

UNCLASSIFIED
Approved for Public Release

CA: This Periodic Review Board is being convened at 0902 hours on 31 May 2016, with regard to the following detainee: Shawqi Awad Balzuhair, ISN 838.

As a reminder, the unclassified portions of this proceeding 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:

LEGAL ADVISOR TO THE BOARD;

CASE ADMINISTRATORS;

PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE;

TWO TRANSLATORS;

THE DETAINEE; AND,

SECURITY OFFICER.

UNCLASSIFIED
Approved for Public Release

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

CA: The detainee's Personal Representative, 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's opening statement. These documents have been posted to the Periodic Review Secretariat website. This session is being observed by 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 Shawqi Awad Balzuhair, ISN 838, to protect against a continuing significant threat to the security of the United States. From here on forward, we will refer... refer to the detainee as Shawqi. This session of the hearing is unclassified.

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

PM: Shawqi, 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

UNCLASSIFIED
Approved for Public Release

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 is your representative to assist you during this process. Finally, the translators ensure that everyone understands your statements and that you understand what is being said during the hearing.

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

PM: Personal Representative, has the detainee had an opportunity to review the unclassified summary?

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

PR: Yes, Sir.

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

PM: Thank you. I will now read the unclassified summary:

Shawqi Awad Balzuhair, YM 838, was a low-level Yemeni militant who traveled to Afghanistan in mid-2001, received basic training at the al-Qaeda camp, and served on the frontlines before nine eleven. Following the onset of coalition operations, he fled to Pakistan where he met senior al-Qaeda figures who were arranging his return to Yemen. Shawqi is one of the Yemenis arrested during the 11 September 2002 raids in Karachi, Pakistan, la... later labeled the "Karachi Six"

UNCLASSIFIED
Approved for Public Release

this may improve his chances of release. Early in his detention, Shawqi expressed hatred toward the United States and said that he was being held unjustly. Shawqi has not expressed a clear plan for how he would support himself if he left Guantanamo, and we judge he would struggle to acclimate to civilian life because he has admitted to dropping out of school and appears to lack vocational skills.

Shawqi does not appear to have any direct associations with at-large extremists. He probably would prefer to be transferred to Yemen to be close to his family, but they probably are experiencing financial hardship because of Yemen's ongoing conflict and we do not know if they would be able to support him financially.

Does the Personal Representative wish to make an unclassified opening statement, at this time?

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

PR: Yes, Sir.

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

PM: 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 resolve the issue. Has the detainee had an opportunity to review your statement?

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

UNCLASSIFIED
Approved for Public Release

based on concerns that they were part of an al Qaeda operational cell intended to support a future attack. We judge that this label more accurately reflects the common circumstances of their arrest and that is more likely the six Yemenis were elements of a larger pool of Yemeni fighters that senior al-Qaeda planners considered potentially available to support future operations. Shawqi was probably awaiting a chance to return to Yemen when he was arrested in the Karachi safe house.

Shawqi has been highly compliant with the guard force at Guantanamo Bay detention facility since his arrival in October of 2002. He has committed a low number of infractions compared to other detainees, according to the Joint Task Guantanamo **[sic]**, JTF-GTMO. Early in his detention, he provided information of moderate value about the activities of al-Qaeda leaders; however, he has also admitted to lying to interrogators based on his allegation of mistreatment and rarely participates in interrogations, suggesting he sees little value in cooperating.

Shawqi has provided little insight into his views of extremism or violence, hindering our understanding of whether he would pursue extremist activity after detention. He has not expressed or demonstrated any sympathy or support al... for al-Qaeda, its global ide... ideology, or other radical Islamic views, probably judging that

UNCLASSIFIED
Approved for Public Release

PR: Yes, Sir.

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

PM: Personal Representative, please proceed.

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

PR: Good Morning, ladies and gentlemen of the Board. I am a Personal Representative for Shawqi Awad Balzuhair. I have met with Mr. Balzuhair multiple times in preparation for the Periodic Review process and I can attest that he has always attended each meeting. He is quite pleasant and is always looking forward to answering your questions today in hopes of reuniting with his family.

What I have learned about Shawqi through my interactions with him is that his family has prepared for his return. They will continue to be a supportive family no matter where he is transferred. While the family has considered that Shawqi may not return to Yemen, they are preparing for this financially... they are preparing for him financially and have created a nest egg for him. There was an inheritance left to him, which has been divided among the unfam... unmarried family members. In addition, while Yemen is expiring **[sic]** much unrest, all members in his family continue to work and some have two jobs. Each family member has confirmed financial support for Shawqi after his release from Guantanamo. As we know, support comes in many forms. Shawqi's family will also continue to

UNCLASSIFIED
Approved for Public Release

support him emotionally and spiritually as they have done during his years in GTMO. Of course, once he leaves GTMO, they will have a greater ability due to the freedoms allowed from cellphone and internet contact. They will be able to encourage and help him more.

Shawqi is preparing for life after GTMO by developing his mind and skill sets. While in Guantanamo, he has developed an interest in carpentry. Based upon an instructor's recommendation, who noted that Shawqi ha... was able to visualize objects in three dimensions, Shawqi has developed a passion for building. Shawqi added math classes and requested self-study books from his Private Counsel to enhance his ability in carpentry projects. He has also taken additional classes in English, Life Skills, and Art. Carpentry is a versatile occupation, capable of being used throughout the word... world wherever he is transferred.

Shawqi's temperament will aid in his transfer as he gets along well with others, as seen by getting along both with detainees and the guard force. He has learned quite a bit about other cultures, while he has lived in GTMO. As most detainees, he is hoping to start his life after GTMO by finding a wife. He knows that he will be able to work hard and he is willing to do so, with the help of his family and active goals he is striving towards, such as learning new skills.

UNCLASSIFIED
Approved for Public Release

So, he is here today to answer your questions openly. I will be here throughout, if you have any questions for me. Thank you.

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

(NON-VERBAL RESPONSE FROM BMs)

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

PM: With no questions, this concludes this portion of the hearing. I ask that you 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 0915, 31 May 2016.]

[END OF PAGE]

ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYM KEY

BM: BOARD MEMBER
CA: CASE ADMINISTRATOR
DET: DETAINEE
PM: PRESIDING MEMBER
PR: PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE
TRANS 1: TRANSLATOR ONE (LOCATED AT PRS HQ)
TRANS 2: TRANSLATOR TWO (LOCATED AT GUANTANAMO BAY)