

**STATEMENT OF IMAD-AD-DEAN AHMAD, PH.D.  
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ON THE CASE OF AAFIA SIDDIQUI**

Remarks at National Press Club contact  
For immediate release

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(Washington, December 10, 2014) The troubling case of Aafia Siddiqui becomes more embarrassing with the passing of time for those of us who believe that the United States, in its ideals and its history, has something positive to offer the rest of the world. Do we not defend human rights? We are the good guys, are we not?

But then I review ordeal Aafia Siddiqui has undergone. I reviewed the videotape of what she was before her rendition, the young science student, articulating the defense of the rights of women in Islam, arguing against extremism of all sorts. I reflected on how after being rendered and tortured, separated from her children, she became a different person, no longer articulate, but rambling and acting so that the judge ordered her removed more than once from the court. Denied the attorneys of her choice during the trial, she appears to have no faith left in the American justice system so that now, our government tells us, she is trying to prevent any further appeals.

We defenders of America's liberal tradition are supposed to trust the system that has found her guilty. But if our liberalism is genuine, we must ask, "How different is it for Aafia to be denied the lawyer of her choice from Washington Post reporter Jason Rezaian held in Iran being denied the lawyer of his choice? How different is her detention and torture at Bagram from journalist Maziar Bahari's detention and torture at Evin Prison, except that her detention was secret and much longer? Why is it that the propaganda around her case continues to be framed as connected to terrorism when she has never been charged with terrorism?"

Let us ask what we would demand if an American citizen were treated this way by some foreign government, let us say in some Muslim land. If a white, American, Christian woman were to be held in secret in prison without charge for years, separated from her children whose fate would not be known for years, if ever, then convicted of shooting at a soldier when the only physical evidence is that it was only she who was shot at, and sentenced and confined to a maximum security medical facility and deprived of contact with her family and countrymen, and we were informed by her captors that she no longer wanted to appeal her legal case or to speak to her family, what would we do? Would we not demand that an international medical team be allowed to see her and evaluate her condition and her family be allowed to contact her? I know I would. And I do in this case.

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