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Prisoner swap on agenda for talks with Taliban: US

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The United States on Thursday said its soldier held hostage by the Taliban since 2009 should be released immediately, accepting that the issue of prisoners exchange was on the agenda for direct talks with the Afghan insurgents.

The Taliban have offered to release the American soldier in their captivity since 2009 in return for their five senior commanders held at the US detention facility in Cuba.

“We have not made a decision to transfer any Taliban detainees from Guantanamo Bay, though we anticipate that the Taliban will raise this issue,” State Department spokesperson Jen Psaki told reporters.

“We will make any such decisions in consultation with Congress and according to US law. But they have stated before, as they’ve stated again today, that this is an issue – the release of these detainees – that they would plan to raise,” Psaki said in response to a question.

“We have been very clear on our feelings about Sergeant Bergdahl and the need for him to be released,” she said, when asked about the Taliban offer of the release of its soldier in exchange of five Taliban prisoners.

US Army Sgt. Bergdahl has been held captive since June 4, 2009 and is believed to be in the mountains of Pakistan, just across the border from Afghanistan.

Meanwhile Idaho’s Congressional delegation in a statement said that its thoughts and prayers continue to be with Bowe Bergdahl and his family. “His safe return has always been of the

utmost importance to us, and his well-being is something we raise with senior administration officials whenever possible. We are following recent potential developments about him very closely,” said a statement issued by the Idaho Congressional delegation.