UNITED STATES v. SALIM AHMED HAMDAN – Case No. 04-0004	**Appointing Authority Decision on Challenges for Cause**
UNITED STATES v. DAVID MATTHEWS HICKS – Case No. 04-0001	Decision No. 2004-001 October 19, 2004

Initial hearings were held in each of the above cases at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, on August 24 and 25, 2004, respectively, during which voir dire was conducted.[1] In both cases, counsel for both sides reviewed detailed written questionnaires completed by each commission member, conducted voir dire of the commission as a whole, and then conducted extensive individual voir dire of the presiding officer, each of the four commission members, and the one alternate member.[2] Some of the commission members were also individually questioned by counsel in closed session so that classified matters could be examined.[3] In both the *Hamdan* and *Hicks* cases, defense counsel challenged the Presiding Officer, three of the four commission members, and the alternate commission member. During the hearings, the prosecution opposed all the challenges in both cases. However, in a subsequent brief filed by the Chief Prosecutor, the prosecution modified their position and no longer opposes the challenges for cause against Colonel (COL) B (a Marine),[4] Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) T, and LTC C.

[1] The initial hearing in *United States v. al Bahlul*, Case No. 04-0003, was held on August 26, 2004, at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The proceedings in that case were suspended prior to voir dire to resolve the accused's request to represent himself. The initial hearing in *United States v. al Qosi*, Case No. 04-0002, was held on August 27, 2004, at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Voir dire in that case is scheduled to be conducted in November 2004.

[2] By comparison, in the Nazi Saboteur Military Commission conducted during World War II, defense counsel asked only two questions of the commission as a whole and conducted no individual voir dire. There were no challenges for cause. *See* Transcript of Proceedings before the Military Commissions to Try Persons Charged with Offenses Against the Law of War and the Articles of War, Washington D.C., July 8-31, 1942, transcribed by the University of Minnesota, 2004, *available at* http://www.soc.umn.edu/~samaha/nazi_saboteurs/nazi01.htm at pp. 13-14.

[3] To what extent voir dire is conducted during any military commission is a matter within the discretion of the Presiding Officer. "The Presiding Officer shall determine if it is necessary to conduct or permit questioning of members (including the Presiding Officer) on issues of whether there is good cause for their removal. The Presiding Officer may permit questioning in any manner he deems appropriate . . . [and shall ensure that] any such questioning shall be narrowly focused on issues pertaining to whether good cause may exist for the removal of any member." DoD Military Commission Instruction No. 8, "Administrative Procedures," paragraph 3A(2) (Aug. 31, 2004) [hereinafter MCI No. 8]. The Presiding Officer permitted extensive, wide-ranging voir dire in both of these cases. There was no objection by any counsel that the Presiding Officer impeded in any way their ability to conduct full and extensive voir dire of all the members, including the Presiding Officer.

[4] The final commission member, COL B (an Air Force officer), was not challenged by either side in either case. All further references to COL B herein refer to COL B, the Marine.

In each case, the Appointing Authority considered the trial transcript, the written briefs of the parties, the written questionnaires completed by the members, and the written recommendations of the Presiding Officer. While each case is decided on the record of trial in that case, this joint decision is provided because of the close similarities in the voir dire of the members and the arguments of counsel in both cases. Additionally, defense counsel from the *al Qosi* case has also filed a brief concerning the proper standard for the Appointing Authority to apply when deciding challenges for cause.

Military Commission Procedural Provisions on Challenges for Cause

The Appointing Authority appoints military commission members "based on competence to perform the duties involved" and may remove members for "good cause." DoD Directive No. 5105.70, "Appointing Authority for Military Commissions," paragraph 4.1.2 (Feb. 10, 2004) [hereinafter DoD Dir. 5105.70]. *See also* DoD Military Commission Order No. 1, "Procedures for Trials by Military Commissions of Certain Non-United States Citizens in the War Against Terrorism," Section 4A(3) (Mar. 21, 2002) [hereinafter MCO No. 1]; MCI No. 8 at paragraph 3A(1). To be qualified to serve as a member or an alternate member of a military commission, each person "shall be a commissioned officer of the United States armed forces ("Military Officer"), including without limitation reserve personnel on active duty, National Guard personnel on active duty in Federal service, and retired personnel recalled to active duty." MCO No. 1 at Section 4A(3). *Compare* Article 25(a), Uniform Code of Military Justice, 10 U.S.C. § 825(a) [hereinafter UCMJ].

The Presiding Officer may not decide challenges for cause but must "forward to the Appointing Authority information and, if appropriate, a recommendation relevant to the question of whether a member (including the Presiding Officer) should be removed for good cause. While awaiting the Appointing Authority's decision on such matter, the Presiding Officer may elect either to hold proceedings in abeyance or to continue."[5] MCI No. 8 at paragraph 3A(3). In the *Hamdan* and *Hicks* cases, consistent with this authority, the Presiding Officer has scheduled due dates for motions, motion hearing dates, and tentative trial dates pending the Appointing Authority's decision on these challenges.

"In the event a member (or alternate member) is removed for good cause, the Appointing Authority may replace the member, direct that an alternate member serve in the place of the original member, direct that proceedings simply continue without the member, or convene a new commission." MCI No. 8 at paragraph 3A(1).

The term "good cause" is not defined in any of these provisions but is defined in the Review Panel instruction as including, but not limited to, "physical disability, military exigency, or other circumstances that render the member unable to perform his duties."

[5] On September 15, 2004, the Appointing Authority sent the following email to the Presiding Officer: "Please forward your observations and recommendations relating to challenges for cause." That same day, the Presiding Officer provided written recommendations concerning the recommended standard for deciding challenges for cause and his recommendations on the challenges against each member in the *Hamdan* and *Hicks* cases.

DoD Military Commission Instruction No. 9, "Review of Military Commission Proceedings," paragraph 4B(2) (Dec. 26, 2003). This is the same definition of good cause that a convening authority or a military judge uses to excuse a court-martial member after assembly of the court. *See* Manual for Courts-Martial, United States, Rules for Courts-Martial 505 (2002) [hereinafter RCM].

Parties' Positions Concerning the Standard for Determining Challenges for Good Cause

At the request of the Presiding Officer, defense counsel in *Hamdan*, *Hicks*, and *al Qosi*, as well as the Chief Prosecutor, filed briefs concerning the appropriate standard for the Appointing Authority to apply when deciding challenges for "good cause." The defense briefs in *Hicks* and *al Qosi* advocate the adoption of the standard set forth in RCM 912(f) including the "implied bias" provision which states that a member shall be excused for cause whenever it appears that the member "[s]hould not sit as a member in the interest of having the [military commission] free from substantial doubt as to legality, fairness, and impartiality." RCM 912(f)(1)(N). While making some different arguments in support of their position, defense counsel in *Hicks* and *al Qosi* advocate that the RCM 912(f)(1)(N) court-martial standard should be applied without change in military commissions. Under this standard, implied bias is determined via a supposedly objective standard, the test being whether a reasonable member of the public would have substantial doubt as to the legality, fairness, and impartiality of the proceeding. *See United States v. Strand*, 59 M.J. 455, 458-59 (2004). Defense counsel in *Hamdan* agree that the RCM 912(f)(1)(N) court-martial standard should be applied to military commissions, but argue that the reasonable member of the public must be taken from the international community.

The brief filed by the Chief Prosecutor recommends the following standard be adopted: "A member shall be disqualified when there is good cause to believe that the member cannot provide the accused a full and fair trial, or the member's impartiality might reasonably be questioned based upon articulable facts."

The Presiding Officer recommends that a challenge for cause should be granted "if there is good cause to believe that the person could not provide a full and fair trial, impartially and expeditiously, of the cases brought before the Commission. I do not believe that there is an 'implied bias' standard in the relevant documents establishing the Commissions." (Mem. for Appointing Authority, Military Commissions at paragraph 2, Sept. 15, 2004.)

The parties cite no controlling standard for deciding challenges for cause before military commissions. Nevertheless, it is helpful to examine the challenge standards in courts-martial, United States federal practice, and under international practice when deciding the appropriate challenge standard for military commissions.

Applicability of the Uniform Code of Military Justice and the Manual for Courts-Martial to Military Commissions

As explained below, while some of the provisions of the UCMJ expressly apply to military commissions, none of the provisions of the Manual for Courts-Martial, including the implied bias standard endorsed by defense counsel, apply to military commissions. Article 21 of the UCMJ provides:

> § 821. Art. 21 Jurisdiction of courts-martial not exclusive
>
> The provisions of this chapter conferring jurisdiction upon courts-marital do not deprive military commissions, provost courts, or other military tribunals of concurrent jurisdiction with respect to offenders or offenses that by statute or by the law of war may be tried by military commissions, provost courts, or other military tribunals.[6]

UCMJ art. 21. Article 36 of the UCMJ states:

> § 836. Art. 36 President may prescribe rules
>
> (a) Pretrial, trial, and post-trial procedures, including modes of proof, for cases arising under this chapter triable in courts-martial, *military commissions* and other military tribunals, and procedures for courts of inquiry, may be prescribed by the President by regulations which shall, so far as he considers practicable, apply the principles of law and the rules of evidence generally recognized in the trial of criminal cases in the United States district courts, *but which may not be contrary to or inconsistent with this chapter* [10 U.S.C. §§ 801-946].
>
> (b) All rules and regulations made under this article shall be uniform insofar as practicable.

UCMJ art. 36 (emphasis added). In 1990, the phrase "and shall be reported to Congress" was deleted from the end of subsection (b). *See* National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1991, Pub. L. No. 101-510, Section 1301, 104 Stat. 1301 (1990).

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[6] As recently as November 22, 2000, less than one year before the 9/11 attacks, Congress again recognized the independent jurisdiction of military commissions. *See* Military Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Act of 2000, Pub. L. No. 106-523 (adding a section entitled "Criminal offenses committed by certain members of the Armed Forces and by persons employed by or accompanying the Armed Forces outside the United States," 18 U.S.C. § 3261 (2000)). 18 U.S.C. § 3261(c) states that "[n]othing in this chapter [18 U.S.C. §§ 3261 et seq.] may be construed to deprive a court-martial, military commission, provost court, or other military tribunal of concurrent jurisdiction with respect to offenders or offenses that by statute or by the law of war may be tried by a court-martial, military commission, provost court, or other military tribunal." *Id.*

Consistent with this Congressional authority, on November 13, 2001, the President entered the following finding:

> Given the danger to the safety of the United States and the nature of international terrorism, and to the extent provided by and under this order, I find consistent with section 836 of title 10, United States Code, that it is not practicable to apply in military commissions under this order the principles of law and the rules of evidence generally recognized in the trial of criminal cases in the United States district courts.

Military Order of November 13, 2001, "Detention, Treatment, and Trial of Certain Non-Citizens in the War Against Terrorism," 66 F.R. 57833, Section 1(f) (Nov. 16, 2001) [hereinafter President's Military Order].

Accordingly, the Manual for Courts-Martial does not apply to trials by military commissions because of the congressionally authorized finding in the President's Military Order. However, the President's statutory authority to promulgate different trial rules for military commissions is not unlimited. Military commission trial procedures must comply with two statutory conditions contained in the Uniform Code of Military Justice. First, all such rules and regulations shall be "uniform insofar as practicable." UCMJ art. 36(b).

Second, any such rule or regulation "may not be contrary to or inconsistent with" the Uniform Code of Military Justice. UCMJ art. 36(a). Most of the UCMJ's provisions specifically apply to courts-marital only, but some also expressly apply to military commissions as well. For example, Articles 21 (jurisdiction), 28 (court reporters and interpreters), 37(a) (unlawful command influence), 47 (refusal to appear or testify), 48 (contempts), 50 (admissibility of records of courts of inquiry), 104 (aiding the enemy), and 106 (spies) all expressly apply to military commissions.

Article 41 of the UCMJ discusses challenges for cause, but is expressly applicable only to trials by court-martial and does not prescribe the standard to use when deciding a challenge for "cause." *See* UCMJ art. 41(a)(1). Article 29 of the UCMJ provides that no member of a court-martial may be excused after the court has been assembled "unless excused as a result of a challenge, excused by the military judge *for physical disability or other good cause*, or excused by order of the convening authority for good cause." UCMJ art. 29(a) (emphasis added).

In historical military jurisprudence, a general statement or assertion of bias was not a proper challenge. The challenge had to allege specific facts and circumstances demonstrating the basis of the alleged bias. *See generally* William Winthrop, *Military Law and Precedents* 207 (Government Printing Office 1920 reprint) (1896). Challenges

"for favor," as implied bias challenges were historically known, did not, by themselves, imply bias.

> [T]he question of their sufficiency in law being wholly contingent upon the testimony, *which may or may not, according to the character and significance of all the circumstances raise a presumption of partiality*. Such are challenges founded upon the personal relations of the juror and one of the parties to the case; their relationship, when not so near as to constitute [actual bias]; the entertaining by the juror of a qualified opinion or impression in regard to the merits of the case; his having an unfavorable opinion of the character or conduct of the prisoner; his having taken part in a previous trial of the prisoner for a different offence, or of another person for the same or a similar offence; or some other incident, no matter what . . . which, alone or in combination with other incidents, may have so acted upon the juror that his mind is not 'in a state of neutrality' between the parties.

Id. at 216 (emphasis added). In such cases, the question of whether the member is or is not biased "is a question of *fact* to be determined by the particular circumstances in evidence." *Id.* at 216-17 (emphasis in original).

Challenges for Cause in United States Federal Courts

In federal practice, the seminal case on implied bias is *Smith v. Phillips*, 455 U.S. 209, 217 (1982) (boldface added):

> [D]ue process does not require a new trial every time a juror has been placed in a potentially compromising situation. Were that the rule, few trials would be constitutionally acceptable. The safeguards of juror impartiality, such as *voir dire* and protective instructions from the trial judge, are not infallible; it is virtually impossible to shield jurors from every contact or influence that might theoretically affect their vote. Due process means a jury **capable and willing to decide the case solely on the evidence before it**, and a trial judge ever watchful to prevent prejudicial occurrences and to determine the effect of such occurrences when they happen.

In an often cited concurring opinion, Justice O'Connor writes that:

> While each case must turn on its own facts, there are some extreme situations that would justify a finding of implied bias. Some examples might include a revelation that the

> juror is an actual employee of the prosecuting agency, that the juror is a close relative of one of the participants in the trial or the criminal transaction, or that the juror was a witness or somehow involved in the criminal transaction.

Id. at 222.

The doctrine of implied bias is "limited in application to those extreme situations where the relationship between a prospective juror and some aspect of the litigation is such that it is highly unlikely that the average person could remain impartial in his deliberations under the circumstances." *Brown v. Warden*, No. 03-2619, 2004 U.S. App. LEXIS 13944, at 3 (3rd Cir. July 6, 2004 unpublished) (quoting *Person v. Miller,* 854 F.2d 656, 664 (4th Cir. 1988)). "The implied bias doctrine is not to be lightly invoked, but 'must be reserved for those extreme and exceptional circumstances that leave serious question whether the trial court subjected the defendant to manifestly unjust procedures resulting in a miscarriage of justice.'" *United States v. Cerrato-Reyes*, 176 F.3d 1253, 1261 (2d Cir. 2000) (quoting *Gonzales v. Thomas*, 99 F.3d 978, 987 (10th Cir. 1996)).

Military courts-martial practice also purports to follow the *Smith* Supreme Court precedent, with the highest military appellate court concluding that "implied bias should be invoked rarely." *See United States v. Warden*, 51 M.J. 78, 81 (2000); s*ee also United States v. Lavender*, 46 M.J. 485, 488 (1997) (quoting *Smith v. Phillips*, 455 U.S. 209, 217 (1982)). In practice, however, the U. S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces has been more liberal in granting implied bias challenges than the various U.S. Federal Circuit Courts of Appeals. But even in courts-martial, military appellate courts look at the "totality of the factual circumstances" when reviewing implied bias challenges. *See United States v. Strand*, 59 M.J. 455, 459 (2004).

The American Bar Association recently proposed a minimum standard for deciding challenges for good cause:

> At a minimum, a challenge for cause to a juror should be sustained if the juror has an interest in the outcome of the case, may be biased for or against one of the parties, is not qualified by law to serve on a jury, or may be unable or unwilling to hear the subject case fairly and impartially. . . . In ruling on a challenge for cause, the court should evaluate the juror's demeanor and substantive responses to questions. If the court determines that there is a reasonable doubt that the juror can be fair and impartial, then the court should excuse him or her from the trial. The court should make a record of the reasons for the ruling including whatever factual findings are appropriate.

American Bar Association, Standards Relating to Jury Trials, Draft, September 2004.

International Standards for Challenges for Cause

International law generally provides for the right of an accused to an impartial tribunal. The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) statutorily establish impartiality as a judicial requirement. Statute of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, art. 13, U.N. Doc. S/25704, 32 ILM 1159, 1195 (May 3, 1993); Statute of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, art. 12, U.N. Doc. S/Res/955, U.N. SCOR 3453, 33 ILM 1598, 1607 (Nov. 8, 1994). The Rules of Evidence and Procedure of both the ICTY and ICTR state that "[a] judge may not sit on a trial . . . in which he has a personal interest or concerning which the Judge has or has had any association which might affect his or her impartiality." Rules of Procedure and Evidence, International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, Rule 15, U.N. Doc. IT/32/Rev. 32 (Aug. 12, 2004); Rules of Procedure and Evidence, International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, Rule 15, U.N. Doc. ITR/3/REV. 1 (June 29, 1995).

Several international treaties and conventions recognize the right to an impartial tribunal. The European Convention on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights guarantee the accused a fair trial and recognize the right to an impartial tribunal. In nearly identical language, the standards in both documents require a criminal tribunal to be fair, public, independent, and competent. *See* European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, art. 6, Section 1, *opened for signature*, 213 UNTS 221 (Nov. 4, 1950); International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights, art. 14, Section 1, 999 UNTS 171 (Dec. 16, 1966).

The European Court of Human Rights has reviewed numerous cases for alleged violations of the right to an impartial tribunal or judge. In evaluating impartiality, the Court consistently emphasizes that judges and tribunals must appear to be impartial. *Piersack v. Belgium*, Series A, No. 53 (Oct. 1, 1982). In *Piersack v. Belgium*, the Court noted that a tribunal, including a jury, must be impartial from a subjective as well as an objective point of view. *Id.* at para. 30(a). The European Court of Human Rights affirmed this consideration in *Gregory v. United Kingdom*, stating that "[t]he Court notes at the outset that it is of fundamental importance in a democratic society that the courts inspire confidence in the public . . . ." *Gregory v. United Kingdom*, 25 Eur. H.R. Rep. 577, para. 43 (Feb. 25, 1997). As a result of an overriding need to maintain an appearance of impartiality, national legislation often establishes specific relationships or perceived conflicts that disqualify a judge on the basis of appearances rather than an objective finding that a judge is indeed impartial.

In evaluating whether there is an appearance of impartiality that gives rise to a challenge of a judge or juror, the European Court of Human Rights noted that lack of impartiality includes situations where there is a "legitimate doubt" that a juror or judge can act impartially. *Piersack*, Series A, No. 53 at para. 30. Further, it is necessary to "examine whether in the circumstances there were sufficient guarantees to exclude any objectively justified or legitimate doubts as to the impartiality of the jury . . . ." *Gregory*, 25 Eur. H.R. Rep. at para. 45. Despite this seemingly expansive approach, the European

Court of Human Rights has ruled consistently that a judge is presumed to be impartial unless proven otherwise. *LeCompte, van Leuven and De Meyeres v. Belgium*, Series A, No. 43 (June 23, 1981). Thus, as a practical matter, it is the rare case in which the impartiality of a judge is successfully challenged on the basis of a judge's relationship to others when such relationship is not specifically enumerated as a disqualifying factor under national legislation.

The Appeals Chamber for the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda has exhaustively analyzed the European Court of Human Rights cases, as well as cases from common law states, and developed the following standard to interpret and apply the concept of impartiality:

> [A] Judge should not only be subjectively free from bias, but also that there should be nothing in the surrounding circumstances which objectively gives rise to an appearance of bias. On this basis, the Appeals Chamber considers that the following principles should direct it in interpreting and applying the impartiality requirement of the Statute:
>
> > A. A judge is not impartial if shown that actual bias exists.
> > B. There is an unacceptable appearance of bias if:
> > i. a Judge is a party to the case, or has a financial or proprietary interest in the outcome of a case, or if the Judge's decision will lead to the promotion of a cause in which he or she is involved, together with one of the parties . . . ; or
> > ii. the circumstances would lead a reasonable observer, properly informed, to reasonably apprehend bias.

Prosecutor v. Furundzija, para. 189, Case No. I IT-95-17/1-A, Judgment, (July 21, 2000).

The Appeals Chamber noted that an informed observer is one who takes into account the oath, as well as any training and experience of the juror. On the basis of this test, the Appeals Chamber found no violation, holding that the judge's membership in an international organization was one of the very factors that qualified her as a judge at the Tribunal and thus such membership could not be the basis for a claim of bias. The Chamber also noted that judges may have personal convictions that do not amount to bias absent other factors. *Id.* at para. 203.

Appointing Authority Standard for Deciding Challenges for Cause

The President's Military Order establishes the trial standard that military commissions will provide "a full and fair trial, with the military commission sitting as the triers of both fact and law." President's Military Order at Section 4(c)(2). Considering all of the above, the Appointing Authority will apply the following standard, which includes a limited implied bias component, when deciding challenges for cause against any member of a military commission:

> Based on the totality of the factual circumstances, a challenge for cause will be sustained if the member has an interest in the outcome of the case, may be biased for or against one of the parties, is not qualified by commission law to serve on the commission, or may be unable or unwilling to hear the case fairly and impartially considering only evidence and arguments presented in the accused's trial.

In applying this standard, a member should be excused if the record establishes a reasonable and significant doubt concerning his or her ability to act fairly and impartially. Additionally, the following factors will be considered, although the existence of any one of these factors is not necessarily an independent ground warranting the granting of a challenge and no one factor necessarily carries more weight than another. In each case the challenge will be decided based upon the above standard, taking into account any of these factors that may be applicable and considering the totality of the factual circumstances in the case.

(1) Has the moving party established a factual basis to support the challenge?

(2) Does the non-moving party oppose the challenge?

(3) What recommendation, if any, did the Presiding Officer make concerning the challenge? *See* MCI No. 8 at paragraph 3A(3).

(4) Does the record demonstrate that the challenged member possesses sufficient age, education, training, experience, length of service, judicial temperament, independence, integrity, intelligence, candor, and security clearances, and is otherwise competent to serve as a member of a military commission? *See* MCO No. 1 at Sections 4A(3)-(4); DoD Dir. 5105.70 at paragraph 4.1.2; UCMJ art. 25(d)(2).

(5) Does the record establish that the challenged member is able to lay aside any outside knowledge, association, or inclination, and decide the case fairly and impartially based upon the evidence presented to the commission? *See Irvin v. Dowd*, 366 U.S. 717, 722-23 (1961) (citations omitted).

Examples of good cause that would normally warrant a member's removal from a military commission include situations where the member does not meet the qualifications to sit on or has not been properly appointed to a military commission; has formed or expressed a definite opinion as to the guilt or innocence of the accused as to any offense charged; has become physically disabled; or has intentionally disclosed protected information from a referred military commission case without proper authorization.

Consideration of Individual Challenges

LTC C

The defense challenges to LTC C are based upon his ongoing strong emotions and anger because of 9/11 and his real and present apprehension that his family may be harmed if he participates in these commissions. At trial, the prosecution opposed this challenge. However, the post-hearing brief filed by the Chief Prosecutor does not oppose this challenge. The Presiding Officer believes that there is "some cause" to grant a challenge against LTC C because his responses would provide a reasonable person cause to doubt his ability to provide an impartial trial.

During his voir dire in *Hamdan*, LTC C acknowledged that he indicated in his written questionnaire that he had a desire to seek justice for those who perished at the hands of the terrorists, that he was very angry about the events of 9/11, and that he still had strong emotions about what happened. LTC C further stated that he believed terrorist organizations would seek out both he and his family for revenge simply because of his participation in these commissions. He also stated that at one point he held the opinion that the persons being detained at Guantanamo Bay were terrorists.

During his voir dire in *Hicks*, LTC C stated that he would try to put his emotions aside and look at the case objectively. He reaffirmed that he had participated in discussions with other soldiers where he probably stated that all of the detainees at Guantanamo Bay were terrorists, but that in retrospect that was no longer his opinion.

LTC C's past statements concerning the detainees at Guantanamo, coupled with his ongoing strong emotions concerning the 9/11 attacks, create a reasonable and significant doubt as to whether he could lay aside his emotions and judge the evidence presented in these cases in a fair and impartial manner. Accordingly, based on the totality of the factual circumstances, the challenge for cause against LTC C will be granted.

COL S

On 9/11, COL S [redacted]. One of these [redacted] reserve battalions [redacted]. During the 9/11 attack, [redacted] COL S

attended his funeral and met with his family. COL S also visited Ground Zero about two weeks after the attack [redacted]

The defense challenges to COL S are based upon his emotional reaction when visiting Ground Zero as well as his attendance at the funeral [redacted]. The prosecution opposed this challenge at trial. The post-hearing brief filed by the Chief Prosecutor also opposes this challenge, without elaboration.

The Presiding Officer's written recommendation is that there is no cause to grant a challenge against COL S:

> His voir dire did not reveal any information which might cause a reasonable person to believe that he could not provide a full and fair trial, impartially and expeditiously. His method of speaking, his deliberation when responding, his ability to understand not only the question but the subtext of the question - all of these show that he is a bright attentive officer who will be able to provide the unbiased perspective which is required by the President for this trial. Even if one were to accept an "implied bias" standard, there was nothing in the voir dire to cause a reasonable person to believe that he is in any way biased in these cases. Based on my personal observations of COL S [] while he was discussing the death of [redacted], he was not unduly affected by the individual death - he regretted the death, but he has had a long career during which he has had occasion to see many Marines die.

In the *Hamdan* record, COL S described his reaction to attending the funeral of [redacted]:

> I have been a battalion commander. I have been a regimental commander. I have been in the Marine Corps 28 years. It is not the first Marine that, unfortunately, that I have seen die, whether he was on or off duty in the Marine Corps. The death of every Marine I have known or served with has a deep affect on me, but it is no different that -- that Marine's worth is no more or less than the other Marines, unfortunately, that I have served with who have been killed.

In the *Hamdan* record, COL S described his emotions while visiting Ground Zero: "It is a sad sight. A lot of destruction there. Hard to fathom what was there and what

was left. . . . I would imagine that everyone who saw it was angry." COL S stated that he did not still think about his visit to Ground Zero.

In the *Hicks* record, COL S described his emotions while visiting Ground Zero as sadness rather than anger, again noting that there was a lot of destruction and loss of life. COL S responded as follows when asked how he would separate his 9/11 feelings and personal experiences from the evidence presented at trial:

> COL S: It's separate things.
> DC: Can you just explain for us how you go about doing that. Because we -- you understand that we need to know and be confident that you can be a fair commissioner, separate those things out, and give Mr. Hicks the fair trial that he's due and that we understand that you understand is your responsibility.
> COL S : I understand. I've read these charges. I understand that the fact that anybody's charged with anything doesn't [im]ply more than that they're charged with it. And I make no connection in my mind between those charges and my visit to the World Trade Center.
> DC: Nothing further, thank you.

COL S's written questionnaire and his voir dire in *Hicks* both indicate that, for a non-attorney, COL S has considerable prior military legal experience. COL S stated that he had previously served as both a witness and a member (juror) in courts-martial; that he has served as a special court-martial convening authority on [redacted] different occasions; and has attended specialized military legal training in the form of Senior Officer's Legal Courses and a Law of Land Warfare Course. He also conducted numerous summary courts-marital where he made determinations of both law and fact, just as members of military commissions are required to do.

As the defense stated in their brief in the *Hicks* case, "most Americans, and possibly all military personnel, are gripped by strong emotion, whether sadness, anger, confusion, frustration, fear, or revenge, at the memory of the September 11th attacks . . . ." The issue, however, is not whether a potential military commission member experienced a strong emotional reaction to events that happened over three years ago, or even whether that person candidly acknowledged such feelings, but rather is the member still experiencing those emotions such that he is unable to lay aside those feelings and render a verdict based solely on the evidence presented to the military commission. As the United States Supreme Court has stated:

> It is not required, however, that the jurors be totally ignorant of the facts and issues involved. In these days of swift, widespread and diverse methods of communication, an important case can be expected to arouse the interest of the public in the vicinity, and scarcely any of those best

> qualified to serve as jurors will not have formed some impression or opinion as to the merits of the case. This is particularly true in criminal cases. To hold that the mere existence of any preconceived notion as to the guilt or innocence of an accused, without more, is sufficient to rebut the presumption of a prospective juror's impartiality would be to establish an impossible standard. *It is sufficient if the juror can lay aside his impression or opinion and render a verdict based on the evidence presented in court.*

Irvin, 366 U.S. at 722-23 (citations omitted) (emphasis added).

Unlike LTC C, nothing in either record demonstrates that COL S is experiencing any ongoing emotions as a result of his 9/11 experiences. The Presiding Officer's recommendation states that there was nothing in COL S's demeanor during voir dire that indicated that he was unduly affected by the death of one of his Marines as a result of the 9/11 attacks. COL S, who has considerable legal training and experience, clearly stated that he can and will try these cases without reference to his 9/11 experiences. Nothing in either record creates a reasonable and significant doubt as to COL S's ability to decide these cases fairly and impartially, considering only evidence and arguments presented to the commissions. Accordingly, the challenge for cause against COL S will be denied.

LTC T and COL B

The defense challenged both LTC T and COL B based upon their involvement with operations in Afghanistan at the time Mr. Hamdan and Mr. Hicks were apprehended.

The defense challenged LTC T based upon his role as an intelligence officer on the ground in Afghanistan from approximately [redacted], the period during which both Mr. Hamdan and Mr. Hicks were captured and detained. At trial, the prosecution opposed this challenge. The post-hearing brief filed by the Chief Prosecutor does not oppose this challenge.

The Presiding Officer concluded that there is cause to grant a challenge against LTC T because:

> "his activities within the same area of operations in which Mr. Hamdan was captured make his participation problematic in regards to his knowledge of activities in the theater of operations - thereby possibly impacting on his impartiality. He, in fact, was a person who could legitimately be viewed as a possible victim in this case. Removing LTC T [] would insure that a person who was, in many ways, intimately familiar with the battlefield and the

> modus operandi of both sides would not have an undue influence upon the deliberations of the panel."

During his voir dire in *Hamdan*, LTC T stated that he is an intelligence officer who was assigned to a [redacted] that deployed both to Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom and to Iraq as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom with the mission to capture enemy personnel, but that he was not involved with the capture of Mr. Hamdan. He stated that it is possible that he may have seen intelligence on Mr. Hamdan, but he has no memory of Hamdan's case. During his voir dire in *Hicks*, LTC T stated he was attached to a [redacted], as an intelligence operations and plans officer while deployed to Afghanistan.

During a closed session of trial, the *Hamdan* defense counsel challenged COL B based upon his role in transporting detainees from the area of operations to Guantanamo Bay. In the open session, defense challenged COL B based on the appearance of unfairness because of his prior duty [redacted]. During both open and closed sessions of trial, the *Hicks* defense counsel challenged COL B because his knowledge of operations in Afghanistan, specifically his knowledge of the transportation of detainees, is such that he would be better suited to be a witness than a commission member, and further that his links with personnel in theater were such that he could be characterized as a victim.

At trial, the prosecution opposed the challenge against COL B. The post-hearing brief filed by the Chief Prosecutor does not oppose this challenge. The Presiding Officer's opinion is that there is no cause to grant a challenge against COL B.

In his written questionnaire, COL B indicated that on 9/11 he was newly assigned as the [redacted]. As a result of 9/11, he was involved in developing and executing war plans for Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. He also indicated that he was intimately familiar with operations, planning, and deployments in support of these two operations. [redacted] He was physically deployed to [redacted].

During voir dire, COL B stated that he was not involved in making the determinations of what detainees were eligible for transfer to Guantanamo [redacted]. He specifically remembered Mr. Hicks' name and that he was Australian. He stated that he probably knew which U.S. forces captured Mr. Hicks, but cannot currently recall that information. He also stated that in his role as [redacted] he regularly saw situation reports concerning the conduct of operations in Afghanistan and that he had a close relationship with the Staff Judge Advocate in Central Command.

Based on the totality of the factual circumstances, including the classified voir dire of LTC T and COL B which were reviewed but not discussed herein, the challenges for cause against both LTC T and COL B will be granted. Both officers were actively involved in planning or executing sensitive operations in both Afghanistan and Iraq and are intimately familiar with the operations and deployments in support of these two campaigns, campaigns that resulted in the capture of the detainees who will appear before these commissions. Their intimate knowledge of activities in the theater of operations, including the modus operandi of both sides on the battlefield, could have an undue influence upon their questioning of witnesses appearing before the commission as well as the closed deliberations of the commission. These experiences create a reasonable and significant doubt as to the ability of these two members to decide these cases fairly and impartially.

Presiding Officer

Hamdan's defense counsel challenged the Presiding Officer on four grounds:

(1) He is not qualified as a judge advocate based on being recalled from retired service and not being an active member of any Bar Association at the time he was recalled;

(2) As an attorney, he will exert improper influence over the other non-attorney members;

(3) Multiple contacts, in person or through his assistant, with the Appointing Authority thus creating the appearance of unfairness; and

(4) Previously formed an opinion on the accused's right to a speedy trial as expressed in a July 15, 2004, meeting with counsel from both the prosecution and the defense.

Hicks' defense counsel challenged the Presiding Officer on the same four general grounds. At trial, the prosecution in both cases opposed the challenge against the Presiding Officer. In a subsequent brief, the Chief Prosecutor recommended the Presiding Officer evaluate whether he should remain on the commission in light of the implied bias standard proposed by the prosecution as previously described herein.

Presiding Officer's Judge Advocate Status

Military Commission Order No. 1 requires that the "Presiding Officer shall be a Military Officer who is a judge advocate of any United States armed force." MCO No. 1 at Section 4A(4). The Presiding Officer's written questionnaire, dated August 18, 2004, indicates that he currently is, and has been, an associate member of the Virginia State Bar since 1977 and that he has never practiced law in the civilian sector.

In a written brief, Hamdan's defense counsel asserts the following:

1) All Army judge advocates are required to remain in good standing in the bar of the highest court of a state of the United States, the District of Columbia, or a Federal Court. U.S. Dep't of Army Reg. 27-1, "Judge Advocate Legal Services," para. 13-2h(2) (Sept. 30, 1996) [hereinafter AR 27-1].

2) The Virginia State Bar maintains four classes of membership: active, associate, judicial, and retired. Associate members are entitled to all the privileges of active members except that they may not practice law (in Virginia).

3) Because the Presiding Officer is only an associate member of the Virginia Bar, he is not authorized to practice law in the Army Judge Advocate General's Corps.

In Virginia, the term "good standing" applies to both associate and active members and refers to whether or not the requirements to maintain that specific level of membership have been met. *Unauthorized Practice of Law*, Virginia UPL Opinion 133 (Apr. 20, 1989), *available at* http://www.vsb.org/profguides/upl/opinions/upl_ops/upl_Op133. "Good standing" generally means that the attorney has not been suspended or disbarred for disciplinary reasons and has complied with any applicable rules concerning payment of bar membership dues and completion of continuing legal education requirements.

As the proponent of AR 27-1, The Judge Advocate General (TJAG) of the Army is the appropriate authority to determine whether associate membership in the Virginia Bar constitutes "good standing" as contemplated in that regulation. The record establishes that the Presiding Officer's status with the Virginia Bar has not changed since he was admitted to the Virginia Bar in 1977. The record also shows that, as an associate member of the Virginia Bar, he practiced as an Army judge advocate for twenty-two years, including ten years as a military judge. Prior to his service as a military judge, the Army TJAG personally certified the Presiding Officer's qualifications to be a military judge as required by the Uniform Code of Military Justice. *See* UCMJ art. 26(b). Accordingly, this challenge is without merit.

Undue Influence over Non-attorney Members of the Commission

Under the President's Military Order, the commission members sit as "triers of both fact and law." President's Military Order at Section 4(c)(2). The defense asserts that this particular Presiding Officer will use his experience as a military trial judge and attorney to exert undue influence over the non-attorney members of the commission when deciding questions of law. In *Hamdan*, the Presiding Officer addressed this issue with the members as follows:

> Members, later I am going to instruct you as follows: As I am the only lawyer appointed to the commission, I will instruct you and advise you on the law. However, the President has directed that the commission, meaning all of us, will decide all questions of law and fact. So you are not bound to accept the law as given to you by me. You are free to accept the law as argued to you by counsel either in

> court, or in motions. In closed conferences, and during deliberations, my vote and voice will count no more than that of any other member. Can each member follow that instruction?
> Apparently so.
>
> Is there any member who believes that he would be required to accept, without question, my instruction on the law?
> Apparently not.

The exceptional difficulty and pressure with being the first Presiding Officer to serve on a military commission in over 60 years cannot be overstated. The Presiding Officer must conduct the proceedings with independent and impartial guidance and direction in a trial-judge-like manner. At the same time, the Presiding Officer must ensure that the other non-attorney members of the commission fully exercise their responsibilities to have an equal vote in all questions of law and fact. There is nothing in either record that remotely suggests that this Presiding Officer does not understand the delicate balance that his responsibilities require. Accordingly, the challenge on this basis is without merit.

Relationship with the Appointing Authority Creates Appearance of Unfairness

The precise factual basis for challenge on this ground was not very well articulated by counsel in either *Hamdan* or *Hicks*. In *Hamdan*, the defense counsel's entire oral argument on this ground was as follows:

> We are also challenging based on the multiple contacts that you have had, either through your assistant, or through yourself, with the [A]ppointing [A]uthority. I understand that you said that this is not going to influence you in any way. We believe that it creates the appearance of unfairness, and at least at that level, we challenge on that.

Defense counsel in *Hamdan* did not further articulate a factual basis for this challenge in their post-hearing brief.

In *Hicks*, defense counsel orally adopted the same challenge grounds as *Hamdan* including "the relationship with the appointing authority" and the "perception of the public" under the implied bias standard in RCM 912(f)(1)(N). Defense counsel in *Hicks* did not further articulate a factual basis for this challenge in their post-hearing brief, even though they individually and rather extensively discussed the factual basis for their challenges against the other four challenged members.

The gist of this challenge appears to be that defense counsel perceive that a close personal friendship exists between the Presiding Officer and the Appointing Authority,

and that the Presiding Officer will be viewed as, or act as, an agent of the Appointing Authority rather than an independent, impartial Presiding Officer. Alternately stated, the Appointing Authority will somehow appear to influence the performance of the Presiding Officer. To evaluate this challenge, it is necessary to understand the traditional social and professional relationships between a convening authority and officer members of courts-martial under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, as well as the criminal sanctions against unlawfully influencing the action of a member of a court-martial or a military commission.

In addition to duty or professional responsibilities, military officers of all grades, and often their spouses, are expected by custom and tradition to participate in a wide variety of social functions hosted by senior commanding officers or general officers. Such functions include formal New Year's Day receptions, formal Dining Ins (dinners for officers only), formal Dining Outs (dinners for officers and spouses/dates), formal Dinner Dances, Change of Command ceremonies, promotion ceremonies, award ceremonies, informal Hail and Farewell dinners (welcoming new officers and "roasting" departing officers), retirement ceremonies, and funerals of members of the unit. Because attendance at all such social functions is customary, traditional, and expected, such attendance is not indicative of close personal friendships among the participants.

In most cases, commanders who are authorized to convene general courts-martial under the UCMJ are high-ranking general or flag officers. *See generally* UCMJ art. 22. The eligible "jury pool" of officers for a general court-martial includes officers assigned or attached to the convening authority's command or courts-martial jurisdiction. The convening authority is required to select officers for courts-martial duty, who, in his personal opinion, are "best qualified for the duty by reason of age, education, training, experience, length of service, and judicial temperament." UCMJ art. 25(d)(2). Consequently, convening authorities frequently select as court members officers who they know well and whose judgment they trust.

To ensure that these professional and social relationships between convening authorities and court members do not affect the impartiality or fairness of trials by courts-martial or military commissions, and to maintain the neutrality of the convening authority, Congress enacted Article 37(a), UCMJ, "Unlawfully influencing action of court."[7] This is one of the UCMJ articles that expressly applies to military commissions. This statute prohibits any "attempt to coerce, or by any authorized means, influence the

[7] UCMJ art. 37(a) states in pertinent part (emphasis added):

(a) No authority convening a general, special, or summary court-martial, nor any other commanding officer, may censure, reprimand, or admonish the court or any member, military judge, or counsel thereof, with respect to the findings or sentence adjudged by the court, or with respect to any other exercises of its or his functions in the conduct of the proceedings. No person subject to this chapter may attempt to coerce or, by any unauthorized means, influence the action of a court-martial *or any other military tribunal or any member thereof*, in reaching the findings or sentence in any case, or the action of any convening, approving, or reviewing authority with respect to his judicial acts.

action of [a] . . . military tribunal or any member thereof, in reaching the findings or sentence in any case." UCMJ art. 37(a). Additionally, the knowing and intentional violation of the procedural protection afforded by Article 37(a), UCMJ, is a criminal offense in that any person subject to the UCMJ who "knowingly and intentionally fails to enforce or comply with any provision of this chapter [10 U.S.C. §§ 801-946] regulating the proceedings before, during, or after trial of an accused" may be punished as directed by a court-martial. UCMJ art. 98(2). The Presiding Officer, as a retired Regular Army officer recalled to active duty, and the Appointing Authority, as a retired member of the Regular Army, are both persons subject to trial by court-martial under the UCMJ. *See* UCMJ art. 2(a)(1),(4).

Article 37(a), UCMJ, protects not only the impartiality of courts-martial and military commissions, but also the judicial acts of a convening authority (appointing authority). "A convening authority must be impartial and independent in exercising his authority . . . . The very perception that a person exercising this awesome power is dispensing justice in an unequal manner or is being influenced by unseen superiors is wrong." *United States v. Hagen*, 25 M.J. 78, 86-87 (C.M.A., 1987) (Sullivan, J., concurring) (citations omitted). Even though a convening authority decides which cases go to trial, he or she must remain neutral throughout the trial process. *See, e.g. United States v. Davis*, 58 M.J. 100, 101, 103 (C.A.A.F. 2003) (stating that a convicted servicemember is entitled to individualized consideration of his case post-trial by a neutral convening authority). The Appointing Authority for Military Commissions, as an officer of the United States appointed by the Secretary of Defense pursuant to the Constitution and Title 10, United States Code, has a legal and moral obligation to execute the President's Military Order in a fair and impartial manner, consistent with existing statutory and regulatory guidance.

In his written questionnaire for counsel, the Presiding Officer stated the following about his relationship with the Appointing Authority (emphasis added):

> b. Mr. Altenburg:
>
> 1. I first met (then) CPT Altenburg in the period 1977-1978, while he was assigned to Fort Bragg. My only specific recollection of talking to him was when we discussed utilization of courtrooms to try cases.
>
> 2. To the best of my knowledge and belief, I did not see or talk to Mr. Altenburg again until sometime in the spring of 1989 at the Judge Advocate Ball in Heidelberg. Later, in November-December 1990, (then) LTC Altenburg obtained Desert Camouflage Uniforms for [another judge] and me so that we would be properly outfitted for trials in Saudi Arabia.

3. During the period 1992 to 1995, (then) COL Altenburg was the Staff Judge Advocate, XVIII Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg while I was the Chief Circuit Judge, 2nd Judicial Circuit, with duty station at Fort Bragg. Our offices were in the same building. My wife, (then) MAJ M [], was the Chief of Administrative Law in the SJA office from 1992 to 1994. During this period, Mr. Altenburg and I became friends. We saw each other about twice a week and sometimes more than that. We generally attended all of the SJA social functions. He and his wife (and children – depending upon which of his children were in residence at the time) had dinner at our house at least three times in the three years we served at Fort Bragg. I attended several social functions at his quarters on post. *Though he was a convening authority and I was a trial judge, we were both disciplined enough to not discuss cases. I am sure there were times when he was not pleased with my rulings.*

4. From summer 1995 to summer 1996 when Mr. Altenburg was in Washington and I was at Fort Bragg, he and I probably talked on the telephone three or four times. I believe that he stayed at my house one night during a TDY to Fort Bragg (but I am not certain).

5. During the period June 1996 to May 1999, I was stationed at Mannheim, Germany and Mr. Altenburg was in Washington. Other than the World-Wide JAG Conferences in October of 1996, 1997, and 1998, I did not see nor talk to MG Altenburg except once--in May of 1997, I attended a farewell [ceremony] hosted by MG Altenburg for COL John Smith. In May 1999, MG Altenburg presided over my retirement ceremony at The Judge Advocate General's School and was a primary speaker at a "roast" in my honor that evening.

6. *Since my retirement from the Army on 1 July 1999, Mr. Altenburg has never been to our house and we have never been to his.* From the time of my retirement until the week of 12 July 2004, I have had the occasion to speak to him on the phone about five to ten times. I had two meetings or personal contacts with him during that period. First, in July or August 2001 when I was a primary speaker at a "roast" in MG Altenburg's honor at Fort Belvoir upon the occasion of his retirement. Second, in November (I believe) 2002, I attended his son's wedding in Orlando, Florida [near the Presiding Officer's home].

> 7. I sent him an email in December 2003 when he was appointed as the Appointing Authority to congratulate him. I also sent him an email in the spring of 2004 when I heard that he had named a Presiding Officer. Sometime in the spring of 2004, I called his house to speak to his wife. After we talked, she handed the phone to Mr. Altenburg. He explained that setting up the office and office procedures was tough. I suggested that he hire a former JA Warrant Officer whom we both knew.
>
> 8. *To the best of my memory, Mr. Altenburg and I have never discussed anything about the Commissions or how they should function. Without doubt, we have never discussed any case specifically or any of the cases in general. I am certain that since being appointed a Presiding Officer we have had no discussions about my duties or the Commission Trials.*

The voir dire in *Hamdan* did not pursue the nature of any personal relationship between the Presiding Officer and the Appointing Authority. During his voir dire in *Hicks*, the Presiding Officer stated the following concerning his relationship with the Appointing Authority (emphasis added):

DC: Now, I want to explore your relationship with the appointing authority.
PO: Okay.
DC: You have known Mr. Altenburg [since] 1977, 1978?
PO: Yes, sometime in that frame.
DC: And you had a professional affiliation for a period of time?
PO: As I said before my knowledge of Mr. Altenburg up until 1992 was minimal, I mean, really. Now he was the SJA of the 1AD, the 1st Armored Division, and I was over on the other side of Germany. We were at Bragg at the same time, but like I said I maybe talked to him once, I think. You see people on post, but that is about it. He and I were on the same promotion list to major, but he had already left Bragg by then. In 92 he came to Bragg as the SJA and I was the chief circuit judge with my offices right there at Bragg in his building, and my wife was his chief of [Administrative Law]. So from 92 to 96 you could say that we had a close professional relationship and within, I don't know, a couple months it became a personal relationship.
DC: And when you retired in May of 1999, Mr. Altenburg presided over your retirement ceremony?
PO: Right, at the JAG school.
DC: And he was also the primary speaker at a roast in your honor that evening?
PO: Yes.
DC: And, in fact, when Mr. Altenburg retired in the summer of 2001 you were the primary speaker at his roast?

PO: No, there were three speakers. I was the only one who was retired and could say bad things about him.
DC: And you also attended his son's wedding in sometime in the fall of 2002?
PO: In Orlando, yeah.
DC: And you also contacted Mr. Altenburg when you learned that he became the appointing authority for these commissions?
PO: Right, I did.
DC: And you are aware that there were other candidates for the position of presiding officer?
PO: Yeah, uh-huh.
DC: Thirty-three others, in fact?
PO: Okay. No. What I know about the selection process I wrote. I don't know who else was considered and who else was nominated. Knowing the Department of Defense I imagine that all four services sent in -- excuse me, that there were lots of nominations and they went somewhere and they got to Mr. Altenburg somehow. I don't know how many other people were nominated.
DC: So the ultimate question is how would you answer the concerns of a reasonable person who might say based on this close relationship with Mr. Altenburg that there is an appearance of a bias, or impartiality -- or partiality rather and that you were chosen not because of independence or qualifications, but rather because of your close relationship with Mr. Altenburg, and how would you answer that concern?
PO: Well, *I would say first of all that a person who were to examine my record as a military judge -- and all of it is open source. All of my cases are up on file at the Judge Advocate General's office in DC -- could see at the time when I was the judge at Bragg, sitting as a judge alone, acquitted about six or seven of the people he referred to a court-martial. They could look at the record of trial and see that in several cases I reversed his personal rulings. They could look at my record as a judge and see that I really don't care who the SJA was in how I acted. So a reasonable person who took the time to examine my record would say, no, it doesn't matter.*

. . . .

P: *Sir, do you care what Mr. Altenburg thinks about any ruling or decision you might make?*
PO: *No.* You want to ask what I think Mr. Altenburg wants from me?
P: Do you know, sir?
PO: No, I asked would you like to ask me what I think he wants?
P: Yes, sir.
PO: Okay. *I think John Altenburg, based on the time that I have known him, wants me to provide a full and fair trial of these people. That's what he wants. And I base that on really four years of close observation of him and my knowledge of him. That's what I think he wants.*
P: Do you think there would be any repercussions for you if he disagreed with a ruling of yours or a vote of yours?
PO: You all went to law school; right?
P: Yes, sir.

PO: Remember that first semester of law school and everyone is really scared?
P: Yes, sir.
PO: Well, I went on the funded program and all the people around me were really scared, but I said to myself, hey the worst that can happen is I can go back to being an infantry officer, which I really liked. Well the worse thing that can happen here, from you all's viewpoint, if you think about that, is I go back to sitting on the beach. *I don't have a professional career. Mr. Altenburg is not going to hurt me.* Okay.
P: Yes, sir. Nothing further, sir.

There is no factual basis in either record to support granting a challenge against the Presiding Officer on this ground. The records establish no actual bias by the Presiding Officer as a result of his former, routine, social and professional relationships with the Appointing Authority, nor do the parties advocate any such actual bias. Even on an implied bias basis, no well-informed member of the public who understands the traditional social relationships among military officers and the criminal prohibitions against the Appointing Authority attempting to influence the Presiding Officer's actions would have any reasonable or significant doubt that this Presiding Officer's fairness or impartiality will be affected by his prior social contacts with the Appointing Authority.

Such a finding is consistent with federal cases reflecting that the mere fact that a judge is a friend, or even a close friend, of a lawyer involved in the litigation does not, by that fact alone, require disqualification of the judge. *See, e.g., Bailey v. Broder*, No. 94 Civ. 2394 (S.D.N.Y. Feb. 20, 1997) (holding that a showing of a friendship between a judge and a party appearing before him, without a factual allegation of bias or prejudice, is insufficient to warrant recusal); *In re Cooke*, 160 B.R. 701, 706-08 (Bankr. D. Conn. 1993) (stating that a "judge's friendship with counsel appearing before him or her does not alone mandate disqualification."); *United States v. Kehlbeck*, 766 F. Supp. 707, 712 (S.D. Ind. 1990) (stating "judges may have friends without having to recuse themselves from every case in which a friend appears as counsel, party, or witness."); *United States v. Murphy*, 768 F. 2d 1518, 1537 (7th Cir. 1985, cert. denied, 475 U.S. 1012 (1986) ("In today's legal culture friendships among judges and lawyers are common. They are more than common; they are desirable."); *In re United States*, 666 F.2d 690 (1st Cir. 1981) (holding that recusal was not required in extortion trial of former democratic state senator whose committee, fifteen years ago, had investigated former republican governor when the judge had been chief legal counsel for the governor); and *Parrish v. Board of Commissioners,* 524 F.2d. 98 (5th Cir. 1975) (en banc) (holding that recusal was not required in class action case where judge was friends with some of the defendants and where judge stated his friendship would not affect his handing of the case).

Predisposition on Speedy Trial Motion

The fourth basis for challenge is that the Presiding Officer has formed an opinion, which he expressed at a July 15, 2004, meeting with counsel, that an accused has no right to a speedy trial in a military commission. Below are the pertinent portions of the voir dire in *Hamdan* on this issue (emphasis added).

DC: During that meeting on 15 July, did you express an opinion regarding speedy -- the right of any detainee to a speedy trial?
PO: No, I didn't.
DC: I wasn't at the meeting, but I was told that you did. I don't --
PO: Thank you.
DC: Did you mention speedy trial at all?
PO: Speedy trial was mentioned. Article 10 was mentioned, and there was some general conversation. I didn't take notes at the meeting. It was a meeting to tell people who I was and asking them to get -- start on motions and things.
DC: But you didn't expect -- while those things were mentioned, you don't recall expressing an opinion yourself?
PO: No. I didn't have any motions or anything.

. . . .

P: *Sir, the issue of speedy trial was brought up and we have, in fact, have notice of motions provided concerning speedy trial. Is there anything as you sit here right now which will impact your ability to fairly decide those motions?*
PO: *No.*

The following exchange occurred in the *Hamdan* commission after all voir dire had been completed and challenges made and the Presiding Officer was about to recess the commission until the Appointing Authority made a decision on the challenges:

DC: Yes, sir. It came to my attention after the voir dire that there was a tape made regarding the 15 July meeting between yourself and counsel. I'd like permission to send that tape along with the other matters that I'm submitting on your voir dire regarding your qualifications.
PO: And why would you like that?
DC: To go toward the idea of whether you have an opinion or not, sir.
PO: On the questions of?
DC: Speedy trial, sir.
PO: Okay. And the tape goes to show what?
DC: Your opinion at the time, sir. I have not yet transcribed it. If it doesn't show anything -- I am proceeding here based on what I've been told by other counsel.
PO: Okay. I would be -- let me think about this. Okay, let me think about this. I am reopening the voir dire of me. Explain to me -- ask me what you want about what I said or may have said on the 15th.
DC: Yes, sir. It's my understanding, sir, that on the 15th you expressed an opinion as to whether the accused have -- whether any detainee had a right to a speedy trial.
PO: Do you think that's correct or do you think that's in reference to Article 10?
DC: My understanding from counsel was that it referenced whether they would have a right to a speedy trial under Article 10 or rights, generally. I confess, sir, I have not heard the tape.
PO: Okay. Why don't you ask me if I am predisposed on that.
DC: Are you predisposed towards those issues, sir?

PO: I believe in the meeting -- I don't remember speedy trial, I remember Article 10 being mentioned, and I believe I said something to the effect of, Article 10, how does that come into play, or words to that effect. I did not know that my words were being taped, and I must confess that when I walked into the room that day I had no idea that Article 10 would come into play because I hadn't had an occasion to review Article 10. It is not something that usually comes up in military justice prudence -- jurisprudence. *So I'm telling you right now that I don't have a predisposition towards speedy trial.* However, although the tape was made without my permission, without the permission of anyone in the room, I do give you permission to send it to the appointing authority with the other matters.
DC: Sir, what I would like to ask, if I transcribe it, that I send it to you first.
PO: I don't want to see it.
DC: Yes, sir.
PO: Okay. Well, wait a second. Do you want to change -- do you want to add on anything to your challenge or stick with it?
DC: No, sir.
PO: How about you?
P: No objection to the tape being sent, sir.

Neither defense counsel nor the prosecution in the *Hicks* case asked any questions of the Presiding Officer concerning a possible predisposition on speedy trial.

In support of this challenge, Hamdan's defense counsel provided an edited transcript of the pertinent portions of the tape recording[8] of the July 15, 2004, meeting, which provides in part:

PO: Hicks has been referred to trial, right. There's no procedure that I've seen that requires an arraignment, has anyone seen anything like that? It requires [Hicks] be informed of the nature of the charges in front of the commission. Okay, uh, there's no such thing as a speedy trial clock in this thing. Right, has anybody seen a speedy trial?
Chief Prosecutor: Sir, I wouldn't even be commenting on that in light of the fact that I think [named defense counsel] believe Article 10 [UCMJ] applies to these proceedings so we ought to stay away from that issue.
DC (al Qosi): I don't think it is appropriate either sir.
Chief Prosecutor: We need to stay away from that.
DC (al Qosi): These are the subjects of motions that are going to be filed and your comments--
PO: I'm asking a question and you can all voir dire me on that, but how are we going to try Mr. Hicks?

[8] Counsel are reminded that audio recording of Commission proceedings is prohibited unless authorized by the Presiding Officer and that compliance with the Military Commission Orders and Instructions is a professional responsibility obligation for the practice of law within the Department of Defense. *See* MCO No. 1 at Section 6B(3); MCI No. 1 at paragraphs 4B,C.

Neither defense team cited any case law from any jurisdiction to support their argument that these facts warrant removal of the Presiding Officer. Generally speaking, "[a] predisposition acquired by a judge during the course of the proceedings will only constitute impermissible bias when 'it is so extreme as to display clear inability to render fair judgment.'" *United States v. Howard,* 218 F.3d 556, 566 (6th Cir. 2000) (quoting *United States v. Liteky*, 510 U.S. 540, 551 (1994)). Furthermore, "the mere fact that a judge has previously expressed himself on a particular point of law is not sufficient to show personal bias or prejudice." *United States v. Bray*, 546 F.2d 851, 857 (10th Cir., 1976) (citing *Antonello v. Wunsch*, 500 F.2d 1260 (10th Cir. 1974)).

The transcripts reveal that on occasion, as in this instance, the Presiding Officer was too casual with his remarks. Some of the detainees at Guantanamo have been there for almost three years. Understandably, they and their attorneys recognize that the determination of what, if any, speedy trial rules apply to military commissions is an important preliminary matter that must be resolved by the members of the military commissions after considering evidence and arguments presented by the parties.

Although not artfully done, the Presiding Officer was trying to tell counsel at the July 15, 2004, meeting that there are gaps in the commission trial procedures that he and counsel will have to address. Prior to the Presiding Officer's comments about arraignment and speedy trial, counsel were advised that the Presiding Officer would be issuing written guidance addressing how to handle some of the gaps in the commission procedures. As the Presiding Officer stated at that meeting, there are no published commission procedures concerning the subjects of arraignment or speedy trial. He was using arraignment and speedy trial as examples of traditional military procedures that were not mentioned in military commission orders or instructions, and that he and the parties would have to address. In fact, just four days after this meeting, the Presiding Officer issued the first three memoranda in a series of Presiding Officer Memoranda, in the nature of rules of court, to address issues not fully covered by military commission orders or instructions.[9] There are currently ten Presiding Officer Memoranda addressing topics such as motions practice, judicial notice, access to evidence and notice provisions, trial exhibits, obtaining protective orders and requests for limited disclosure, witness requests, requests to depose a witness, alternatives to live witnesses, and spectators to military commissions.

During voir dire, the Presiding Officer expressly stated that he had formed no predisposition concerning how he would rule on speedy trial motions. Considering all of the above, the record fails to establish that the Presiding Officer's spontaneous remarks in an informal meeting demonstrates a clear inability to render a fair and impartial ruling on speedy trial motions or otherwise disqualifies him from performing duties as a Presiding Officer.

[9] Current versions of all Presiding Officer Memoranda may be found on the Military Commission web site, *available at* http://www.defenselink.mil/news/commissions.html.

DECISION

The challenges for cause against the Presiding Officer and COL S are denied. Effective immediately, the challenges for cause against COL B (the Marine), LTC T, and LTC C are granted and each of these members is hereby permanently excused from all future proceedings for all military commissions. The country is grateful for the professional, dedicated, and selfless service of these exceptional officers in this sensitive and important matter.

A military commission composed of the Presiding Officer, COL S, and COL B (the Air Force officer) will proceed, at the call of the Presiding Officer, in the cases of *United States v. Hamdan* and *United States v. Hicks*. No additional members or alternate members will be appointed. *See* MCO No. 1 at Section 4A(1) and MCI No. 8 at paragraph 3A(1).

Official orders appointing replacement commission members for the cases of *United States v. al Qosi* and *United States v. al Bahlul* will be issued at a future date. *See* MCO No. 1 at Section 4A(1) and MCI No. 8 at paragraph 3A(1).

There is no classified annex to this decision.

John D. Altenburg, Jr.
Appointing Authority
for Military Commissions