

RELEASE IN FULL

From: McHale, Judith A <McHaleJA@state.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, May 4, 2011 5:52 AM
To: H; Mills, Cheryl D; Sullivan, Jacob J
Subject: FW: Pakistan media

Good readout of mood in Pakistan. Favorite conspiracy theory to date, reported by some Pakistani journalists I met with yesterday ---" bin Laden was killed in Afghanistan; body brought to Pakistan, whole event on Sunday was "staged" to embarrass Pakistan and give us a basis for cutting off funding" !!! I suppose it would be laughable but for the fact that this is Pakistan and these things have a way of gaining traction. Sad.

jm

From: Davidson, Mark J
Sent: Wednesday, May 04, 2011 3:30 AM
To: McHale, Judith A
Cc: Schwartz, Larry R/PPR; Douglas, Walter T; Rodriguez, Alberto; Beale, Courtney A.; DiMartino, Kitty
Subject: RE: media

Judith,

Here is our early update for today. This will be followed by our more extensive daily media analysis later; we will aim to have it out by 8 am DC time. Please let us know if you need anything else.

After discussion and consideration among our team, and weighing what we've heard from our Pakistani contacts, we strongly believe that releasing a photo would help drive the final nail into the coffin of "credible" denials conspiracy theories in Pakistan.

Best regards,

Mark

The dominant focus of Pakistani media has shifted from initial reaction to Osama Bin Laden's death to criticism of the Pakistani military/intelligence establishment's awareness (or lack thereof) of his whereabouts and the U.S. operation to kill him. A sense of national chagrin has permeated discussion everywhere, defying ISI's well-honed ability to spin the media to protect itself.

Urdu media is uncharacteristically – perhaps unprecedentedly – critical of the military and ISI "intelligence failure." There is also widespread if muted, almost pro-forma, disapproval of the unilateral U.S. action to kill him. Media prominently covered the Foreign Office's defensive press release expressing "deep concern" over the operation. Throughout, the sense of anti-American rage and rancor we have seen after Ray Davis was released or alleged major drone strikes was absent. It is also notable that forty-eight hours after the announcement of bin Laden's death, there is almost no show of support for bin Laden or his legacy. TV and English print media have virtually ignored the few small "in absentia" funerals for bin Laden in Karachi and Quetta, and Urdu papers have published only tiny articles, most without photos. There have been no other public demonstrations covered by the media

The top television story on Wednesday morning was CIA Director Panetta's public questioning of whether the Pakistani government was complicit in hiding bin Laden's, or merely incompetent. The print media focused on the Foreign Office's statement, which appeared to be written by the military, denying knowledge of or involvement in the operation and expressing "reservations" about the "unauthorized" action. Newspapers also reported on Congressional threats to suspend aid if evidence emerges that Pakistani intelligence helped conceal bin Laden in Abbottabad. While Urdu editorials criticized the U.S. operation as a violation of Pakistan's sovereignty, major Urdu daily "Express" grudgingly admitted that "the U.S. has proved that Al Qaeda leadership may be in Pakistan."

On Tuesday night's television talk shows, even pro-military and pro-ISI hosts Hamid Mir and Kamran Khan and their guests slammed the Pakistani military for not knowing that American helicopters had violated Pakistan's airspace and flown to a military town near the capital. This sense of embarrassment or even anger over the performance of Pakistan's military and intelligence agencies has filtered into both Urdu broadcast and print media.

SBU

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: McHale, Judith A
Sent: Wednesday, May 04, 2011 5:04 AM
To: Douglas, Walter T; Davidson, Mark J
Cc: Schwartz, Larry R/PPR
Subject: media

Walter/ Mark:

I have a 9 a.m. SVTC on post-Bin Laden reactions. Can you pls email me an update no later than 7 a.m. my time on reactions in Pakistan. Also let me know your thoughts on release of pix.

Thx.

jm