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CA: This Periodic Review Board is being conducted at 0919 hours on 15 March 2016, with regard to the following detainee: Sharqawi Abdu Ali Al Hajj, ISN 1457.

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 agenc... agencies are present and are 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 REPRESENTATIVES;

TWO TRANSLATORS; AND,

SECURITY OFFICER.

The detainee's Personal Representatives and one translator are located at the detention facility, U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay,

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Cuba. They are attending via video teleconference. This session is being observed by foreign, national, and local media, foreign government officials.

PM: Good morning. This Board is called to order. The Board is convened to determine whether continued law of war detention is warranted for Sharqawi Abdu Ali Al Hajj, ISN 1457, in order to protect against a continuing significant threat to the security of the United States. From here forward, we'll refer to the detainee as Sharqawi. Sharqawi decided not to participate in today's hearing, but he did submit a statement and... because although he's not here, we'll still read the unclassified summary in English and then in the Arabic translation.

This session is unclassified.

The Periodic Review Board determines whether continued law of war detention is warranted in this case. Continued law of war detention will be warranted if it is necessary to protect against a sig... a continuing significant threat to the national security of the United States. This focus of this hearing is on the threat posed to the United States and its interests if Sharqawi is transferred or released from U.S. custody. It is not on the lawfulness of his detention.

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Personal Representatives, has Sharqawi had an opportunity to review the unclassified summary.

PR 1: Yes, Ma'am.

PM: Thank you. I'll read the unclassified summary and then we'll have it translated:

Sharqawi, ISN 1457, was a career jihadist who acted as a prominent finance... financial and travel facilitator for al-Qaeda members before and after the 9/11 attacks. He probably provided logistic or financial support for al-Qaeda operations; although, he may not have had foreknowledge of the plots. Sharqawi developed ties to senior al-Qaeda leaders such as Usama bin Laden and Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and associated with al-Qaeda plotters and operatives, including members of the USS Cole bombing and some of the 9/11 hijackers. However, he repeatedly has denied being an al-Qaeda member, claiming instead that the group trusted him because of his facilitation support.

Sharqawi's extremist activities began in Bosnia in 1995 where he was injured fighting Serbian forces. He tried to join other jihadist causes in Chechnya, East Africa, and South East Asia before returning to Yemen in 1999. From there, he facilitated the travel of fighters to Afghanistan, many of whom became Usama bin Laden's body guards. In mid-2000, Sharqawi traveled to Afghanistan where he received basic

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training at an al-Qaeda camp before relocating to Pakistan to help Arab fighters reach Afghanistan. Once coalition operations began, he ran a guest house in Karachi that he used to help Arab fighters flee the region. During this period, he also funneled Saudi donations to al-Qaeda and dispensed... dispersed money to group members and other Arab fighters.

During his detention at Guantanamo, Sharqawi has been somewhat compliant, although he has physically assaulted the guards when he perceived his grievances were not addressed. Until late 2004, he provided his interrogators with a wealth of information on his extremist activities and associations before his capture; cooperation he leveraged to improve his living situation. He's demonstrated leadership capabilities, which he has used to influence other detainees and manipulate camp dynamics.

Most of Sharqawi's comments on life after detention have centered on conti... on continuing to engage in jihad in defense of his religion. He remained steadfast in his support for extremist causes and groups praising recent acts of terrorism, which indicates that he views terrorist acts as legitimate form of jihad. He probably views America as his enemy, given that he has expressed desire to fight and kill Americans. Sharqawi has corresponded with former Guantanamo detainees suspected of reengaging in extremist activity.

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There are no indications of Sharqawi's family members in Ta'izz, Yemen have engaged in extremist activities. However, they are affiliated with al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula members and other Guantanamo detainees. Sharqawi probably could leverage these connections should he decide to reengage.

TRANS 1: **[TRANSLATION OF ABOVE]**

PM: Do the Personal Representatives wish to make an unclassified opening statement at this time?

PR 1: Yes, Ma'am.

PM: Okay. I'd like to remind you that all the information shared at this time must be unclassified. If there's a concern about the classification of the information, I'll indicate as such and we'll stop the proceedings to resolve the issue. Has the detainee been able to review your statement?

PR 2: Yes, Ma'am. Yes, Ma'am.

PM: Okay, great. Please proceed.

PR 1: Members of the Board, we appreciate this opportunity to present you the case for the transfer of Sharqawi Abdu Ali Al-Hajj. Sharqawi took the occasion of our first meeting to describe his experiences and his hope for the future. In 1998, as a young man full of idealism and wanting to help oppressed people, Sharqawi travelled to Bosnia. While there, he met with forces from the United

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States and the United Kingdom and joined the Bosnian Army. After the war, he turned in his weapon and left Bosnia and the army. While being interested in the plight of the poor, meek, and oppressed, Sharqawi has disavowed his involvement in the war and aggression, because he believes it to be against the will of God.

Sharqawi will be able to rely on the support of his family, who are a respected family and have no relationships with extremists; they were against his leaving Yemen. He has prepared himself for the future, by taking many courses at Guantanamo, including Adobe Photoshop and English.

(inaudible) organizations. He does not approve of the recent acts by the Islamic State as he feels they have killed a lot of innocent people, creating instability in the region. He could never defend such heinous acts.

Sharqawi wants to make it perfectly clear to the Board that he is seeking to go to a stable, peaceful country to start his life over and that he is not a threat to the United States.

PM: Thank you. Board Members may reserve questions until detainee witness statements have been presented in their entirety. Does anyone on the Board have questions for this unclassified session?

(NO VERBAL RESPONSE FROM BMs)

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PM: Okay. With no questions, this concludes this portion of the hearing. I ask that we all remain seated until further instructed by our case administrator.

CA: We will take a 15-minute recess to prepare for the remaining sessions.

PM: Thanks.

[The public session closed at 0932, 15 March 2016.]

[END OF PAGE]

ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYM KEY

BM: BOARD MEMBER

CA: CASE ADMINISTRATOR

DET: DETAINEE

PC: PRIVATE COUNSEL

PM: PRESIDING MEMBER

PR 1: PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE ONE

PR 2: PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE TWO

TRANS 1: TRANSLATOR ONE (LOCATED AT PRS HQ)

TRANS 2: TRANSLATOR TWO (LOCATED AT GUANTANAMO BAY)