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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Statement to the CIA Workforce by Director Hayden On the Conviction of Former CIA Contractor David Passaro

A federal jury in Raleigh, North Carolina, today reached a guilty verdict in the case of David Passaro, a former CIA contractor who was charged with assault in connection with the death in 2003 of Afghan detainee Abdul Wali at a U.S. base in Asadabad, Afghanistan. Wali was being questioned about whether he was involved in rocket attacks on the base.

I think it is very important for all of us to bear in mind that Passaro's actions were unlawful, reprehensible, and neither authorized nor condoned by the Agency. As soon as these allegations came to light in 2003, they were reported to managers in the field and relayed to Headquarters. The CIA's Inspector General immediately began an investigation and referred the matter to the Department of Justice for criminal prosecution.

I want to commend the Office of Inspector General and the Office of General Counsel for their outstanding work in supporting the successful prosecution of this case.

As abhorrent as this situation was, it is a fact that we, as an Agency, did not sweep it under a rug. We addressed it head-on and dealt with it swiftly.

During my travel overseas, I have had opportunities to see first hand the outstanding work being done by our Agency's officers and contractors in some difficult conditions. They are courageous, law-abiding, and represent the very best of CIA. At a time when the conviction of Passaro will undoubtedly result in negative publicity about the Agency, it is important for all of us to remember that his actions were totally inconsistent with the normal conduct of CIA officers and contractors, who reflect the core values of our nation and, day in and day out, are risking their lives to help keep all Americans safe.

Now that I have shared my thoughts with you on this matter, I plan to issue a statement publicly as well.

[\[Press Releases and Statements Page\]](#) [\[Public Affairs Page\]](#) [\[CIA Homepage\]](#)

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