

## U.S. to build new massive prison in Bagram

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As the Obama administration announced [plans for hundreds of billions of dollars more in domestic budget cuts](#), it late last week solicited bids for the construction of a massive new prison in Bagram, Afghanistan. [Posted on the aptly named FedBizOps.Gov website](#) which it uses to announce new privatized spending projects, the administration unveiled plans for “the construction of Detention Facility in Parwan (DFIP), Bagram, Afghanistan” which includes “detainee housing capability for approximately **2000 detainees**.” It will also feature “guard towers, administrative facility and Vehicle/Personnel Access Control Gates, security surveillance and restricted access systems.” The announcement provided: “the estimated cost of the project is **between \$25,000,000 to \$100,000,000.**”

In the U.S., prisons are so wildly overcrowded that [courts are ordering them to release inmates en masse](#) because conditions are so inhumane as to be unconstitutional (today, the [FBI documented](#) that a drug arrest occurs in the U.S. once every 19 seconds, but as everyone knows, only insane extremists and frivolous potheads advocate an end to **that** war). In the U.S., [budgetary constraints are so severe](#) that entire grades are being eliminated, the use of street lights restricted, and the most basic services abolished for the nation’s neediest. But the U.S. proposes to spend up to \$100 million on a sprawling new prison in Afghanistan.

Budgetary madness to the side, this is going to be yet another addition to what [Human Rights First recently documented](#) is the oppressive, due-process-free prison regime the U.S. continues to maintain around the world:

Ten years after the September 11 attacks, few Americans realize that the United States is **still imprisoning more than 2800 men outside the United States without charge or trial**. Sprawling U.S. military prisons have become part of the post-9/11 landscape, and the concept of “indefinite detention” — previously foreign to our system of government — has meant that such prisons, and their captives, could remain a legacy of the 9/11 attacks and the “war on terror” for the indefinite future. . . .

The secrecy surrounding the U.S. prison in Afghanistan makes it impossible for the public to judge whether those imprisoned there deserve to be there. What’s more, because much of the military’s evidence against them is classified, the detainees themselves have no right to see it. So although detainees at Bagram are now entitled to hearings at the prison every six months, they’re often not allowed to confront the evidence against them. As a result, they have no real opportunity to contest it.

In [one of the first moves](#) signalling just how closely the Obama administration intended to track its predecessor in these areas, it [won the right to hold Bagram prisoners without any habeas corpus rights](#), successfully arguing that the Supreme Court's *Boumediene* decision — which [candidate Obama cheered](#) because it guaranteed habeas rights to Guantanamo detainees — was inapplicable to Bagram. Numerous groups doing field work in Afghanistan [have documented](#) that the maintenance of these prisons is a leading recruitment tool for the Taliban and a prime source of anti-American hatred. Despite that fact — or, more accurately ([as usual](#)), because of it — the U.S. is now going to build a brand new, enormous prison there.

One last point: recall how many people [insisted that the killing of Osama bin Laden](#) would lead to a drawdown in the War on Terror generally and the war in Afghanistan specifically. Since then — in just four months since bin Laden's corpse was dumped into the ocean — the U.S. has done the following: [renewed the Patriot Act for four years with no reforms](#); significantly escalated drone attacks in [Yemen](#), [Somalia](#) and [Pakistan](#); [tried to assassinate](#) U.S. citizen Anwar al-Awlaki with no due process; [indicted a 24-year-old Muslim](#) for "material support for Terrorism" for uploading an anti-American YouTube clip after he talked to the son of a Terrorist leader; [pressured Iraq](#) to keep U.S. troops in that country; [argued that it has the virtually unlimited right](#) to kill anyone it wants anywhere in the world; and now finalized plans to build a sprawling new prison in Afghanistan. If that's winding things down, I sure would hate to see what a redoubling of the American commitment to Endless War looks like.

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