

PERIODIC REVIEW BOARD FULL HEARING, 21 MAR 2017
SAIFULLAH ABDULLAH PARACHA, ISN 1094
PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OPENING STATEMENT

Members of the Board, thank you for reviewing Mr. Saifullah Paracha's case so that he can answer your questions. He has reviewed the outcome from his first Board, understands your concerns, and has considered ways to mitigate the issues.

I did want to address the reason behind Mr. Paracha wanting to continue to work. While he is older, beyond retirement age, Pakistan does not offer the same social services as the United States. The concerns that Mr. Paracha wanted to address before retiring have been caused by people taking advantage of his family due to his detention. He has declared on numerous occasions to me that he does not want to return home to become a businessman out of sheer drive for success, but instead wants to get his family's life in order. A letter he received from his wife gave details of a civil case brought against Mr. Paracha, which has obviously distressed him. The case occurred as a result of his wife being conned into selling their family home. There are many debts as well as a Guantanamo related stigma facing the Paracha family, as long-term friends and neighbors have abandoned them, making it even more difficult for Paracha's wife to succeed as the head-of-household in a male-centric society. Mr. Paracha wants to settle the court case and help his children get situated so they can take over as the supporters for the family. He wants to be there for his wife and live a retired life.

He does not plan to make contacts with people he knew before GTMO but instead plans to be a father and supporter for his wife and children. This support does not have to be solely financial but can also present itself in the form of knowledge or emotional strength. The elderly are valued for holding the knowledge and experience of society, and Mr. Paracha intends to teach his children so they can become the family breadwinners. All three of his children have graduated from college. He would like to return home to help strengthen his family and is willing to comply with any conditions placed on him.

Thank you.

PERIODIC REVIEW BOARD

Saifullah Paracha (ISN 1094)

Statement of Private Counsel David H. Remes

In its final determination of April 7, 2016, the Board gave two basic reasons for concluding that Mr. Paracha's continued detention is warranted. First, he did not persuade the Board that if he resumed his business career, he could or would avoid dealings with nefarious business contacts. Second, he did not indicate a sense of responsibility for his involvement with al-Qaeda or an awareness of the impact of his actions.

To meet the Board's first concern, Mr. Paracha will wind down his business affairs and retire when he returns to Pakistan. Mr. Paracha resolved to retire even apart from the Board's concern. He accepts that he is too old and his health too precarious to go back into business. He feels the tug of family.

Mr. Paracha is understandably concerned for the financial security of his family, but he has indicated that he has sufficient assets to allow him and his wife to live comfortably. His family members in Pakistan and America are ready, willing, and able to provide financial support. Reprieve, with its UN-funded "Life after Guantanamo" program and strong presence in Pakistan, will also help support him.

When the Board probed to determine whether Mr. Paracha accepts responsibility for his actions and recognizes their impact, Mr. Paracha did not understand what the Board was driving at. He never intended to promote what happened. But he fully accepts that he may have helped enable Al Qaeda to carry out the 9/11 attacks, and, as he says, this possibility will haunt him for the rest of his life.

For these reasons, I respectfully encourage the Board to convene a full review and hope that it will conclude that Mr. Paracha's continued detention is unwarranted.

David H. Remes