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Guantanamo Show Trials Closing Out Of Town?

by Michael in New York on 9/27/2004 02:56:00 AM

The NYT details the many, many ways in which the **Guantanamo show trials are falling apart**. The process "is in turmoil" according to many involved, thanks to military panels filled with members who have personal conflicts or are unsuitable, inadequate translators (a bit of a problem when dealing with foreign folk), a presiding officer who lied about past statements and was caught red-handed (and red-faced) and lawyers on BOTH sides who agree it's become a farce. Growing momentum calls for ditching the antiquated, unwieldy and questionable military tribunals in exchange for court-martial proceedings.

But two tidbits stood out. Did you know that the court-martial was adopted in 1950 "**as a direct response** to the unfair features in the military tribunal system?" So we ditched tribunals more than 50 years ago because they were unfair and inadequate and that's the system Bush wants to revive today? Why not just model ourselves on the Salem witch trials instead?

And here's that lie that the panel's presiding officer Col. Peter Brownback III was caught in.

"Under questioning in a hearing, Colonel Brownback stated flatly that he had never told a group of lawyers that the detainees had any speedy trial rights, a statement that could have demonstrated he did not have an open mind on the issue. When he was then told by a Navy lawyer that an audio recording of such a meeting existed, he was stunned and said he had not been aware the meeting was being taped."

Brownback should be dismissed from this post and given a serious reprimand, at the very least.



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