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CA: This Periodic Review Board is being conducted at 0901 hours on 19 May 2016, with regards to the following detainee: Jabran al-Qahtani, ISN 696.

As a reminder, the unclassified portion 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,

THE OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF.

The following personnel are also present:

CASE ADMINISTRATORS;

PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE;

PRIVATE COUNSEL;

TWO TRANSLATORS;

THE DETAINEE; AND,

SECURITY OFFICER.

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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, the Personal Representatives' and Private Counsel's opening statements. These documents have been posted to the Periodic Review Secretariat website. This session is being observed by foreign media, observers from congressional offices, 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 Jabran al-Qahtani, ISN 696, to protect against a continuing significant threat to the security of the United States. From here forward, we'll refer to the detainee as Jabran. This session of the hearing is unclassified.

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

PM: Jabran, this is your Periodic Review Board hearing 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

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national security of the United States. The focus **[sic]** of this hearing is on the threat 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.

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

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

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

PM: For the Private Counsel and Personal Representatives... Personal Representative, excuse me, has the detainee had an opportunity to review the unclassified summary?

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

PR: Yes, Ma'am.

PC: Yes, Ma'am.

TRANS 2: **[TRANSLATION OF ABOVE]**

PM: All right. Thank you. I'll read the unclassified summary:

Jabran al-Qahtani, ISN 696, is a self-radicalized electrical engineer who traveled from Saudi Arabia to Afghanistan in October 2001 to fight against U.S. forces in Afghanistan. He rece... he received abbreviated weapons training at an al-Qaeda camp in

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Afghanistan and was selected by a senior al-Qaeda military commander to receive explosive detonator training in Faisalabad, Pakistan. There, he learned to construct circuit boards for radio-remote controlled improvised explosive devices with the intention of teaching bomb making techniques to operatives attacking U.S. and coalition forces in Afghanistan. Five months after leaving Saudi Arabia, Jabran was captured by Pakistani authorities on 28 March 2002 at a senior al-Qaeda facilitator's home... excuse me... at senior al-Qaeda facilitator, Abu Zubaydah's safe house in Faisalabad, Pakistan.

Jabran has been mo... mostly compliant with guard forces... guard force personnel at Guantanamo, but has not cooperated with interrogators. Early in his detention, he expressed his support for the Taliban and repeatedly stated that he intended to rejoin the extremist fight against the United States and its allies, according to... to a Joint Task Force-Guantanamo January 2009 report. Jabran has not been forthright about his expertise in electronics or his time in Afghanistan, and made conflicting statements about the extent of his affiliation with al-Qaeda before discontinuing his participation with interrogators in late 2002.

Jabran earned an electrical engineering degree from King Saud University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in January 2001, which could provide him with credentials for employment, if he is released. His

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education and training also make Jabran a skilled bomb maker; however, those... who... however, whose electronics expertise would be in demand by terrorist organizations. Should Jabran return to Saudi Arabia, we assess that he would seek out prior associates who could provide him a path to reengage in hostilities and extremism, if he chose to do so.

Does the Personal Representative or Private Counsel wish to make unclassified opening statements, at this time?

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

PR: Yes, Ma'am.

TRANS 2: **[TRANSLATION OF ABOVE]**

PM: All right. I'd like to remind everyone that any information shared at this time, must be unclassified. If there's a concern about classification of the information, I will indicate such and we'll stop the proceedings until we resolve the issue. Has Jabran had an opportunity to review your statement?

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

PR: Yes, Ma'am.

TRANS 2: **[TRANSLATION OF ABOVE]**

PM: Okay. Personal Representative, please proceed.

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

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PR: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen of the Board. I am the Personal Representative for ISN 696, Mr. Jabran Saad al-Qahtani. I will be assisting Mr. Qahtani with his case this morning, along with the assistance of his Private Counsel.

Jabran has been overjoyed and eager to participate in the Periodic Review process since I first met him in mid-April 2016. He has maintained his positive attitude throughout all our meetings and has always been gracious and respectful towards me.

Mr. Qahtani has expressed his desire to return home to reunite with his family. However, he is open to transfer to any country, but would prefer an Arabic-speaking country, if possible. He is willing to participate in any rehabilitation or reintegration program as well. He looks forward to life after his transfer from Guantanamo Bay and reconnecting with his large family. As he... the youngest son of his parents, he hopes that at some point his many sisters and brothers could come visit him and that he could get to know the youngest members of his close-knit family who were born during his detention.

Jabran has been a client... a compliant detainee with a relatively low number of infractions since his arrival at Guantanamo Bay and has taken advantage of the communal living opportunity here at the detention facility. He earned an electrical engineering degree from

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King Saud University and comes from a large close-knit family of educators, government workers, and small business owners.

Additionally, over the past 14 years, Jabran has attended art, computer skills, and English car... courses offered at the camp. By being exposed to so many people of various cultural and religious backgrounds here at GTMO, Jabran has had many opportunities to better understand and appreciate their beliefs and customs. These adaptive skills, along with his formal education in Saudi Arabia and coursework completed at Guantanamo Bay, will serve him well wherever he is transferred.

I am confident that Jabran's desire to pursue a better way of life, if transferred from Guantanamo Bay, is genuine and that he bears no ill will towards anyone. I remain convinced that Jabran does not pose a significant threat to the United States or any of its allies.

Thank you for your time and attention, and I look forward to answering any questions you may have during this Board.

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

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

PC: Thank you. Mr. al-Qahtani poses no threat to the security of the United States. The background to Mr. al-Qahtani's actions:

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Jabran Sa'id Wazar al-Qahtani is the eighth child of Sa'id Wazur al-Qahtani. He has 13 brothers and 8 sisters. His father built a successful real estate business in Riyadh.

As a boy, Mr. al-Qahtani was raised in a family where an education was highly prized. Math, science, and engineering came naturally to many of Mr. al-Qahtani's older brothers, who achieved early success. Two of Mr. al-Qahtani's brothers are chemical engineers, one is an electrical engineer, one is a petroleum engineer, one is a computer scientist, and two are college professors. None of his siblings has had any involvement in extremist movements.

Mr. al-Qahtani greatly admired the success and achievement of his father and his older brothers. Although studies did not come as easily to him as to some of his older brothers, Mr. al-Qahtani was able, through long hours of study as a boy and a young man, to earn an electrical engineering degree specializing in high voltage from King Saud University in Riyadh. This led him to accept a position at the Saudi Arabian Electric Company in Riyadh. Around that time, Mr. al-Qahtani met Nawal. They married and began to plan a family of their own.

In 2001, however, Mr. al-Qahtani got caught up in a wave of enthusiasm for defending Islam against what he heard described as a

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crusade by the United States and its allies. His understanding of battle at that time came from story books. He had no training or experience with combat or military affairs.

In what he has come to recognize as the greatest mistake of his young life, Mr. al-Qahtani left Saudi Arabia for Afghanistan in 2001 and, after a series of misadventures, ended up in a training camp north of Kabul. The camp lasted for ten days. While it included weapons instruction, most of that consisted of classroom lectures. He spent much of his time digging a bunker and ducking fire from the Northern Alliance. He never fired a shot in anger.

After 10 days were over, Mr. al-Qahtani retreated into hiding for approximately 20 days. He ended up in a safe house in Faisalabad, where he was captured by Pakistani soldiers. Plans to exploit Mr. al-Qahtani's knowledge of engineering by training him to train others on the making of triggering devices came to nothing. Nobody was ever harmed by a device made directly or indirectly by Mr. al-Qahtani.

Mr. al-Qahtani was the furthest thing from a hardened Mujahadeen. In the words of one of those captured with Mr. al-Qahtani in Faisalabad, "his background and actions weren't that of a fundamentalist. He liked to joke, have fun."

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Mr. al-Qahtani's attempts to puff himself up as tough and dangerous following his capture, for example, calling himself a terrorist, were nothing more than a misguided attempt to fit into the extreme society of his fellow Guantanamo Bay detainees.

Mr. al-Qahtani's family are committed to supporting his pla... his plans to start a family and live a quiet life.

Mr. al-Qahtani comes from a well-respected Saudi Arabian family that, despite his mistakes, is willing to support his reintegration into modern society.

None of Mr. al-Qahtani's brothers is involved in extremist activities. They were all dismayed by Mr. al-Qahtani's actions and would have tried to stop them had they known his intentions in 2001, 2002.

Mr. al-Qahtani's family's statements, enclosed with this submission, evince a loving family ready to support Mr. al-Qahtani. Mr. al-Qahtani's brother has collected letters from all available members of his family. [REDACTED] says that Mr. al-Qahtani's release would "return the smile and happiness to every member of his family." His older brother hopes that Mr. al-Qahtani's life is stabilized with marriage, suitable work, and a house to be a productive individual serving his home and his society. His brother-in-law states that his entire family was shocked when he left home but hopes that the Board

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gives Mr. al-Qahtani an opportunity to join his family once again. Another brother describes him as, among many other things, gregarious, humorous, moderate, patient, and loved by others. Another brother says that Mr. al-Qahtani's leaving home was terrible and that he hopes to help Mr. al-Qahtani proceed his life, which will be the new, better beginning of him. An additional brother remarks fondly on how Mr. al-Qahtani taught his younger siblings school lessons and hopes that his family can help Mr. al-Qahtani start a family of his own soon. His sisters and father's second wife express acceptance for his release and note that his family plans to help provide him a home and financial support upon his release.

Mr. al-Qahtani plans to reintegrate into society by finding a job... a wife, a job, and starting a family. These are not the plans of potential recidivists, but rather the plans of a man ready to live the rest of his life quietly.

Mr. al-Qahtani's behavior in custody has improved. The statements from Mr. al-Qahtani's fellow inmates and teachers reflect the maturing of his character. Mr. al-Qahtani has taken a number of classes at Guantanamo, including English, life skills, and Photoshop courses, and his instructors in those courses speak highly of his studious nature and willingness to work with others. Similarly, while Mr. al-Qahtani was formerly stand-offish at Guantanamo, he has

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slowly opened up to other inmates and has become social once again. Their statements evince his development while in Guantanamo Bay and his readiness to reintegrate into modern society.

The Board should release Mr. al-Qahtani. Mr. al-Qahtani poses no threat to the security of the United States. He deeply regrets his decision to leave home in 2002 and realizes that it was based on an immature, storybook notion of the world that has no basis in reality.

Mr. al-Qahtani's training as an electrical engineer should not stand in the way of his release. Mr. al-Qahtani is not a bomb-maker. Indeed, he has never been alleged to have been a bomb-maker, only a young man who, because of his education, was picked out to receive training in that area. There is no reason to believe that formal electrical engineering training Mr. al-Qahtani received twenty years ago would provide him with relevant specialized knowledge of bomb-making.

Regardless, Mr. al-Qahtani has absolutely no desire to be a bomb maker. He wishes to leave a quiet life, raise a family, get a job, and earn respect in his community.

PM: Thank you. Board Members **(clears throat)**... excuse me... Board Members may reserve questions until detainee and witness statements

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have been presented in their entirety, but at this time, does any Board Member have a question?

(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 stay 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 0923, 19 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)