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## Obama vs. Obama on Guantanamo

President Obama [said](#) at his press conference last week that he was “going to reengage with Congress” on Guantanamo. The President’s history on this subject has been more of a debate with himself over how he wants to proceed and whether Guantanamo is really an issue of governance, or still just a campaign issue.

At his April 30 <sup>th</sup> press conference, the President said: “When I was campaigning in 2007 and 2008, and when I was elected in 2008, I said we need to close Guantanamo. I continue to believe that we’ve got to close Guantanamo.”	As one of his first acts in office, the President ordered Guantanamo to be closed within a year— with no semblance of a plan for how to accomplish that. In typical Obama Administration fashion of putting the cart before the horse, when he ordered the facility to be closed, he also created a task force designed to decide what to do with the detainees there.
Also at last Tuesday’s press conference, the President said: “The idea that we would still maintain forever a group of individuals who have not been tried, that is contrary to who we are.”	His own task force <a href="#">determined</a> there are 48 Guantanamo detainees “too dangerous to transfer but not feasible for prosecution.” Or, in his words, it is contrary to who we are to do exactly what his own Administration will do—maintain detainees who will not be tried or released.
When he was campaigning for President, Senator Obama <a href="#">said</a> he would not “use signing statements to nullify or undermine congressional instructions as enacted into law.”	Since taking office he has <a href="#">complained</a> in signing statements that Congressional actions “foreclose my ability to shut down” Guantanamo. He also <a href="#">says</a> he will “interpret and implement” such provisions as he sees fit, or in his words, undermine congressional instructions as enacted into law.

There are 166 detainees remaining at Guantanamo. The recidivism rate for those transferred from the facility is [28 percent](#). Rather than lead on the Guantanamo issue, the President seems determined to maintain it as a campaign issue to demagogue, rather than an issue to govern. In the meantime, he will maintain the counterterrorism detention policies of his predecessor.