

THE SHOW TRIALS

I'm not really surprised by the reason the lead prosecutor for Gitmo detainees quit—as reported by the WaPo. The Administration wanted show trials in time for the 2008 election, and they were willing to use classified information to do so.

Politically motivated officials at the Pentagon have pushed for convictions of high-profile detainees ahead of the 2008 elections, the former lead prosecutor for terrorism trials at Guantanamo Bay said last night, adding that the pressure played a part in his decision to resign earlier this month.

I'm just a little curious about the timing. The guy the Administration put in to "nano-manage" the prosecutions, General Thomas Hartmann, only came on this summer.

Hartmann arrived as legal adviser to the convening authority last summer, and suddenly, Davis said during a lengthy interview, his office was inundated with what he called "nano-management," including requests to oversee cases that had previously been left solely to prosecutors.

Part of the new focus, Davis said, was to speed up cases that would show the public the system was working. Davis said he wanted to focus on cases that had declassified evidence, so the public could see the entire trial through news coverage. That would defuse possible allegations that the trials were stacked against defendants.

But Hartmann said he was satisfied with putting on cases that included closed sessions, because the law allows it.

"He said, the way we were going to

validate the system was by getting convictions and good sentences," Davis said. "I felt I was being pressured to do something less than full, fair and open."

Hatmann came in, interfered in prosecutors' jobs, demanded to conduct pre-trial discussions with defendants' lawyers himself, and gave the team a prioritized list of prosecutions to carry out. This summer. After the Administration had spent 6 months getting flogged for doing the same thing with our civilian judicial system.

Which is why it's not enough to let the Alberto Gonzales inquiry just take its course. Because in the absence of any real punishment for the politicization of the civilian judiciary, they're going to keep on politicizing justice.