

Rule 505. Classified Information

(a) *General Rule.* Classified information must be protected and is privileged from disclosure if disclosure would be detrimental to the national security. Under no circumstances may a military judge order the release of classified information to any person not authorized to receive such information. The Secretary of Defense may prescribe security procedures for protection against the compromise of classified information submitted to courts-martial and appellate authorities.

(b) *Definitions.* As used in this rule:

(1) "Classified information" means any information or material that has been determined by the United States Government pursuant to an executive order, statute, or regulations, to require protection against unauthorized disclosure for reasons of national security, and any restricted data, as defined in 42 U.S.C. § 2014(y).

(2) "National security" means the national defense and foreign relations of the United States.

(3) "In camera hearing" means a session under Article 39(a) from which the public is excluded.

(4) "In camera review" means an inspection of documents or other evidence conducted by the military judge alone in chambers and not on the record.

(5) "Ex parte" means a discussion between the military judge and either the defense counsel or prosecution, without the other party or the public present. This discussion can be on or off the record, depending on the circumstances. The military judge will grant a request for an ex parte discussion or hearing only after finding that such discussion or hearing is necessary to protect classified information or other good cause. Prior to granting a request from one party for an ex parte discussion or hearing, the military judge must provide notice to the opposing party on the record. If the ex parte discussion is conducted off the record, the military judge should later state on the record that such ex parte discussion took place and generally summarize the subject matter of the discussion, as appropriate.

(c) *Access to Evidence.* Any information admitted into evidence pursuant to any rule, procedure, or order by the military judge must be provided to the accused.

(d) *Declassification.* Trial counsel should, when practicable, seek declassification of evidence that may be used at trial, consistent with the requirements of national security. A decision not to declassify evidence under this section is not subject to review by a military judge or upon appeal.

(e) *Action Prior to Referral of Charges.*

(1) Prior to referral of charges, upon a showing by the accused that the classified information sought is relevant and necessary to an element of the offense or a legally cognizable defense, the convening authority must respond in writing to a request by the accused for classified information if the privilege in this rule is claimed for such information. In response to such a request, the convening authority may:

(A) delete specified items of classified information from documents made available to the accused;

(B) substitute a portion or summary of the information for such classified documents;

(C) substitute a statement admitting relevant facts that the classified information would tend to prove;

(D) provide the document subject to conditions that will guard against the compromise of the information disclosed to the accused; or

(E) withhold disclosure if actions under (A) through (D) cannot be taken without causing identifiable damage to the national security.

(2) An Article 32 investigating officer may not rule on any objection by the accused to the release of documents or information protected by this rule.

(3) Any objection by the accused to the withholding of information or to the conditions of disclosure must be raised through a motion for appropriate relief at a pretrial conference.

(f) *Actions after Referral of Charges.*

(1) *Pretrial Conference.* At any time after referral of charges, any party may move for a pretrial conference under Article 39(a) to consider matters relating to classified information that may arise in connection with the trial. Following such a motion, or when the military judge recognizes the need for such conference, the military judge must promptly hold a pretrial conference under Article 39(a).

(2) *Ex Parte Permissible.* Upon request by either party and with a showing of good cause, the military judge must hold such conference ex parte to the extent necessary to protect classified information from disclosure.

(3) *Matters to be Established at Pretrial Conference.*

(A) *Timing of Subsequent Actions.* At the pretrial conference, the military judge must establish the timing of:

- (i) requests for discovery;
- (ii) the provision of notice required by subdivision (i) of this rule; and
- (iii) the initiation of the procedure established by subdivision (j) of this rule.

(B) *Other Matters*. At the pretrial conference, the military judge may also consider any matter that relates to classified information or that may promote a fair and expeditious trial.

(4) *Convening Authority Notice and Action*. If a claim of privilege has been made under this rule with respect to classified information that apparently contains evidence that is relevant and necessary to an element of the offense or a legally cognizable defense and is otherwise admissible in evidence in the court-martial proceeding, the matter must be reported to the convening authority. The convening authority may:

- (A) institute action to obtain the classified information for the use by the military judge in making a determination under subdivision (j);
- (B) dismiss the charges;
- (C) dismiss the charges or specifications or both to which the information relates; or
- (D) take such other action as may be required in the interests of justice.

(5) *Remedies*. If, after a reasonable period of time, the information is not provided to the military judge in circumstances where proceeding with the case without such information would materially prejudice a substantial right of the accused, the military judge must dismiss the charges or specifications or both to which the classified information relates.

(g) *Protective Orders*. Upon motion of the trial counsel, the military judge must issue an order to protect against the disclosure of any classified information that has been disclosed by the United States to any accused in any court-martial proceeding or that has otherwise been provided to, or obtained by, any such accused in any such court-martial proceeding. The terms of any such protective order may include, but are not limited to, provisions:

- (1) prohibiting the disclosure of the information except as authorized by the military judge;
- (2) requiring storage of material in a manner appropriate for the level of classification assigned to the documents to be disclosed;
- (3) requiring controlled access to the material during normal business hours and at other times upon reasonable notice;
- (4) mandating that all persons requiring security clearances will cooperate with investigatory personnel in any investigations that are necessary to obtain a security clearance;
- (5) requiring the maintenance of logs regarding access by all persons authorized by the military judge to have access to the classified information in connection with the preparation of the defense;
- (6) regulating the making and handling of notes taken from material containing classified information; or
- (7) requesting the convening authority to authorize the assignment of government security personnel and the provision of government storage facilities.

(h) *Discovery and Access by the Accused*.

(1) *Limitations*.

(A) *Government Claim of Privilege*. In a court-martial proceeding in which the government seeks to delete, withhold, or otherwise obtain other relief with respect to the discovery of or access to any classified information, the trial counsel must submit a declaration invoking the United States' classified information privilege and setting forth the damage to the national security that the discovery of or access to such information reasonably could be expected to cause. The declaration must be signed by the head, or designee, of the executive or military department or government agency concerned.

(B) *Standard for Discovery or Access by the Accused*. Upon the submission of a declaration under subdivision (h)(1)(A), the military judge may not authorize the discovery of or access to such classified information unless the military judge determines that such classified information would be noncumulative and relevant to a legally cognizable defense, rebuttal of the prosecution's case, or to sentencing. If the discovery of or access to such classified information is authorized, it must be addressed in accordance with the requirements of subdivision (h)(2).

(2) *Alternatives to Full Discovery*.

(A) *Substitutions and Other Alternatives*. The military judge, in assessing the accused's right to discover or access classified information under subdivision (h), may authorize the government:

- (i) to delete or withhold specified items of classified information;
- (ii) to substitute a summary for classified information; or