

WASHINGTON - Sen. Chuck Hagel and Rep. Lee Terry said Thursday that they are pleased President Bush finally confirmed the existence of secret CIA prisons and announced the transfer of 14 terror suspects from them to military detention at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

Bush said he made the disclosures Wednesday because questioning of the prisoners was complete and that they had to be brought into the open for trial.

Hagel, R-Neb., said openness is especially important for a nation that "holds itself up as the shining beacon of transparent government."

"When we don't live up to those standards, then we impair our own credibility in the world and that means trust and confidence in our word, in our actions, are affected," Hagel said.

Terry, R-Neb., said that he favors the arresting terrorists, but that running secret holding facilities in other countries fosters rumors and tensions.

Rep. Tom Osborne, R-Neb., said there is logic in keeping secret the location of some overseas prisons.

Without doing so, he said, terrorists could try to help captured comrades escape or kill prisoners to prevent them from revealing valuable information.

Bush also urged Congress to pass legislation allowing for military commissions to try suspected terrorists. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in June that military tribunals previously established for such trials require congressional authorization.

Both Hagel and Sen. Ben Nelson, D-Neb., indicated they expect Congress to pass some form of legislation addressing prosecution of detainees.

"In light of the recent Supreme Court decision, it is necessary for Congress to pass legislation that establishes a process for trying terrorists, protects our nation against future terrorist attacks and maintains the democratic principles our armed services are defending," Nelson said.

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