

Monday, January 28, 2008

Please write to Karzai, et al. to release Sayed Perwiz Kambakhsh.

Â Â Here is a grossly underreported story from last week that calls for immediate action, by writing to Afghan president Karzai to release Sayed Perwiz Kambakhsh. Read on.Â No matter the heavy defeats against the Taliban after September 11, 2001, its members probably are nodding in approval over the recent blasphemy death sentenceÂ orderedÂ by a northern Afghanistan court against journalist Sayed Perwiz Kambakhsh. Fortunately, Mr. Kambakhsh has the opportunity to appeal. Unfortunately, he apparently will stay imprisoned during the appellate process. Fortunately, his death sentence probably will be overturned somehow, even if it takes Afghan president Karzai to do it. Of course, one is left to wonder whether any overturning of the death sentence will have more to do with wanting to please the UnitedÂ States -- which has poured billions of dollars and countless killed and wounded soldiers (many of whom, of course, have killed andÂ wounded, themselves -- how bloody and nasty war is (and how much does war numb people to such a singular death sentence as this one?), and I mean it)Â into its years-long military adventure in Afghanistan -- than anything else, and whether any overturning of Mr. Kambakhsh's death sentence will be accompanied by a full release from prison and a full reversal of his conviction. Â This blasphemy death sentence is not limited to the whims of the sentencing judge(s) (the trial apparently was secret, so I do not yet know how many judges were involved). Some or many Moslem clerics apparently pushed for this result. Provincial attorney generalÂ Hafizullah Khaliqyar supported the death sentence, and said the trial was conductedÂ in a "very Islamic way." BBC News reports that the "court also threatened to arrest any reporters who protested against Kambakhsh's sentence."Â Thanks to Jonathan Turley -- who writes one of my favorite blogs -- for bringing this story to my attention, and for listing these news story links here and here that I used in writing this blog entry.Â Jon Katz.

Posted by Jon Katz in Constitutional Law at 19:00