

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, June 15, 2011 3:13 AM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Pakistan Arrests C.I.A. Informants in Bin Laden Raid (NY Times)

From: OpsNewsTicker
Sent: Tuesday, June 14, 2011 10:40 PM
To: NEWS-Mahogany; NEWS-Pakistan; NEWS-SCT
Cc: SES-O
Subject: Pakistan Arrests C.I.A. Informants in Bin Laden Raid (NY Times)

WASHINGTON (NY Times) — Pakistan's top military spy agency has arrested some of the Pakistani informants who fed information to the Central Intelligence Agency in the months leading up to the raid that led to the death of Osama bin Laden, according to American officials.

Pakistan's detention of five C.I.A. informants, including a Pakistani Army major who officials said copied the license plates of cars visiting Bin Laden's compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan, in the weeks before the raid, is the latest evidence of the fractured relationship between the United States and Pakistan. It comes at a time when the Obama administration is seeking Pakistan's support in brokering an endgame in the war in neighboring Afghanistan.

At a closed briefing last week, members of the Senate Intelligence Committee asked Michael J. Morell, the deputy C.I.A. director, to rate Pakistan's cooperation with the United States on counterterrorism operations, on a scale of 1 to 10.

"Three," Mr. Morell replied, according to officials familiar with the exchange.

The fate of the C.I.A. informants arrested in Pakistan is unclear, but American officials said that the C.I.A. director, Leon E. Panetta, raised the issue when he travelled to Islamabad last week to meet with Pakistani military and intelligence officers.

Some in Washington see the arrests as illustrative of the disconnect between Pakistani and American priorities at a time when they are supposed to be allies in the fight against Al Qaeda — instead of hunting down the support network that allowed Bin Laden to live comfortably for years, the Pakistani authorities are arresting those who assisted in the raid that killed the world's most wanted man.

The Bin Laden raid and more recent attacks by militants in Pakistan have been blows to the country's military, a revered institution in the country. Some officials and outside experts said the military is mired in its worst crisis of confidence in decades.

American officials cautioned that Mr. Morell's comments about Pakistani support was a snapshot of the current relationship, and did not represent the administration's overall assessment.

"We have a strong relationship with our Pakistani counterparts and work through issues when they arise," said Marie E. Harf, a C.I.A. spokeswoman. "Director Panetta had productive meetings last week in Islamabad. It's a

crucial partnership, and we will continue to work together in the fight against Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups who threaten our country and theirs.”

Husain Haqqani, Pakistan’s ambassador to the United States, said in a brief telephone interview that the C.I.A. and the Pakistani spy agency “are working out mutually agreeable terms for their cooperation in fighting the menace of terrorism. It is not appropriate for us to get into the details at this stage.”

Over the past several weeks the Pakistani military has been distancing itself from American intelligence and counterterrorism operations against militant groups in Pakistan. This has angered many in Washington who believe that Bin Laden’s death has shaken Al Qaeda and that there is now an opportunity to further weaken the terrorist organization with more raids and armed drone strikes.

But in recent months, dating approximately to when a C.I.A. contractor killed two Pakistanis on a street in the eastern city of Lahore in January, American officials said that Pakistani spies from the Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence, known as the ISI, have been generally unwilling to carry out surveillance operations for the C.I.A.. The Pakistanis have also resisted granting visas allowing American intelligence officers to operate in Pakistan, and have threatened to put greater restrictions on the drone flights.

It is the future of the drone program that is a particular worry for the C.I.A. American officials said that during his meetings in Pakistan last week, Mr. Panetta was particularly forceful about trying to get Pakistani officials to allow armed drones to fly over even wider areas in the northwest tribal regions. But the C.I.A. is already preparing for the worst: relocating some of the drones from Pakistan to a base in Afghanistan, where they can take off and fly east across the mountains and into the tribal areas, where terrorist groups find safe haven.

Another casualty of the recent tension is an ambitious Pentagon program to train Pakistani paramilitary troops to fight Al Qaeda and the Taliban in those same tribal areas. That program has ended, both American and Pakistani officials acknowledge, and the last of about 120 American military advisers have left the country.

American officials are now scrambling to find temporary jobs for about 50 Special Forces support personnel who had been helping the trainers with logistics and communications. Their visas were difficult to obtain and officials fear if these troops are sent home, Pakistan will not allow them to return.

In a sign of the growing anger on Capitol Hill, Representative Mike Rogers, a Michigan Republican who leads the House Intelligence Committee, said Tuesday that he believed elements of the ISI and the military had helped protect Bin Laden.

Mr. Rogers, who met with senior security officials in Pakistan last week, said he had no evidence that senior Pakistani military or civilian leaders were complicit in sheltering Bin Laden. And he did not offer any proof to support his assertion, saying only his accusation was based on “information that I’ve seen.”

He warned that both lawmakers and the Obama administration could end up putting more restrictions on the \$2 billion in American military aid received annually by Pakistan. He also called for “benchmarks” in the relationship, including more sharing of information about militant activities in Karachi, Lahore and elsewhere and more American access to militants detained in Pakistan.

American military commanders in Afghanistan appear cautiously optimistic that they are making progress in pushing the Taliban from its strongholds in that country’s south, but many say a significant American military withdrawal can occur only if the warring sides in Afghanistan broker some kind of peace deal.

But the United States is reliant on Pakistan to apply pressure on Taliban leaders, over whom they have historically had great influence.

For now, at least, America's relationship with Pakistan keeps getting tripped up. When he visited Pakistan, Mr. Panetta offered evidence of collusion between Pakistani security officials and the militants staging attacks in Afghanistan.

American officials said Mr. Panetta presented satellite photographs of two bomb-making factories that American spies several weeks ago had asked the ISI to raid. When Pakistani troops showed up days later, the militants were gone, causing American officials to question whether the militants had been warned by someone on the Pakistani side.

Shortly after the failed raids, the Defense Department put a hold on a \$300 million payment reimbursing Pakistan for the cost of deploying more than 100,000 troops along the border with Afghanistan, two officials said. The Pentagon declined to comment on the payment, except to say it was "continuing to process several claims."

NewsTickers alert senior Department officials to breaking news. This item appears as it did in its original publication and does not contain analysis or commentary by Department sources.