

## Protected "B"

**Summary:** I met with Mr. Omar Khadr on April 8 (2 hrs), 9 (2 hrs) and 11 (1hr) at the facility nicknamed "Camp Iguana" of the US Military base of Guantanamo. As for the previous visit by S. Millington (March 12 & 14), [REDACTED] (SJA) acted as my escort, official point of contact and channel of communication with the detention operations and various authorities in GTMO. The SJA emphasized the same points as he had during the previous visit: prisoners are well treated; the medical care that they receive is excellent (in his view superior to what many American citizens have access to); they are trying to accommodate our requests for provision of reading material and comfort items. He also repeated to me what he had said during the previous visit: Omar Khadr is perceived as a "good kid" and he is salvageable. The physical conditions of the meetings with Mr. Khadr were similar to those described in the last visit report and Camp authorities were very cooperative in facilitating my access to him. My observations are as follows:

**Health:** Mr. Khadr who is now 21, stands at about 6 feet and weighs about 180-185 pounds. He is fit and looks after his physical condition by exercising regularly in the outdoor area of the camp and by controlling his food intake.

As mentioned in previous welfare reports, he has a number of permanent health problems and limitations linked to injuries sustained during the battle which lead to his capture in Afghanistan:

- He has lost vision in his left eye because of a shrapnel injury, and his vision is impaired and gradually deteriorating in his right eye because of a piece of shrapnel embedded in the eye's membrane. Doctor's advice regarding his right eye is that his vision is still at a level where the risk linked to an operation outweighs the relative benefit to his vision. When his vision further deteriorates, surgery may be warranted. His eye is hyper-sensitive to light and he has requested a pair of sunglasses which have not been provided.
- He still has shrapnel in his right shoulder which is painful at night when the temperature drops. He said he had asked for an extra blanket and a pillow but that this was reserved as incentives for detainees under interrogation (this was confirmed to me by my military escort who could not deliver a pillow brought on a previous welfare visit.)
- He did not refer to any specific problem relating to his injuries from two assault-rifle gunshots fired at short range through his thorax. He however has recurring stomach problems, for which he occasionally uses available medication (but he says he doesn't want to live on pills)

- He still has nightmares but he says that he sleeps better since his removal from solitary confinement last year as can now exercise and has more to occupy his mind.

He also has a sports-related knee injury, the meniscus in his right knee is torn and a piece of cartilage sometimes moves abnormally, blocking the movement of his knee. Mr. Khadr said that he was offered arthroscopic surgery for his knee but he is afraid of getting it at the prison camp in Guantanamo because he saw another detainee who was worse-off after a similar intervention. He also questioned the quality of physiotherapy offered to detainees.

As during the previous visit, he complained that the enamel was breaking from his teeth and said that he had been asking to see a dentist for 2 months. SJA ensured me that all detainees had to do was to ask to see a dentist or a doctor.

I visited the detainee's hospital located near Camp 4 which was described to me by medical staff as the equivalent of a small community hospital. It offers a range of services including a pharmacy and small surgical unit. I also spoke to the Head of the hospital who explained that for the most serious cases specialists could be flown from the US and that the military hospital located on the base could also be used if necessary. I am not qualified to determine whether he is receiving all the care that he needs for his physical condition, but as far as I understand, medical attention is available in situ. Psychological-related resources are also available at the hospital but I cannot assess their quality or degree of availability.

### **Conditions of detention:**

I visited Camp IV in which Mr. Khadr is currently detained is reserved for compliant detainees and is considered medium security. It consists of a square with cell blocks on 3 sides, each separated by a fence and a large central area where the detainees can mingle and exercise. Each cell has 4 or 5 detainees. Detainees spend most of the day outdoors where they have access to a portion of the outside area where they can eat together (meals rotate on a 14 days basis), wash their clothes etc... The recreation area is on raw soil and equipped for basketball, soccer, volleyball and running is possible around it. The Camp is well secured by physical barriers and military personnel. During one of our interviews, Mr. Khadr described the relations there with guards as much better than in the camps where he was held in solitary confinement. He said that in those camps, guards had all rights (but he did not elaborate further). He said that there was better discipline on both parts prisoners and guards in Camp IV. Copies of the provisions of the Geneva Convention dealing with the treatment of detainees are posted in four languages on billboards near the outdoor communal eating area. Both defence lawyers and SJA confirmed that the transfer of Mr. Khadr from solitary confinement to communal detention had a very positive effect on him and on his relations with others.

I also visited Camp VI where Mr. Khadr was previously detained. It is far more austere and conditions are a lot more restrictive than in Camp IV. It was built from prefabricated parts according to the plans of a US Maximum Security prison (at a cost of USD 36m.) The section I visited had no natural light. Detainees are held in small individual cells (about 10'x5') and are allowed recreational time in small groups in an interior court divided in four sections of about 20'x20' every 12 hours. Since one of the recreation hours is often falls in the middle of the night, prisoners may elect to remain in their cell (Mr. Khadr said that he usually preferred to stay in his cell during the night in order not to ruin his sleep and was hence usually spending 23 hrs a day in it.) Meals are served wherever the detainees are at mealtime. Camp VI has a small clinic and more serious ailments are referred to the main detainee hospital.

In both camps, a number of standard comfort items are given to prisoners and the quality and quantity increase or decrease according to their degree of compliance.

#### **Educational opportunities/intellectual stimulation:**

Mr. Khadr is not currently receiving any education. Although there is a classroom in Camps IV to dispense literacy programs in English, Pashto and Arabic, there are currently no teachers (Mr. Khadr speaks 4 languages: English, Arabic, Pashto and Farsi but would like to improve his writing skills). There is a TV room where movies, nature programs and highlights of international soccer games are shown. There is also a library (which I did not see) from which Mr. Khadr borrows novels. He said he has a dictionary and that he tries to learn things from it. He expressed interest in learning French and asked for a book on French for beginners. He had been provided with workbooks in mathematics during a previous visit but he said that it was too difficult for him without help.

#### **Comfort items:**

At the time of my visit, Mr. Khadr had received some of the comfort items/reading material brought for him on previous visits (Velcro shoes, a photo book of Canada, an origami book) but not others: snacks, personal hygiene products, books, magazines, paper accompanying the origami book, a pillow, yoga book, toothbrush (not allowed for security reasons). During my visit, requests for follow-up were addressed to detaining authorities through the SJA and by e-mail. SJA ensured me that more books had been cleared and would be given to Mr. Khadr shortly. He advised that pillows were only handed out as incentives for detainees being interrogated and that since Mr. Khadr had lawyers and was no longer subject to interrogation, he was not eligible for one. I pointed to the fact that he was now considered to be fully compliant and that he should be allowed to get comfort items that are available to other prisoners at the camp. The SJA said that he was bringing in supplies to Mr. Khadr every 2-3 weeks and agreed to follow-

up. The SJA noted that there was a limit on the volume of personal items prisoners were allowed to keep in their cell (a plastic bin called their locker).

Further to Mr. Khadr's requests made during the previous visit, I brought a copy of the book "Guantanamo's Child" and an English version of the Quran. I also brought various nature and science magazines, an encyclopaedia on Canada and shoes under-soles. SJA undertook to try to get all items looked at and cleared shortly. Mr. Khadr expressed interest in learning French and asked to be provided with a book on French for beginners. He reiterated his request for a pair of dark glasses. SJA said that Mr. Khadr should mention this to the medical staff who could determine whether they were indicated for his condition. With respect to his request for gloves to wear during Court proceedings, SJA informed that they had been rejected on the basis that they presented a security risk. This is not worth pursuing: after his hearing on April 11, Mr. Khadr explained that, this time, he had stuck his hands into his long sleeves in the courtroom to keep them warm. His only concern was that it did not look so good...

### **General observations:**

Throughout my meetings with him, Mr. Khadr was friendly and of good humour, although he complained about a number of things (much in the way of any teenager in my escort's words...) Mr. Khadr spontaneously made the following comments: He finds court proceedings boring. He appreciates the opportunity welfare visits offer him to interact with people from Canada. He said that he trusts the Canadian officials who have visited him and sends his regards to them. He wonders however why Canada is so quiet on his case and commented that, while Canada was the best country in the World to live in, it was not as strong as the UK to defend its citizens abroad, although both countries have the same Queen. He hopes that Canada will intervene to get him out of Guantanamo (he said he hoped PM Harper will do something). He said that he is in Guantanamo because of his family and that he wants another chance. He said that he wants to train for a job which will allow him to play a useful role in society by helping others (he said "the neediest").

He is intelligent and interested in current issues in Canada and the World. His lawyers brought him Canadian news clippings about his case and showed him their copy of "Guantanamo's Child" which he could not keep (to me, he only commented on the pictures inside the book):

As mentioned above, our US military contact repeated what he had said during the welfare visit conducted in March: Omar Khadr is a "good kid" and he is salvageable (This opinion was also expressed by other US officers encountered during my stay.) He said that extended detention in Guantanamo would however run the risk of turning him into a radical.

### **Follow-up:**

Outstanding as of April 11: Books (including Guantanamo's Child) and magazines brought during this and previous visits; pillow and blanket; dark glasses; shoe insoles; personal hygiene products including cologne; letters and pictures from lawyer Denis Edney; (I did not bring black seeds, for his stomach, available in Middle Eastern grocery stores). I did not bring a "stress ball" or First Aid Book. )

New requests: Language classes when they become available at Camp IV; book on French for beginners; dental exam; eye exam.

He also asked to be allowed to take his dictionary with him during welfare visits, meetings with his lawyers and Court appearances as there are sometimes English words that he doesn't understand (although he has excellent command of the language).

Grateful if Consular could follow-up on the above directly with US contacts.

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