

UNCLASSIFIED
Approved for Public Release

CA: This Periodic Review Board is being conducted at 0911 hours on 12 May 2016, with regard to the following detainee: Abd al-Salam al-Hilah, ISN 1463.

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.

TRANS 1: [TRANSLATION OF ABOVE]

CA: Representatives from the following 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 REPRESENTATIVE;

PRIVATE COUNSEL;

TWO TRANSLATORS;

THE DETAINEE; AND,

UNCLASSIFIED
Approved for Public Release

SECURITY OFFICER.

TRANS 1: [TRANSLATION OF ABOVE]

CA: The detainee's Personal Representative, Private Counsel, the detainee, and one translator are located at the detention facility, U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. They are attending via video teleconference and the detainee waived translation of the unclassified summary, and Personal Representative and Private Counsel opening statements. These documents have been posted to the Periodic Review web... Secretariat website. This session is being observed by local media and representatives from non-governmental organizations.

TRANS 1: [TRANSLATION OF ABOVE]

PM: Good morning. This Board is convened to determine whether continued law of war detention is warranted for Abd al-Salam al-Hilah, ISN 1463, to protect against a continuing significant threat to the security of the United States. From here forward, we'll refer to the detainee as Abdul Salam. This session is unclassified.

TRANS 1: [TRANSLATION OF ABOVE]

PM: Abdul Salam... Salam, 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's necessary to protect against a continuing significant threat to the

UNCLASSIFIED
Approved for Public Release

national security of the United States. The focus of this hearing is on the threat you may pose to the United States and its interests, if you're transferred or released from U.S. custody. This is not about the lawfulness of your detention.

TRANS 1: [TRANSLATION OF ABOVE]

PM: The Personal Representatives and Private Counsel are your representatives to assist you during this process. Finally, the transfer... the translators ensure that everyone understands your statements and that you understand is what... what is being said during the hearing.

TRANS 1: [TRANSLATION OF ABOVE]

PM: Personal Representatives, Private Counsel, has Abdul Salam had an opportunity to review the unclassified summary?

TRANS 1: [TRANSLATION OF ABOVE]...

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

TRANS 1: ... [TRANSLATION OF ABOVE]

PR: Yes, Ma'am.

PM: All right. Thanks. I will read the unclassified summary:

Abd al-Salam al-Hilah, ISN 1463, entered into extremist circles at a young age and rose to be a prominent extremist facilitator who leveraged his position within the Yemeni Political Security Organization, PSO, to provide refuge and logistical support

UNCLASSIFIED
Approved for Public Release

to extremist groups. Abdul Salam probably learned about terrorist plots against Yemeni and Western interests on multiple occasions through his extremist contacts. During detention, Abdul Salam has admitted to many of these activities. He reported pre-detention act... his reported pre-detention activities suggest that Abdul Salam was sympathetic to extremists and driven by a desire for personal position and financial gain.

Since his arrival at Guantanamo, Abdul Salam has committed a moderate number of infractions relative to other detainees and appears to calibrate his cooperation with Joint Task... ja... Joint Task Force-Guantanamo personnel to extract his preferred living conditions. He has expressed few... he has expressed a few, general aspirations for his time after Guantanamo, including wanting to help transfer additional Guantanamo detainees and open a business. He has provided few insights into his original motivations for supporting terrorists in Yemen and... or his current thinking about the situation in Yemen.

He has expressed continuing support for extremists and terrorist groups, including ISIL.

Abdul Salam has been in direct contact with two extremists outside Guantanamo during his detention, one of whom is his brother. Another is a former Guantanamo detainee suspected of regage...

UNCLASSIFIED
Approved for Public Release

reengaging in terrorism. We cannot confirm whether his brother's support for terror... terrorism has continued. Abdul Salam probably would have multiple avenues to reengage in terrorism if he chose to do so because of these contacts, his expansive extremist connections from before his detention, and because his family resides in an area of Sana'a known for extremist activity.

Do Personal Representatives and Private Counsel wish to make unclassified opening statements, at this time?

TRANS 1: [TRANSLATION OF ABOVE]

PR: Yes, Ma'am.

PM: All right. I'd like...

PC: ... Yes, Ma'am.

PM: Okay. I'd like to remind all participants that information shared at this time, must be unclassified. If there's a concern about the classification of the information, I will indicate such and stop the proceedings until we resolve the issue. Has Abdul Salam had an opportunity to review your statements?

TRANS 1: [TRANSLATION OF ABOVE]

PR: Yes, Ma'am.

PM: All right. Personal Representatives, please proceed.

TRANS 1: [TRANSLATION OF ABOVE]

UNCLASSIFIED
Approved for Public Release

PR: As Abdul Salam's Personal Representative, I would like to thank the Board for allowing me the opportunity to present his case and demonstrate how he is not a continuing significant threat to the United States, her people, or her allies.

First, Abdul Salam was a highly respected leader in his native country of Yemen, and he had a great deal of tribal, political, and business influence. After the passing of his father, a tribal leader who had taught him the intricate lessons of leadership and influence, Abdul Salam became the leader of his family at the age of 12 years old. He raised his brothers and sisters, with the help of his mother, which earned him considerable respect from his community.

Later, he developed his business and trade skills to such a degree that he was able to become not only financially stable, but prosperous. He got married to a loving and supportive wife, who bore him two beautiful daughters and two handsome sons. He is extremely proud of his family who support him, and who he wishes to see again soon.

As he continued in his businesses and tribal affairs, he attracted the attention of the political parties in Yemen. Ultimately, he joined the General Congress Party, the largest political party in Yemen, at the request of the President of Yemen, hoping to bring together all of the parties. As a result, his tribe

UNCLASSIFIED
Approved for Public Release

encouraged him to run for Parliament. He used his influence to help raise the economic standards to all the people of Yemen. He helped bring international companies to Yemen to build bridges, roads, airports, power plants, and increase the efforts of energy exploration.

With such great respect and influence, Abdul Salam was asked to help the government in cooperating with other tribes to root out any Afghan trained fighters and have them handed over to the government. This was a task that should have been recognized as aiding the West in its efforts to combat terrorism. However, when he visited another Middle Eastern country to arrange for 200 million dollars in financial commitments to Yemen, he was arrested and handed over to U.S. authorities and eventually interned at the detention facility in Guantanamo.

Abdul Salam has never had any intentions to harm the United States, her allies, or the people of the Western democracies, and he is ready to answer any questions the Board may have for him, at this time.

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

TRANS 1: [TRANSLATION OF ABOVE]...

PC: ... Good morning...

UNCLASSIFIED
Approved for Public Release

TRANS 1: ... [TRANSLATION OF ABOVE] Thank you.

PC: Good morning. I am David Remes, Private Counsel for Abdul Salam al-Abdul Rahman al-Hilah [sic], ISN 1463. I have represented Abdul Salam in his habeas corpus case for over a decade. I have met with him countless times, and I believe I know him well. I've also have met with families of Abdul Salam's... members of Abdul Salam's family, including his brothers and his wife, on almost every... sorry... one of my trips... one of my 11 trips to Yemen between 2005 and 2013. I have been to their homes and broken bread with them.

Abdul Salam al-Hilah is a strong and justifiably proud man. The son of an influential Sheikh, Abdul Salam became an influential Sheikh in his own right. He, also, became a successful businessman and a figure of national prominence. President Ali Abdullah Saleh enlisted him to mediate disputes between the government and the tribes; and the tribes enlisted him to mediate disputes among themselves. Abdul Salam was among those chosen by President Saleh to help manage the deportation of jihadists who had settled in Yemen after defeating the Soviet Union in Afghanistan with assistance from the United States.

The letters of support that we have submitted for Abdul Salam prove the high esteem in which he is held in official and political circles in Yemen. I have discussed his case, on many occasions, with

UNCLASSIFIED
Approved for Public Release

leaders of Yemen's national legislature and senior government officials. The Deputy Leader of the Chamber, Hemiar Al-Ahmar, leads the committee of notables who have been fighting for Abdul Salam's release for many years. All speak out in favor... strongly in favor of his release and are emphatic that he poses no threat to anyone.

The Board should not conclude that Abdul Salam is a continuing significant threat to the United States based on activities or associations 15 to 20 years ago... 25 years ago. He is nearing 50 and is through with government and politics. He has no ideology. He wants to restore his life with his wife and daughter. He was devastated by the death of his mother and the deaths of his two young sons, who were killed by a live hand grenade left in the area. Abdul Salam, also, wants to reestablish himself as a businessman, and he should have no trouble doing so. He used to conduct business throughout Europe; he speaks English; and he is cosmopolitan. Building an import-export business for products to be sold in Yemen is an obvious possibility.

Wherever he is settled, Abdul Salam wants to build, not tear down. He will submit to rehabilitation and close supervision. Abdul Salam is not a continuing significant threat to the United States. I urge the Board to recommend his transfer. Thank you.

UNCLASSIFIED
Approved for Public Release

PM: Thank you. Board Members may reserve questions until detainee and witness statements have been presented in their entirety. Does anyone have a question, at this time?

(NON-VERBAL RESPONSE FROM BMS)

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

PM: All right. With no questions, this concludes this portion of the hearing. I ask that we all remain seated until further instructed by the Case Administrator.

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

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

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

[The public session closed at 0927, 12 May 2016.]

[END OF PAGE]

ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYM KEY

BM: BOARD MEMBER

CA: CASE ADMINISTRATOR

DET: DETAINEE

PC: PRIVATE COUNSEL

PM: PRESIDING MEMBER

PR: PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE

TRANS 1: TRANSLATOR ONE (LOCATED AT PRS HQ)

TRANS 2: TRANSLATOR TWO (LOCATED AT GUANTANAMO BAY)