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## US-run jail in Afghanistan 'worse than Guantanamo'

By Alec Russell in Washington

(Filed: 27/02/2006)

An American-run prison for terrorist suspects in Afghanistan has grown to rival and even eclipse Guantanamo Bay with hundreds of inmates in legal limbo, it was disclosed yesterday.



Away from the spotlight focused on the more notorious detention camp in Cuba, Bagram, a US base north of Kabul, now houses about 500 detainees, claimed the New York Times.

The situation there resembles the "legal void" that led to the Supreme Court ruling in 2004 giving Guantanamo prisoners the right to challenge their detention in US courts, Bush administration officials told the paper.

Conditions at Bagram have improved since the violent deaths of two inmates in late 2002 but they remain harsher than at Guantanamo.

"Bagram was never meant to be a long-term facility and now it's a long-term facility without the money or resources," said one Pentagon official who visited the jail.

"Anyone who has been to Bagram would tell you it is worse [than Guantanamo]."

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The number held at Bagram's former Soviet aircraft machine shop is reported to have risen from 100 in early 2004 to 600 at times last year.

Officials said the increase was partly a result of a decision by the Bush administration in 2004 to stop sending more prisoners to Cuba.

A former senior administration official. "For some reason people did not have a problem with Bagram. It was in Afghanistan."

Some detainees are believed to have been previously held at the CIA's so-called black sites, secret interrogation centres across the world.

The CIA is thought to have been wary of sending former inmates from "black sites" to Guantanamo Bay lest they ended up testifying about the CIA's custody in court.

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