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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Elizabeth A. Smithwick, RC-E Gender Advisor/LNO Disaster Management
CJTF 1-CJ9
APO, AE 09354

23 April 2013

Subject: SIV Recommendation letter for Mr. Ahmad Khalid Siddiqi

To Whom It May Concern:

I serve with the U.S. Agency for International Development as the Gender Advisor for RC-E (Elizabeth A. Smithwick, RC-E Gender Advisor/LNO Disaster Management, USAID, esmithwick@usaid.gov, cell: 0700 234 203, Embassy ext: 2258), based in Bagram, Afghanistan. The following details are provided for Mr. Siddiqi's Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) application:

- *Name of applicant:* Ahmad Khalid Siddiqi
- *Date of birth:* 02-March-1986
- *Badge number:* 589591
- *Job title:* Executive Protocol Assistant
- *Job location:* US Embassy, Kabul

Ahmad Khalid Siddiqi has provided faithful and valuable service to the U.S. Government, through both the Department of State and the Department of Defense for a total of over 10 years. I have known and worked with Mr. Siddiqi since 22 Nov, 2009, first at the PRT in Panjshir when he served as a Political Assistant, then in his position with the Regional Transition Team at Bagram and now as a Protocol Assistant at the US Embassy in Kabul. I am personally aware of a number of the challenges and threats he faced during his time on the PRT and while working in Bagram and I understand that the threats continue. During his period at the PRT I was present on several occasions when he was specifically and directly warned by government officials (the governor and others), to avoid travel at certain times and through certain areas due to threats toward his person. Due to the nature of his work, he interacted closely with a wide variety of individuals ranging from local villagers to the provincial governor, as well as high ranking national and international figures and was identified as a member of the PRT. His position put him in a very visible position to both the local population and national audience. During tense periods (eminent domain discussions, disallowed or cancelled projects and periods of religious tensions for example), that visibility led to taunts and threats. When COM staff were removed from the PRT prior to its closure, Mr. Siddiqi was moved to Bagram (BAF) as part of the new Regional Transition Team. This move caused unique challenges and risks for Mr. Siddiqi as he is originally from Bagram. Work requirements and the security process necessitated Mr. Siddiqi and his fellow RTT Afghan colleagues to be singled out during the daily arrival and departure process. I personally escorted Mr. Siddiqi through the process on a number of occasions and saw the reactions of the other workers and heard their comments and accusations. Being from the local area and having family there as well made Mr. Siddiqi readily identifiable and easily targeted. The accidental burning of the Quran on 21- Feb- 2012 resulted in Mr. Siddiqi having to relocate his family to Kabul due to local threats based on the suspicion that Mr. Siddiqi was "a spy for the Americans". Mr. Siddiqi has stated that he and his family continue to face ongoing security concerns as a result of his employment with the U. S. government and has expressed his desire to move to the U.S. for protection reasons. To the best of my knowledge, Mr. Siddiqi does not present a threat to the national security or safety of the United States. I strongly support his application for a special immigrant visa.

Most Sincerely,

Elizabeth A. Smithwick