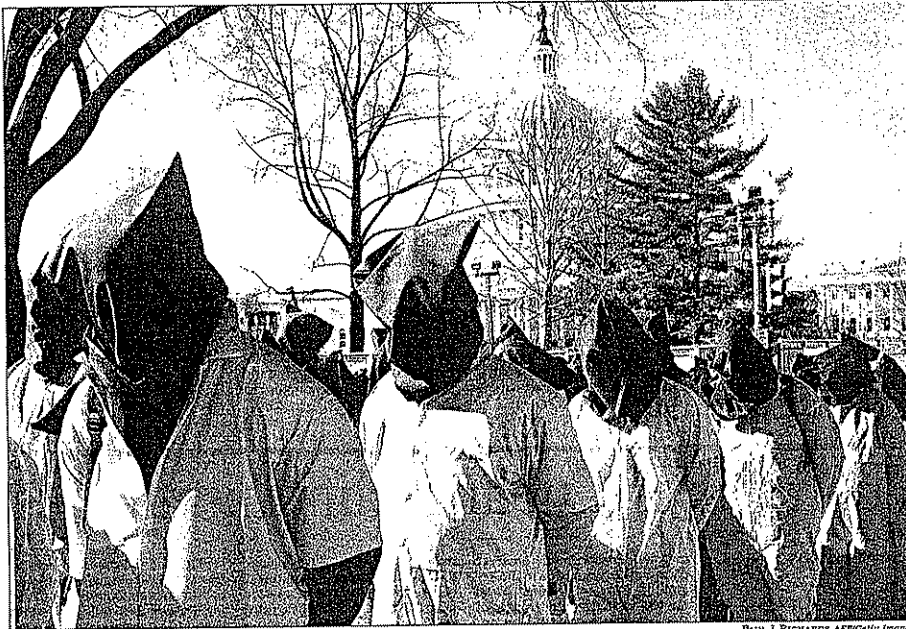


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PAUL J. RICHARDS/AGF/Getty Images

MARKING TIME: Protesters stand in front of the Supreme Court to protest the Guantanamo prison. Similar demonstrations took place at U.S. embassies in Greece, Denmark, Britain, Hungary, Germany, Turkey and Italy. Newly elected U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon also said he believed the camp prison should be closed.

Guantanamo stirs protests

In Cuba, Europe and the U.S., activists decry detentions at the camp, where terror suspects first arrived 5 years ago.

By CAROL J. WILLIAMS
Times Staff Writer

MIAMI — Protesters from Kuwait to the Cuban countryside to the Miami military headquarters that commands Guantanamo Bay denounced Thursday the Pentagon's indefinite detention of terrorism suspects at the offshore prison, which opened five years ago.

Hooded protesters in orange jumpsuits demonstrated outside U.S. embassies throughout Europe, and rights activists marked the date with demands for the release or trial of the remaining 395 men at the prison in southern Cuba.

Activist Cindy Sheehan led a dozen protesters on a march from the city of Guantanamo to the locked back gates of the naval base, where they chanted for an end to the detention of so-called enemy combatants.

"Guantanamo is a source of shame; no more torture in our name!" shouted Sheehan and the others allowed into Cuba for a rarely permitted visit to the remote base.

Among those who made their way to the little-used northeast gate was Tahir Deghayes, who held a photograph of his detainee-brother, Omar Deghayes. Deghayes' mother, Zohra Zewari, accompanied Sheehan's group to Cuba and told news agencies that her son had been tortured and blinded in one eye since being imprisoned in September 2002.

Also with the protesters was



CHRIS HONANER/GETTY IMAGES

HAD ENOUGH: A New York City protester at a Guantanamo demonstration shows her opposition to President Bush's call for sending more troops to Iraq.

25-year-old British citizen Asif Iqbal, whose three years in U.S. custody and subsequent release without charges was the subject of the 2006 documentary film "The Road to Guantanamo."

Base authorities said they had no contact with protesters.

"Today is a typical workday here at GTMO. We have no puny or interaction with protesters. Wherever they are protesting in Cuba, it's not near us," said Army Col. Lora Tucker, spokeswoman for the Joint Task Force operating the prisons.

In Washington, more than 100 protesters were arrested after they entered a federal courthouse wearing T-shirts with slogans such as "Stop Torture" and "Shut Down Guantanamo." Their permit authorized an outdoor protest.

Dozens of demonstrators dressed like Guantanamo prisoners also turned out at U.S. embassies in Greece, Denmark, Britain, Hungary, Germany, Turkey and Italy.

The American Civil Liberties

the base.

Khalid al-Odah, whose 29-year-old son Fawzi has been a prisoner at Guantanamo since Feb. 16, 2002, said: "The American administration should just put our boys in an independent court, try them if they have any charges, otherwise set them free. This is the simple demand from me as a father."

A retired Kuwaiti air force pilot, the elder al-Odah said in a telephone interview from his homeland that his son had been doing relief work in Pakistan near the Afghanistan border when Pakistani bounty hunters captured him and handed him over to U.S. troops in Kandahar for reward money offered for suspected Taliban or Al Qaeda figures.

David Cynamon, a Washington attorney representing al-Odah and three other Kuwaiti prisoners at Guantanamo, believes mounting international condemnation has U.S. authorities scrambling to reduce the detainee population.

About 100 Guantanamo prisoners were sent home last year, and at least 80 still in custody have been cleared by annual reviews for release or transfer.

In the five years since the first 20 men were escorted off a military cargo plane, Guantanamo has become a source of foreign policy discord for Washington.

Newly elected U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Thursday added his voice to appeals for an end to what critics consider flagrant human rights abuses.

"I understand that today is the fifth anniversary of Guantanamo's prison," Ban said at a news conference in New York. "Like my predecessor, I believe that prison at Guantanamo should be closed."

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