By Charlie Savage

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WASHINGTON — The Obama administration has decided to continue to imprison without trials nearly 50 detainees at the Guantánamo Bay military prison in Cuba because a high-level task force has concluded that they are too difficult to prosecute but too dangerous to release, an administration official said on Thursday.

However, the administration has decided that nearly 40 other detainees should be prosecuted for terrorism or related war crimes. And the remaining prisoners, about 110 men, should be repatriated or transferred to other countries for possible release, the official said, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak about the numbers.

There are just under 200 detainees left at the detention center.

President Obama established the task force shortly after his inauguration last year as part of his administration's effort to deal with the detainee issues left behind by the Bush administration. It was facing a deadline of Friday to complete its work.

For the past year, national-security and law-enforcement officials under the direction of Matthew G. Olsen, a Justice Department lawyer, have been pulling together scattered files for each detainee at Guantánamo. They evaluated any evidence against each man, the perceived threat he might pose if released, and the possibility of successfully prosecuting him.

The group made recommendations that were then evaluated by senior administration officials, led by Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr.

But the determination about which category to put each detainee in leaves other questions unanswered. For example, of the roughly 110 detainees who are set to be transferred to other countries, about 30 are Yemenis, the official said. The administration recently halted transfers to Yemen in the wake of the attempted bombing of an airplane bound for Detroit on Christmas — a plot believed to have been developed by an affiliate of Al Qaeda based in Yemen.

In addition, Mr. Holder is charged with deciding whether the prisoners who are to be prosecuted should face a civilian trial or a military commission. In November, he announced that five detainees would face a military commission and five others — including Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, the self-described mastermind of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 — would be prosecuted in federal court.