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## **Guantanamo Detainee's Father Asks to Meet Blair in Australia**

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March 24 (Bloomberg) -- The father of Guantanamo Bay detainee David Hicks asked to meet U.K. Prime Minister Tony Blair in Canberra next week after the U.K. government rejected Hicks' appeal to be considered a British citizen.

Hicks, 30, wants citizenship so he can ask U.K. officials to lobby for his release from the naval base in Cuba where he is held on terrorism charges. Hicks won a legal battle for citizenship on Dec. 13. The U.K. government challenged the move. Blair will address a joint session of parliament during his visit to Australia next week.

"I have been invited to Canberra by Greens Senator Kerry Nettle and I will attend an official lunch to welcome Blair," Terry Hicks said from his home in Adelaide. "I want to make a personal appeal that the government intervene in David's case and grant him the citizenship he won in U.K. courts last year."

Nine Britons held at the U.S. naval base in Cuba were returned to the U.K. and have been released. About 490 prisoners from 40 countries are being held by the U.S. at Guantanamo Bay.

Hicks was captured in Afghanistan during the U.S.-led war on terrorism in December 2001. He faces charges of conspiracy to commit attacks on civilians and civilian targets, attempted murder and aiding the enemy. He is scheduled to stand trial before a U.S. military tribunal.

Nettle invited Terry Hicks as her guest for Blair's address to a joint sitting of the Australian parliament on March 27. Terry Hicks will also attend the official lunch that follows, Nettle said in an interview in Sydney.

"It is a crime Hicks has been there for so long and this is our chance to press Blair to intervene," Nettle said.