds, Obama's Democratic allies insisted the president was fundamentally correct.

"Guantanamo is used by al-Qaida as a symbol of American abuse of Muslims and is fanning the flames of anti-Americanism around the world," said Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California.

And Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada, who had said on Tuesday he opposed allowing detainees to be transferred to U.S. prisons, signaled he might change his mind on that point. "If the administration proposes a plan that recommends the transfer of some detainees to American prisons, he will evaluate it carefully and make a judgment at that time," said spokesman Jim Manley.

The lopsided vote was a victory for the Senate Republicans, who have recently turned their attention to Obama's policies on foreign policy and terrorism after failing to make headway in criticizing his economic program.

Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., has delivered numerous speeches in recent weeks raising pointed questions about Obama's plans to close the prison without first explaining where the men held there would be sent. "For months, we have been saying what Senate Democrats now acknowledge: that because the administration has no plan for what to do with the 240 detainees at Guantanamo, it would be irresponsible and dangerous for the Senate to appropriate the money to close it," McConnell said shortly before the vote.

The Republican leader also won approval for a separate terror-related provision later in the day. On a vote of 92-3, the Senate agreed to require the administration, before releasing any detainee, to inform Congress of the likelihood that he would return to terrorism. It also would report on any effort al-Qaida may be making to recruit detainees once they're released from U.S. custody.

Obama came to office pledging a dramatic change in George W. Bush's terrorism policy. In the months since, he has woven an uncertain course, occasionally angering liberals.

He first backed the cancellation of military tribunals for prisoners, then announced he wanted them resumed with greater legal protections for the accused. Last week, he reversed course on another issue, deciding to appeal a court-ordered release of prisoner-abuse photos taken at Abu Ghraib in Iraq.

Several Republicans praised Obama for those very steps.

"I commend him for being very willing to change his opinion in light of having access to the intelligence he didn't have access to" as a candidate, said Sen. Orrin Hatch of Utah.



**soldier in pink boxer**  
seconds ago



**RichardM buzzed up in April, led by Califc**  
ago

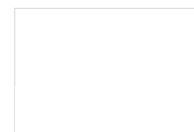


**Jus\_Tryn\_2Live buzz chief lauds soldier ir (Reuters)** 12 seconds

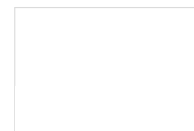


**Corey R buzzed up: lauds soldier in pink**  
seconds ago

## Politics Video



**Biden in Beirut before a key election** AFP



**Obama addresses Naval Academy graduates** AP

## Education



**Recession Prc**  
Even in this ec industries still Growing Care



**Flexible Jobs I**  
Make great m schedule and f balance in you

## Real Estate

**Search homes for sale :**

**Location** (City & State or Zi

**Listing Type**

- Homes for Sale  Rer  
 Foreclosures

[Home](#) | [US](#) | [Business](#) | [World](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Sports](#) | [Tech](#) | [Politics](#) | [Science](#) | [Health](#)

FBI Director Mueller made his comments before the House Judiciary Committee. Prodded by Rep. Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., to agree that Guantanamo detainees could be kept safely in maximum security prisoners in the United States, Mueller declined. He noted that in some instances gang leaders have run their gangs from inside prisons.

If Reid has appeared equivocal on the possible transfer of prisoners, Sen. Richard Durbin of Illinois, the second-in-command among Democrats, pointed out that no one has ever escaped from a federal "supermax" prison and that 347 convicted terrorists are among those held in them.

That drew some support from Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C. "The idea that we cannot find a place to securely house 250-plus detainees within the United States is not rational," he said.

Not all Republicans were thinking along the same lines.

"No good purpose is served by allowing known terrorists, who trained at terrorist training camps, to come to the U.S. and live among us," said Rep. Lamar Smith of Texas. "Guantanamo Bay was never meant to be an Ellis Island."

Associated Press writers Devlin Barrett, Nedra Pickler and Andrew Taylor contributed to this report.

Related Searches: [senate majority leader harry reid](#) [president barack obama](#) [guantanamo bay](#) [sen. mitch mcconnell](#) [sen. daniel inouye](#)

**Recommend** 331 users recommend



Send

Share

Print

Opinion

### Related

[Judge says US can hold detainees indefinitely](#) AP

[Obama unsure on shifting Guantanamo prisoners](#) AP

[First US trial planned for Gitmo detainee](#) AP

[Analysis: Guantanamo a political win GOP needed](#) AP

### More...

Video: [Guantanamo 'weakens US security'](#) BBC

Video: [Obama on Guantanamo closure](#) BBC

Video: [AP Top Stories](#) AP

NEWS SERVICES [RSS](#) [News Alerts](#) [Add Yahoo! Headlines to](#) [Help](#) [Feedback](#)

Copyright © 2009 The Associated P  
The information contained in the AP  
published, broadcast, rewritten or r  
prior written authority of The /



**'Flying carpet' in space**  
Japanese astronaut flies carpet in zero gravity.

[See today's talked about videos](#)

### Most Viewed - Politics

[The Bible bill?](#) Politico

[Gates defends decision to close Guantanamo prison](#) AP

[Obama signs bill to cut wasteful defense spending](#) AP

[Obama set to approve new rules for credit cards](#) AP

[Cheney's speech contained omissions, misstatements](#)

McClatchy Newspapers

[All Most Viewed »](#)

### Most Blogged - Politics

[Op-Ed Columnist: Cheney Lost to Bush](#) New York Times – Thu May 21, 9:49 pm EDT

[Blogs About This Story](#)

(17)

[Op-Ed Columnist: Blue Double Cross](#) New York Times – Thu May 21, 9:48 pm EDT

[Blogs About This Story](#)

(14)

### Elsewhere on the Web

[Politico: Guns at the White House?](#)

[Politico: Obama's reality-show presidency](#)

[McClatchy Newspapers: McConnell said 'I couldn't win,&quot; Bunning says](#)

[Animatronic Obama Going to Disney World With High-Tech Style](#) New York Times – Thu May 20, 2009  
[Add to My Yahoo!](#) | [RSS](#)  
[Blogs About This Story](#)

- Politics - U.S. Congress  
[Add to My Yahoo!](#) | [RSS](#)
- Politics - Barack Obama  
[Add to My Yahoo!](#) | [RSS](#)
- Guantanamo Detainees  
[Add to My Yahoo!](#) | [RSS](#)
- Presidential Elections  
[Add to My Yahoo!](#) | [RSS](#)

[More News Feeds »](#)

### Alerts

Get an alert when there are new stories about:

- Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid
- President Barack Obama
- Guantanamo Bay
- Sen. Mitch McConnell
- Sen. Daniel Inouye

[Add Selected Alerts](#)

[View More Alerts »](#)

### Also on Yahoo! News

- [Today in History](#)
- [Obituaries](#)
- [Corrections](#)
- [News by Region \(Yahoo! Directory\)](#)
- [Yahoo! News & Media Sites](#)

### Daily Features

[All Comics »](#)

Opinions & Editorials: [Diverse views on news from the right, left, and center.](#)

[All Opinion »](#)



### Photo Highlight

#### Photo Highlight Slideshow

The Statue of Liberty is seen during a media tour to the crown. AFP/Timothy A. Clary

[More Photos and Slideshow »](#)

