PART I
PREAMBLE

1. Structural provisions of the M.C.A.

The M.C.A. amends both Articles 21 and 36, Uniform Code of Military Justice (U.C.M.J.) (10 U.S.C. §§ 821 and 836) to permit greater flexibility in constructing procedural and evidentiary rules for trials of alien unlawful enemy combatants by military commission. Several key provisions of the M.C.A. demonstrate this accommodation of military operational and national security considerations:

(a) While the M.C.A. is consistent with the U.C.M.J. in many respects, neither the U.C.M.J. itself nor “[t]he judicial construction and application of that chapter” is binding on trials by military commission (10 U.S.C. § 948b(c)).

(b) 10 U.S.C. §§ 810, 831(a), (b), & (d), and 832 do not apply to these military commissions (10 U.S.C. § 948b(d)(1)).

(c) Other provisions of the U.C.M.J. apply only as specified in the M.C.A. (10 U.S.C. § 948b(d)(2)).

(d) The M.C.A. provides that the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Attorney General, may prescribe rules of evidence and procedure, as well as elements and modes of proof, for offenses tried by these military commissions (10 U.S.C. § 949a(a)), and that if the Secretary promulgates regulations, he shall submit them to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and the House of Representatives (M.C.A. § 3(b)).

(e) Such rules “shall, so far as the Secretary considers practicable or consistent with military or intelligence activities, apply the principles of law and the rules of evidence” for trials by general court-martial, so long as the Secretary’s rules and procedures are not contrary to or inconsistent with the M.C.A. (10 U.S.C. § 949a(a)).

(f) Implementing rules must be consistent with the M.C.A. and provide for the accused’s rights to:

(1) be present at trial, examine and respond to evidence admitted against him, cross-examine witnesses who testify against him, obtain and present evidence, and not be required to testify against himself at a military commission proceeding (10 U.S.C. §§ 948r(a), 949a(b)(1)(A) & (B), and 949j(a)); and

(2) assistance by counsel or self-representation (10 U.S.C. § 949a(b)(1)(C) & (D)).

(g) Statements obtained by torture are not admissible (10 U.S.C. § 948r(b)), but statements “in which the degree of coercion is disputed” may be admitted if reliable, probative, and the admission would best serve the interests of justice (10 U.S.C.