

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

CA: This Periodic Review Board is being conducted at 0908 hours on 25 September, 2018, with regard to the following detainee: Saifullah Paracha, ISN 1094.

As a reminder, the unclassified portions of these proceedings are being recorded for the purpose of generating a transcript to be posted on the PRS website. Representatives from the following agencies are present and members of the Board:

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE;

DEPARTMENT OF STATE;

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE;

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY;

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE; and

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF.

The following personnel are also present:

LEGAL ADVISOR TO THE BOARD;

CASE ADMINISTRATORS;

PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE;

PRIVATE COUNSEL;

TRANSLATOR;

THE DETAINEE; AND,

SECURITY OFFICER.

The detainee's Personal Representative, Private Counsel and the

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

detainee are located at the detention facility, U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. They are attending via... via video teleconference and the detainee waived translation of the entire hearing. These documents have been posted to the Periodic Review Secretariat website. This session is being observed by foreign, national and local media; Foreign Government Officials; and Representatives from Non-Governmental Organizations.

PM: Good Morning. This Board is convened to determine whether continued law of war detention is warranted for Saifullah Paracha, ISN 1094, to protect against a continuing significant threat to the security of the United States. From here on forward, we will refer to the detainee as Mr. Paracha. This session of the hearing is unclassified.

Mr. Paracha this is your Periodic Review Board to determine whether continued law of war detention is warranted in your case. Continued law of war detention will be warranted if it is necessary to protect against a continuing significant threat to the national security of the United States. The focus of this hearing is on the threat that you may pose to the United States and its interests if transferred or released from U.S. custody. It is not on the lawfulness of your detention.

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

The Personal Representative and Private Counsel are your representative to assist you during this process.

Personal Representative and Private Counsel, has Mr. Paracha had the opportunity to review the Unclassified Summary?

PR: Yes, sir.

PM: Thank you. I will now read the unclassified summary. Saifullah Paracha, ISN 1094, was a Pakistan-based businessman and facilitator on behalf of al-Qa'ida senior leaders and operational planners. He met Usama Bin Laden in 1999 or 2000 and later worked with external operations chief Khalid Shaykh Muhammad, ISN 10024, to facilitate financial transactions and propaganda.

Do the Personal Representative and private Counsel wish to make unclassified opening statements at this time?

PR: Yes, sir.

PM: Okay. I would like to remind all participants that any information shared at this time must be unclassified. If there is a concern about the classification of the information, I will indicate such and will stop the proceedings until we have resolved the issue.

Has Mr. Paracha had the opportunity to review your statements?

PR: Yes, sir.

PC: Yes, sir.

PM: Great. So Personal Representative, please proceed.

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

PR: Members of the board, thank you for the opportunity to present Mr. Saifullah Paracha's case before the Board and to answer any questions you may have with regards to his detainment.

I have been meeting with Saifullah for over a year now, during which time he has attended every meeting, and has always shown myself and our linguist the upmost respect and courtesies. He has always been pleasant to work with and maintains a good sense of humor, despite his current situation.

During our many conversations, ranging from his detainment to the nature of the world and its people, he has never given any indication of extremist views, or intention to cause harm to anyone. In fact, our conversations have been quite the opposite. He often speaks of both cultural and religious tolerance and acceptance, and cross cultural ideals he embraces, having been both a Muslim man from Pakistan and a business man working and living in New York City. While he is understandably dismayed by his detainment, he continues to maintain an overall positive view of the United States and harbors no ill will towards the country, or its people, or allies.

Saifullah continues to be a respected member of his community in GTMO and is always willing to help out a fellow detainee. Many of the detainees have benefited greatly from his lessons in English, business, and American Culture. He has also spent a great deal of

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

time helping other detainees prepare for their boards, giving them advice on how to express themselves and tell their story in a manner that would be understood. He has also advised fellow detainees to be open and honest with the board, a belief that he intends to follow as well.

Before his detainment, Saifullah was a legitimate television producer and businessman. While visiting Afghanistan during a humanitarian aid venture, he took an opportunity to meet with Usama Bin Ladin. After meeting with him he saw an opportunity to market a program, featuring Bin Laden, speaking on the similarities between the Muslim, Christians and Jewish religions. He was hoping to share a message of peace, showing that the three religions which historically found themselves at odds with each other, at their roots, shared many of the same core moral beliefs. Like any good journalist, he believed the message would attract the most viewers if it were given by a controversial character; a belief that is not without precedent, given that many other television producers had interviewed notorious individuals, including Bin Ladin, themselves. Saifullah never had any intention of featuring extremist causes... furthering extremist causes, and this was solely a business journalistic endeavor. In retrospect, he regrets his actions in the regard.

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

Saifullah understands the Board's concerns that potential extremist business contacts could have provided him with an opportunity to re-engage upon his release should he choose to use them. If released, Saifullah has agreed that he will not return to his... this line of work. He has already signed a Power of Attorney authorizing his daughter to sell his business related assets and to close the Paracha family business interests.

While Saifullah has agree to retire from his previous business, I do believe he has a bright future in education should he continue a need... continue... sorry... continue to need a manner of support... to support himself. He has demonstrated this aptitude in teaching a wide variety of subjects that appears that... and appears to enjoy the pleasure he gets by helping students. Aside from that, Saifullah is a very talented and well-versed individual who would probably succeed at any endeavor he chooses. Hi greatest desire is nothing more than to be a loving father while making up for lost time with his family.

Saifullah is now over 71 years old and his health is starting to reflect it. The medical care he has received during his detainment has been exemplary, but there will be a time in the near future when the facilities available to him will become inadequate. Please take that into consideration while reviewing his case.

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

Saifullah has the reputation of a caring and compassionate man. This opinion is shared by his family, friends, colleagues, other detainees, legal counsel, the guard force, and almost anyone who has interacted with him. Those who dealt with him before his detainment all speak of a man who wanted the best for people, and willing to do whatever he could to help. Those who have spoken about him after his detainment describe a peaceful man who is always willing to help where he can. Even in detainment, he continues to help others. I truly hope the Board shares my view and recommends him for transfer. To help demonstrate this willingness... his willingness to cooperate, Saifullah is prepared to answer any question the Board may have for him. Thank you for your time.

PM: Private Counsel, you may proceed with your unclassified opening statement.

PC: Thank you. Esteemed Periodic Review Board Members, my name is Shelby Sullivan-Bennis and it is my privilege to represent Mr. Saifullah Paracha in this proceeding.

I can say without hesitation that Mr. Paracha is grateful beyond words for your approval of his last file review and the opportunity that you have thus given him to demonstrate that he poses no threat to the security of our country.

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

Mr. Paracha has endured the last 15 plus years in custody with what can only be described as interminable grace. The government's own declassified document... in the government's own declassified document, he is described as one of the, if not the, most peaceful detainees, amassing fewer infractions since capture than there are detainees left in this prison.

Described by GTMO staff as "respectful," and "polite," he has made a name for himself as both the prison professor and its indefatigable uncle. He has spent time in these late years of his life, teaching other men how to read, how to speak English, how to start and run businesses of their own.

More declassified government reports provide support for the assertion that Mr. Paracha holds no extremist views, as he has not espoused a single one in all the years of his captivity.

As far back as 30 years ago, he chose to send all of his children to private Christian schools, eventually encouraging them to move to and be educated in the United States. Years before that, Mr. Paracha petitioned for multiple family members to immigrate to the U.S., where they remain today, each with their own vibrant family and with the support... and the support of that family and of Reprieve, if released, Mr. Paracha could quite easily live out the remainder of his years with his loved ones.

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

No one thinks that Mr. Paracha has "violent extremist" views or wishes harm to befall America or its people; Mr. Paracha's own nephew, [REDACTED], stood literal feet from the Twin Towers as they fell, his marketing job having been just around the corner.

But all of this information is known and has been for years. What's different today is that a middle-aged man has become an elderly one, and naturally, with the years of that transition comes increased internal reflection as his time to do so slips by.

It is not outrageous to consider that Mr. Paracha could die in this prison without ever seeing his family again. It is the reality of that sentence that commands the kind of deep analysis of a life lived that I know Mr. Paracha has been performing. I won't attempt to speak for him, but he is prepared to do so himself today, and I ask only that you listen, keeping at the forefront of your mind the life he's lived in these last 15 years.

PM: Thank you very much. Board Members may reserve questions until the detainee and witness statements have been presented in their entirety. Does anyone on the Board have questions at this particular time?

Okay, thank you. With no questions, this concludes this portion of the hearing. I ask that all remain seated until further instructed by the Case Administrator.

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

UNCLASSIFIED//FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

CA: Okay, we will now take a 15-minute recess to prepare for the remaining sessions.

[The public session closed at 0918, 25 September 2018.]

[END OF PAGE]

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

UNCLASSIFIED//FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYM KEY

BM: BOARD MEMBER
CA: CASE ADMINISTRATOR
DET: DETAINEE
PM: PRESIDING MEMBER
PR: PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~