

PERIODIC REVIEW BOARD SUBSEQUENT HEARING, 19 APRIL 2016
OBAIDULLAH, ISN 762
PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OPENING STATEMENT

Good morning ladies and gentlemen of the Board. We are the Personal Representatives of ISN 762. We will be assisting Mr. Obaidullah this morning with his case, aided by his Counsel, Mrs. Anne Richardson.

In the past four months, Obaidullah has earnestly participated in the Periodic Review Process and has attended all meetings with his Personal Representatives and his Counsel.

Obaidullah has conducted himself in a professional and patient manner throughout all engagements with Counsel and his representatives. He has a proven history of compliant behavior while detained at Guantanamo. He has engaged with the Joint Task Force Medical Staff in order to deal with health issues. This teamwork has greatly improved his quality of life.

He has taken advantage of all the opportunities for education and personal enrichment while detained at Guantanamo. These opportunities include courses in English, Life Skills, computers.

Obaidullah is fortunate to have a very supportive family remaining in Afghanistan comprised of his spouse, daughter, mother, brother and sister. His family members and the town elders have pledged unwaivering financial support, a place of residence, and assistance with employment during his transition to the utmost of their ability.

Subsequently, Obaidullah will discuss both his past and his desire for a better life for himself in the future. We are confident that Obaidullah's desire to pursue a better way of life if transferred from Guantanamo, is genuine and that he does not represent a continuing or significant threat to the security of the United States of America. He is open to transfer to any country, but would prefer to return to Afghanistan if possible.

Thank you for your time and attention. We are pleased to answer any questions you have throughout this proceeding.

UNCLASSIFIED
Approved for Public Release

PERIODIC REVIEW BOARD (PRB) 19 April 2016
OBaidULLAH, ISN 762
PRIVATE COUNSEL OPENING STATEMENT

Good morning. My name is Anne Richardson, and I am the Private Counsel for Obaidullah. I have been an attorney for over 25 years, and now work at a non-profit called Public Counsel in Los Angeles. I appreciate this opportunity to appear before you and to give you my observations regarding Obaidullah.

I first met Obaidullah in 2009, when I began to represent him in his habeas petition, along with the Center for Constitutional Rights. Since then, I have been down to Guantanamo about a dozen times to meet with him. I also regularly have telephone calls to stay in touch with him and keep his spirits up. Since about 2010, his English has been so excellent that we have not needed a translator unless we are discussing complex legal issues.

Obaidullah does not pose any threat to the United States. He was only approximately 19 when he was captured, from his own bed, in the middle of the night. He has a wife and a daughter, who was born just before he was captured, whom he desperately longs to see. His father died when he was very young, and his mother, brother and sister still live in the same village. Obaidullah's brother Fazel has a very successful mobile phone shop and has already built a new house for his own wife and children that he hopes to share with Obaidullah and his family. His family has written supportive letters, stating that they will do everything in their power to help him make an adjustment once he is released from Guantanamo. While he would like to be transferred back home, where he can immediately start working with his brother Fazel, and live with his extended family, he is willing to go wherever the United States transfers him.

In all the years I have visited and spoken with him, Obaidullah, has never expressed any ideological ideas about America or any other country. He has been unfailingly polite and courteous in asking after my family and those of the other habeas attorneys. I did not know if he would have a problem meeting with female attorneys, but he has always shaken my hand, and seen me as a full peer of any male attorney he also meets with. Far from being a religious extremist, he discussed with us childhood games he remembered from Afghanistan, and has written some moving poems, some of which we have submitted to this Board. In fact, one of his translators during the habeas process was the distinguished poet Abdul Bari Jahani, who is now the Minister of Culture and Education, who is the most esteemed living poet in the Pashto language. Mr. Jahani has written a supporting letter regarding Obaidullah, urging this Board to recognize that he poses no threat.

Obaidullah is and has for many years been one of the most compliant detainees. He served as Block leader, and even before that, he served as a translator for others who experienced conflict with the guards or other detainees. He has taken English

UNCLASSIFIED
Approved for Public Release

classes, computer classes, art classes, and takes every opportunity to improve himself and improve his life once he is released from Guantanamo.

Obaidullah is no longer young, and wishes nothing more than just to be back with his family. He proudly tells us how smart his daughter is, and how important her schooling is to him. Although he is willing to undergo any program the U.S. wishes to require, he does not need any rehabilitation.

At one time, he was charged in the military commission's process. The charges were later dismissed. We have submitted letters from a large number of his current and former military attorneys and investigators, as well as his habeas attorneys, all of whom express the same conclusion -- that he is not a danger to the United States or its interests. We also stand ready to assist him in his reintegration into life outside the prison, whether financially or emotionally, so convinced are we that he will be able to adjust and lead a lawful, humble life on the outside.

In conclusion, I urge this Board to find that Obaidullah is not a threat to the United States, and I trust that any lingering doubts this Board may have will be assuaged by meeting him yourselves.

Very Truly Yours,

Anne Richardson