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Obama Considering “Wide Array” of Options to Shut Down Guantanamo

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White House spokesperson Josh Earnest also did not rule out the use of executive action as a means to shut the prison down.

This privilege has allowed Obama to bypass Republican opposition in Congress to push immigration reform and lifting of the economic embargo on Cuba.

When asked by reporters aboard the presidential plane, the Air Force One, if Obama would use his powers to shut down the prison at the U.S. naval base in Cuba that houses terrorism suspects, Earnest replied, “The president and his team are always considering a wide array of options.”

However, he said, President Obama’s preferred option for closing down the controversial prison would be congressional approval of a plan to transfer prisoners to third countries to reduce the number of inmates in the center.

During recent months, the president has accelerated efforts to close down Guantanamo and transfer its inmates, despite fierce opposition from lawmakers, especially Republicans, who fear inmates charged with terrorism will end up in prisons in their own districts.

The latest transfers occurred in June, when the U.S. sent six prisoners to Oman.

These were the first transfers since January and also the first since Ashton Carter was appointed Secretary of Defense.

The prison still holds 116 inmates, a much lower figure than the almost 800 who came to live within its walls after President George W. Bush decided to wage a war against Islamist terrorism and set up this maximum-security prison following the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

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