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Taliban Guantanamo Detainees Agree to Qatar Transfer Deal

By John Glaser

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After a visit from a delegation of Afghan President Hamid Karzai, [five Taliban detainees held at the U.S. Guantanamo Bay military prison have agreed to be transferred to Qatar](#), a possible first step toward peace talks with the Taliban.

The aim is to transfer the five Taliban detainees from the due-process-free Guantanamo Bay to a prison in Qatar with at least some conceivable court oversight. This is meant to bring the Taliban to the negotiating table with Washington and Kabul to hopefully reach an agreement and avoid continued insurgency after the U.S. withdrawal in 2014.

There are obvious political risks for Obama to make a final approval of this deal, especially since it would be a direct contradiction to the spirit of the 10-year war, which held that the Taliban were enemies that needed to be killed.

White House spokeswoman Caitlin Hayden said of the Karzai government's disclosure of the prisoners' agreement to transfer to Qatar, "The United States has not decided to transfer any Taliban officials from Guantanamo Bay."

"We are not in a position to discuss ongoing deliberations or individual detainees, but our goal of closing Guantanamo is well established and widely understood," she said. "In general, any

decision to transfer a detainee from Guantanamo would be undertaken in accordance with U.S. law and in consultation with the Congress.”