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U.S. to Send 6 Guantanamo Prisoners to Uruguay

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“The administration has given Congress 30 days (advance) notice about the intention to transfer these six detainees from Guantanamo to Uruguay,” the source said.

“The United States thanks Uruguay, our partner, for its important humanitarian gesture and values the generous assistance of the Uruguayan government while the United States continues with its efforts to close Guantanamo,” the official added.

The prisoners, who received the authorization to be transferred more than four years ago, could arrive in Uruguay within a few weeks, given that it is probable that Congress will not block the move.

The 2014 defense appropriations measure requires Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel to provide 30 days advance notification regarding new prisoner transfers and to specify that guarantees and safeguards exist that these individuals do not pose a national security risk.

In the case of these six prisoners, the administration provided those guarantees, the State Department officials said.

This group of detainees will be the largest to be transferred to another country since 2009, when repatriations were halted of prisoners who had received the green light to be transferred from the prison where they had been held for more than a decade.

With the departure of these six prisoners, the number of detainees at Guantanamo will fall to

143, 72 of whom have been approved for transfer.

The transfer to Uruguay was delayed by the controversial agreement resulting in U.S. prisoner of war Bowe Bergdahl's release.

Bergdahl was exchanged for five reputed Taliban members being held at Guantanamo without the administration's notifying Congress in advance.

Uruguayan President Jose Mujica in late March had expressed his willingness to cooperate in efforts leading to the closure of Guantanamo.

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