

# *White House Says U.S. Will Not Return Guantanamo Bay to Cuba*

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Washington, January 30 (RHC) — Despite the recent rapprochement efforts by the Cuban and U.S. governments, the White House said Thursday it had no plans to return Guantánamo Bay, the site of a major U.S. naval base and military prison on Cuba's southeast coast.

This announcement comes in response to a statement by Cuban President Raúl Castro that normalizing relations made no sense as long as the U.S. continues to illegally occupy Guantanamo Bay.

However, White House spokesman Josh Earnest indicated any such move was off the table. "The President (Obama) does believe that the prison at Guantánamo Bay should be closed down," he said. "But the naval base is not something that we wish to be closed."

The U.S. controls Guantanamo Bay since a 1903 Cuban–American Treaty signed soon after the Spanish–American War, when Cuba was under U.S. military occupation.

Following the 1959 Cuban Revolution, Havana has consistently protested against the U.S. presence on Cuban soil and called it illegal under international law, saying the military base was imposed on Cuba by force.

The U.S. currently controls over 45 sq. mi. of Guantánamo Bay. The military prison set up there has been embroiled in controversy for reports of torture and the absence of trials for inmates accused of terrorism.

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