



TMO NEWS

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OPPOSITION GROWS TO NY TRIAL OF SEPTEMBER 11 SUSPECTS

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NEW YORK



NEW YORK (Reuters) - The Senate Intelligence Committee's chairwoman on Thursday backed calls by New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg for the trial of the accused plotters of the September 11 attacks to be moved from Manhattan.

[U.S.](#)

Democratic Senator Diane Feinstein joined a chorus of concern about the risks and expense of bringing Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and four other men to New York for trial from the U.S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay.

"The dynamic has changed," Feinstein told MSNBC. "The administration should listen to the mayor and the mayor's concerns and candidly make a change."

But President Barack Obama has stood by U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder's November announcement that the trials would be held in a Manhattan federal court, very close to where hijacked airliners destroyed the World Trade Center in 2001.

"The president's opinion has not changed," said White House spokesman Bill Burton.

Bloomberg, who initially backed the move, does not want the trials to be held in New York. Several other Democratic and Republican politicians agree, arguing that the men should be tried elsewhere or appear before military tribunals.

"It would be great if the federal government could find a site that didn't cost a billion dollars, which using downtown will, and it will also impact traffic and commerce and people's lifestyles downtown and it would be great if we didn't do it," Bloomberg said on Wednesday.

Bloomberg estimated the security cost would be \$216 million for the first year and \$206 million annually thereafter and called on the U.S. Congress to foot the bill.

PROTESTS ABOUT SECURITY PLAN

The security plan devised by the New York Police Department calls for a security perimeter in one of the busiest areas of the city near Wall Street, Chinatown and the Brooklyn Bridge.

Businesses and neighbors whose lives were upended by the September 11 attacks protested against the plan.

"The trial will wreak havoc on the surrounding community with the extensive security requirements and massive disruptions, like permanent street closures," said Steven Spinola, President of the Real Estate Board of New York.

The board created a website (movethetrial.com) to fight the trials and has rallied with other groups to protest.

New York Governor David Paterson and New York Senator Kirsten Gillibrand also expressed concern.

Political opposition to trying the five men in a civil rather than in a military court has steadily grown.

"Guantanamo terrorists like KSM (Mohammed) don't belong in any federal civilian courts. They belong in military commissions," said U.S. Representative Peter King.

"These terrorists certainly don't belong in American communities, such as lower Manhattan, mere blocks from Ground Zero, City Hall, NYPD headquarters and the Brooklyn Bridge."

A group of U.S. senators, including Republican John McCain and independent Joseph Lieberman, have urged Obama to abandon the New York trials entirely, arguing that they would give the defendants a political platform.