

(Added Pub. L. 111-84, div. A, title XVIII, §1802, Oct. 28, 2009, 123 Stat. 2588.)

Editorial Notes

PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 949k, added Pub. L. 109-366, §3(a)(1), Oct. 17, 2006, 120 Stat. 2615, related to the defense of lack of mental responsibility, prior to the general amendment of this chapter by Pub. L. 111-84.

§ 949l. Voting and rulings

(a) VOTE BY SECRET WRITTEN BALLOT.—Voting by members of a military commission under this chapter on the findings and on the sentence shall be by secret written ballot.

(b) RULINGS.—(1) The military judge in a military commission under this chapter shall rule upon all questions of law, including the admissibility of evidence and all interlocutory questions arising during the proceedings.

(2) Any ruling made by the military judge upon a question of law or an interlocutory question (other than the factual issue of mental responsibility of the accused) is conclusive and constitutes the ruling of the military commission. However, a military judge may change such a ruling at any time during the trial.

(c) INSTRUCTIONS PRIOR TO VOTE.—Before a vote is taken of the findings of a military commission under this chapter, the military judge shall, in the presence of the accused and counsel, instruct the members as to the elements of the offense and charge the members—

(1) that the accused must be presumed to be innocent until the accused's guilt is established by legal and competent evidence beyond a reasonable doubt;

(2) that in the case being considered, if there is a reasonable doubt as to the guilt of the accused, the doubt must be resolved in favor of the accused and the accused must be acquitted;

(3) that, if there is reasonable doubt as to the degree of guilt, the finding must be in a lower degree as to which there is no reasonable doubt; and

(4) that the burden of proof to establish the guilt of the accused beyond a reasonable doubt is upon the United States.

(Added Pub. L. 111-84, div. A, title XVIII, §1802, Oct. 28, 2009, 123 Stat. 2589.)

Editorial Notes

PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 949l, added Pub. L. 109-366, §3(a)(1), Oct. 17, 2006, 120 Stat. 2615, related to voting and rulings, prior to the general amendment of this chapter by Pub. L. 111-84.

§ 949m. Number of votes required

(a) CONVICTION.—No person may be convicted by a military commission under this chapter of any offense, except as provided in section 949i(b) of this title or by concurrence of two-thirds of the primary members present at the time the vote is taken.

(b) SENTENCES.—(1) Except as provided in paragraphs (2) and (3), sentences shall be determined by a military commission by the concurrence of

two-thirds of the primary members present at the time the vote is taken.

(2) No person may be sentenced to death by a military commission, except insofar as—

(A) the penalty of death has been expressly authorized under this chapter, chapter 47 of this title, or the law of war for an offense of which the accused has been found guilty;

(B) trial counsel expressly sought the penalty of death by filing an appropriate notice in advance of trial;

(C) the accused was convicted of the offense by the concurrence of all the primary members present at the time the vote is taken, or a guilty plea was accepted and not withdrawn prior to announcement of the sentence in accordance with section 949i(b) of this title; and

(D) all primary members present at the time the vote was taken on the sentence concurred in the sentence of death.

(3) No person may be sentenced to life imprisonment, or to confinement for more than 10 years, by a military commission under this chapter except by the concurrence of three-fourths of the primary members present at the time the vote is taken.

(4) The primary members present for a vote on a sentence need not be the same primary members who voted on the conviction if the requirements of section 948m(d) of this title are met.

(c) NUMBER OF MEMBERS REQUIRED FOR PENALTY OF DEATH.—(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), in a case in which the penalty of death is sought, the number of primary members of the military commission under this chapter shall be not less than 12 primary members.

(2) In any case described in paragraph (1) in which 12 primary members are not reasonably available for a military commission because of physical conditions or military exigencies, the convening authority shall specify a lesser number of primary members for the military commission (but not fewer than 9 primary members), and the military commission may be assembled, and the trial held, with not less than the number of primary members so specified. In any such case, the convening authority shall make a detailed written statement, to be appended to the record, stating why a greater number of primary members were not reasonably available.

(Added Pub. L. 111-84, div. A, title XVIII, §1802, Oct. 28, 2009, 123 Stat. 2589; amended Pub. L. 112-81, div. A, title X, §1030(a), Dec. 31, 2011, 125 Stat. 1570; Pub. L. 113-66, div. A, title X, §1031(c), Dec. 26, 2013, 127 Stat. 850.)

Editorial Notes

PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 949m, added Pub. L. 109-366, §3(a)(1), Oct. 17, 2006, 120 Stat. 2616, related to number of votes required for conviction and sentences and number of members required on military commission for penalty of death, prior to the general amendment of this chapter by Pub. L. 111-84.

AMENDMENTS

2013—Pub. L. 113-66, §1031(c)(1), inserted “primary” before “members” wherever appearing.

Subsec. (b)(4). Pub. L. 113-66, §1031(c)(2), added par. (4).