

Judge: Terror evidence thin on facts

by UPI

MIAMI - The U.S. judge overseeing the Miami trial of terrorism suspect Jose Padilla said the indictment against Padilla is "very light on facts."

U.S. District Judge Marcia G. Cooke appeared to agree with defense attorneys who complained at a pretrial hearing about the vague nature of the evidence against Padilla, the alleged "dirty bomber" accused of "conspiracy to murder, kidnap and maim," The Washington Post reported.

Legal experts said the government is trying to link Padilla and his codefendants to an international conspiracy rather than to a specific crime, the Post reported.

The charges revolve around an "inchoate crime ... rather than any particular completed operation," federal prosecutor Brian K. Frazier told the judge, the Post reported. "It's very hard to particularize."

The evidence against Padilla, prosecutors have said, includes his application to join the Mujahedin organization that was recovered from an al-Qaida base.

"Describing the entire jihad movement as a single conspiracy is a bit of stretch," Robert M. Chesney, a Wake Forest University law professor, told the newspaper.

Chesney said prosecutors may have an easier time with the second set of charges in the indictment, alleging that Padilla provided "material support" for a terrorism conspiracy.

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