

## **Nine months imposed by Howard's phony deal**

David has pleaded guilty to "providing support to a 'terrorist' organisation" - a plea bargain very difficult to reject by anyone in his position. His 'crime' is unknown in Australian law and was only recently created in the US. Even National Senator Barnaby Joyce said: 'The only thing that is guilty here is the judicial process under which [David] was being tried'.

David has been languishing in the hell hole of the US naval base of Guantanamo since 11 January 2002. He was condemned by the Howard government to 5 years of hell. Howard confessed that just a phone call would have freed David from this ordeal, but he refused to do so.

In 2004, a military commission, a kangaroo court, was set under US executive orders to determine the fate of those charged at Guantanamo. In June 2006 the MC was found unlawful by the US Supreme Court. Initial charges against David were dismissed. In October 2006 US Congress approved of an unconstitutional MC, currently being challenged in the US Supreme Court. Nevertheless, David's new charge: "providing material support for terrorism" was introduced – a retrospective charge non-existent in international law.

Howard's phony deal with the US administration means David has been imposed 'gag orders' and another 9 months of imprisonment, not because of David's guilt but for Howard to have a smooth run before the next Federal election.

The illegal base of Guantanamo Bay and the military commission are directly connected. Recently appointed US Defence Secretary, Robert Gates, has recognised that "the trials should be moved to US territory because the military tribunals may appear tainted to the rest of the world" (SMH 31/3). It can't be alleged that if David is sent to Australia we have to respect the sentence in the name of the prisoner exchange treaty, as all the conditions attached to David's transfer to Australia are illegal.

A huge majority of Australians have come to understand the larger issues around David Hicks and what they actually represent. It took more than 4 years of perseverance to build that public awareness. The anger and frustration that it generated will not go away because: David Hicks has yet to receive JUSTICE.

**JOIN US ON THE NATIONAL DAY OF PROTEST – SATURDAY 21 APRIL & REJECT HOWARD'S PHONY DEAL.**

**Speakers:** Dr. Tim Anderson, Senator Kerry Nettle, Philip Bolton (tbc); Mamdouh Habib...