
Trump: Americans could be tried in Guantánamo

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A President Donald Trump might push for Americans accused of terrorism to be tried in military tribunal at the U.S. Navy base in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, the Republican nominee told the Miami Herald on Thursday.

"I would say they could be tried there, that would be fine," Trump said in a brief interview ahead of his speech to home builders in Miami Beach.

Under current federal law, it's illegal to try U.S. citizens at military commissions. Changing the law would require an act of Congress.

In the wide-ranging interview focused on key South Florida issues, Trump continued to question climate change caused by humans. He said he plans to soon sit down with Cuban Americans in Miami to hash out a Cuba policy. And for the first time, he said Congress should set aside money to combat the Zika virus.

Asked about Guantánamo in the past, Trump has said he would like to "load it up with bad dudes." He wouldn't specify to the Herald whether as president he would again allow terrorism suspects captured abroad to be transferred to the detention center.

"I want to make sure that if we have radical Islamic terrorists, we have a very safe place to keep them," he said. President Barack Obama, he added, is "allowing people to get out that are terrible people."

"Would you try to get the military commissions — the trial court there — to try U.S. citizens?" a reporter asked.

"Well, I know that they want to try them in our regular court systems, and I don't like that at all. I don't like that at all," he said. "I would say they could be tried there, that would be fine."

The Obama administration for a while considered trying five alleged conspirators in the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks in a

federal court in New York City, rather than in Guantanamo where they are being held. But the plan was met with such fierce political resistance that the White House chose to prosecute them by military tribunal. No trial date has yet been set for charges filed four years ago.

Trump spoke to the Herald at the Fontainebleau Hotel, steps from the shoreline and not far from streets the city of Miami Beach has spent millions of dollars elevating to fend off rising seas.

"I'm not a big believer in man-made climate change," Trump said, despite vast scientific evidence to the contrary. "There could be some impact, but I don't believe it's a devastating impact."

In the past, Trump has called climate change a "hoax."

"I would say that it goes up, it goes down," he said. "Certainly climate has changed. ... The problem we have is our businesses are suffering. Our businesses are unable to compete in this country because other countries aren't being forced to do what our businesses are being forced to do, and it makes us uncompetitive."

If cities like Miami Beach want to set local rules to fight the effects of rising seas, though, Trump said he wouldn't get in their way.

"If the local government feels that way, they should do it," he said. "If they're doing the roads, and if they want to make them higher, I think that's probably not the worst thing I've ever heard, if you're going to do them anyway."

On Miami's Zika outbreak, Trump said he would "let some of the funds that they're asking for come in" to fight the virus.

He would ask Congress to do that?

"Yeah, I would. Absolutely," he said, in apparent agreement with Democratic rival Hillary Clinton and Florida Republicans from both political parties who have urged lawmakers to help fund the Zika response. "They're fighting for it, and hopefully that's going to be approved very soon."

"It's a tough thing to stop anyway," he added about the mosquito-borne virus, praising Republican Florida Gov. Rick Scott, a Trump supporter. "But they're spraying all over the place. I see it. And I think it'll be fine."

In the next week or two, Trump said he intends to return to Miami to meet with Cuban Americans about U.S. policy toward the island. He has said it's "fine" for the Obama administration to pursue renewed ties with Cuba but called for a "stronger" deal.

Pressed with what that agreement would look like, Trump offered a single specific detail: The U.S. should bar Cuba from pushing for reparations for losses it claims stemmed from the American trade embargo.

"Any deal you make, you're going to put a very major paragraph in that deal that under no circumstances can Cuba come back two years later and bring a \$3 trillion lawsuit against the United States for reparations," he said.

The problem with that stance: It would likely also foreclose U.S. efforts — led by the same Cuban Americans Trump will probably hear from — for reparations from Cuba for businesses confiscated by the Castro government.

Trump declined to take a position on the wet-foot, dry-foot policy that allows Cubans who reach U.S. soil to stay in the country. Earlier this year, he questioned the fairness of the Cuban Adjustment Act, which lets Cubans obtain legal status and a path to citizenship.

"I want to listen to what the people are saying," he said. "And I want to listen specifically to what Cuban people who came to this country and who have lived in this country — Cuban Americans — I want to hear how they feel about it."

The Herald interview was Trump's second with a South Florida news outlet in as many weeks. He spoke to Herald news partner WFOR-CBS 4 late last month, and he taped another interview Thursday with WJAN-NBC 6. Clinton, who campaigned in Miami and Davie on Tuesday, has not taken questions from local reporters.

Trump got things started by mentioning a new national Rasmussen poll whose results he liked because they showed him virtually tied with Clinton.

His least-focused response came on Venezuela. At a Sunrise rally Wednesday night, he'd warned the U.S., under poor leadership, could "end up being a large version of Venezuela."

What did he mean?

"Venezuela's got tremendous problems right now, even for getting food, and when I look at it, I'm so sad, because I know how great the people of Venezuela are. But I use that as an example," he said. "Certain policies cause that to happen."

What should the U.S. do about it?

"Their leaders are not very friendly to our leaders," Trump said. "But, of course, our leaders don't get along with too many people. But certainly, if we could help in some way, we should help. But, you know, they've got some very deep-seated problems."

Trump claimed ignorance of comparisons, including by international scholars, between his brash political style and that of the late Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez. As candidates, both cast themselves as the only ones able to fix their countries, and their underdog campaigns relied on appealing to voters ignored by political elites.

"He had some feelings, some very strong feelings, and he did represent a lot of people, and he represented a lot of people that had been left behind," Trump said. "We have people that, honestly, they've been left behind."
