

Operation Geronimo: Assassination of Osama Bin Ladin and its implications on the US-Pakistan relations, War on Terror, Pakistan and Al-Qaeda

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ABSTRACT

The month of May 2011 witnessed the killing of the world's most wanted man, Osama Bin Laden (OBL) inside Pakistan. It has been reported that Osama was living in Abbottabad for the last five years, near a Pakistan military academy. The US Navy Seal team, in a commando action called "Operation Geronimo" killed him and took his body with them. As the operation was conducted without prior information to the government of Pakistan, it has brought the two countries relations to an all-time low. There have also been reports that the US troops will be deployed in Pakistan if the nation's nuclear installations come under threat from terrorists out to avenge the killing of OBL (Sunday Express, 15 May, 2011). This has further increased tension between the US and Pakistan.

In this paper, an effort has been made to give a brief background of Al-Qaeda as an organization and to find out implications of the death of Osama Bin Laden on the Pak-US relations, War on Terror (WOT), Pakistan and Al-Qaeda.

KEY WORDS: Osama Bin Laden, Operation Geronimo, Al-Qaeda, Pakistan, America

A Brief History of Al-Qaeda

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, drew many Muslim volunteers from the Arab world and Pakistan to participate in the Afghan jihad; it was these volunteers for whom the chief ideologue of the "Arab-Afghans" (Rashid: 2011, 123) and mentor for Osama bin Laden, Abdullah Azam used the word Al Qaeda, to "describe the role he envisaged the most committed of the volunteers playing once the war against the Soviets was over" (Burke: 2004, 02). Defining 'al Qaeda' proves a complex task, it is commonly misconceived to be a distinct organisation or group headed by Arab leader Osama bin Laden, however in reality it is much more

subtle, Burke describes the term as 'a loose network of networks'. The term "Al Qaeda is a messy and rough designation, often applied carelessly in the absence of a more useful term" (Burke: 2004, 01). It is actually a common Arabic word that can mean base, foundation, a rule, a principle, a method or maxim. The above translations are helpful in understanding the use of the term in reference to terrorist and extremist organisations. Abdallah Azzam, an early mentor of bin Ladin used the phrase in 1987 to describe the 'strong vanguard' of committed individuals who would continue on to 'achieve victory' after the withdrawal of the Soviets from Afghanistan in 1989(Burke: 2004, 02). He saw the Al Qaeda as a "base that was to be composed of individuals committed to the cause who would, through accumulative weight of their actions instigate great change"; he referred to a tactic, or a 'mode of activism', not an organisation(Burke: 2004, 02). At that time, the aim of the movement was to "keep alive the Jihadist spirit among Muslims in general" (Byman: 2005, 198), additionally the after war years had left the speculation that the defeat of the Soviets (barring all the other causes) by the Jihadists could indeed lead to the defeat of the other superpowers like the US (Rashid: 2001, 130). The evolution of the phrase can be traced from this point. Once the Afghan-Soviet war came to an end the common purpose which had provided unity between disparate groups of Islamist extremists began to disintegrate, bin Ladin, in an attempt to overcome these re-emerging divisions aimed to create an 'international army' for the purpose of 'defending Muslims from oppression' (Burke: 2004, 23). Ollapally (2008) describes how 'the Soviet invasion was clearly the catalyst' for growing religious militancy 'but in 1979 hardly anyone familiar with Afghan society would have predicted the religious extremism and terrorism that would evolve' (Ollapally: 2008, 34). It was after Azam's death in 1989, however that Osama bin Laden took charge of the Al Qaeda and spearheaded the movement. It was not until bin Ladin moved to Afghanistan after leaving Sudan in 1996 with a small number of followers, that he was provided with opportunity to develop a real terrorist entity, from this point until 2001 was the closest al Qaeda came to being the commonly conceived 'base' (Burke: 2004, 23). The CIA and its allies had always wanted royal patronage for the Afghan jihad, Bin Laden, a close friend of the Saudi Prince Turki bin Faisal, though not royal, was deemed fit for the cause. Bin Laden is on record to have said "to counter these atheist Russians, the Saudis chose me as their representative in Afghanistan" (Rashid: 2001, 132). In 1997 the US Department of State accurately described al Qaeda not as a group but as an 'operational hub, predominantly for like minded Sunni extremists'. Money from Saudi Arabia allowed bin Ladin and his followers to effectively buy themselves a country, Afghanistan, to use as a base, and so between 1996 and 2001 a central focus was provided to local extremists around the provision of resources and facilities, including training, expertise, money and a safe haven. Burke (2004) suggests that al Qaeda grew to consist of three main elements; a 'hardcore' basis of around a dozen associates of bin Ladin's since the 1980's and a number of 'pre-eminent militants active around

the world' who formed the 'heart of al Qaeda's capability' and were 'committed to a similar agenda'(Burke: 2004, 44). Secondly a network of localised groups in some way linked to bin Ladin or his associates, with their own leaders and own agendas. Lastly a third element of ideology, Burke (2004) describes al Qaeda as 'a way of thinking about the world, a way of understanding events' and not 'being part of a group'.

Bin Laden, dismayed over the Saudi royal family's decision to involve the USA in the Gulf War, instead of using the trained Arab-Afghans from the Soviet Jihad as he had suggested, announced Jihad against the Americans, moreover because they still occupied territories of Saudi Arabia, by stating "the walls of oppression and humiliation cannot be demolished except in a rain of bullets". Increasingly disillusioned with Muslim countries allying with the USA, Bin Laden issued a manifesto that claimed "the US has been occupying the lands of Islam in the holiest of places, the Arabian peninsula, plundering its riches, dictating to its rulers, humiliating its people, terrorizing its neighbours, and turning its bases in the peninsula into a spearhead through which to fight the neighbouring Muslim peoples". He further called for the liberation of the Middle East by issuing a Fatwa- "The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies-civil and military- is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to". The radical Islamist Ayman Zawahiri, who believed in the use of terror tactics to aid Laden's idea of global jihad, also played a great part in setting out the aims of Al Qaeda. The movement aspired to establish Sharia law in the Muslim countries, to expel the American infidels from the Middle East and decrease their influence, and bring down the Muslim regimes that were US allies or supported its policies. Most importantly, they wanted to institute a Pan-Islamic caliphate and wage Jihad against the USA, by setting up a 'World Islamic Front for Jihad' (Wilkinson: 2006, 40). The *modus operandi* of Al Qaeda, in carrying out these aims included the killing of large numbers of people, cause the maximum economic damage possible and disrupt society and create a climate of fear. These attacks were usually coordinated and carried out without any previous warning; common tactics were suicide bombs and car bomb attacks. As Burke said, "Al Qaeda specifically aims to have a lot of people watching as well as a lot of people dead" (Wilkinson: 2006, 40).

Considerable media attention was given to a video aired in June 2007 showing an Afghan Taliban Commander with 300 masked men claiming to be suicide bombers prepared for terror attacks in Western countries. However such attacks were never put into action. The Afghan Taliban have displayed no history of attacks on Westerners outside of the states border. However, terror tactics displayed by the Afghani Taliban have evolved in recent years. Leaders have used 'al Qaeda style anti Western rhetoric' and endorsed suicide bombing as a tactic, which was previously unknown, indicating that the group are not static in the attacks they will pursue (Stenersen: 2009) . Martyrdom operations were not typical in Afghanistan; in 2002 there were only two in the whole country. Today

however a suicide attack occurs approximately every three days' (Riedel, 2007), indicating how readily the Taliban have adopted al Qaeda style tactics. Most Afghani Taliban attacks have been aimed at Afghan police and security forces, international troops and Afghan civilians, importantly attacks against foreigners have been limited to within the state (Stenersen: 2009). Enmity towards the West has been expressed only in retaliation, such as the bombing of the German Embassy in Kabul in 2008 was claimed to have been because the German forces in Afghanistan were involved in taking innocent lives (Stenersen: 2009). Western countries perceived as insulting Islam have been the subject of Afghan Taliban threats, in 2008 the Netherlands were threatened twice after they released an Islam-critical movie entitled *Fitna* (Stenersen: 2009). Critically these retaliatory threats were limited to Dutch troops inside Afghan borders, a marked difference from the Pakistan Taliban who were associated with an attempted terrorist plot on public transport networks in Barcelona in 2008.

Al Qaeda had made a 'spectacular resurrection' in Pakistan after they lost their base in Afghanistan from the US lead invasion in 2001, (Riedel, 2007). However, one after another, their command leadership was caught and hence it was weakened. On May 2, 2011, with the Operation Geronimo, Osama Bin Ladin was also assassinated and hence a fifteen year long hunt spent with billions of dollars came to an end. Osama's death bears some serious implications on the Pak-US relations, War on terror, Pakistan and Al-Qaeda. All such factors will be discussed one by one.

Implications of Operation Geronimo on Pak-US Relations

Pakistan US relations indeed are at a critical moment and need a structural overhauling. There are multiple ways to absorb and analyze this development. The most obvious reaction, as we have witnessed in the wake of Bin Laden's killing, is to question Pakistan's commitment as a partner in the fight against terrorism given that he was found living comfortably in a Pakistani Garrison town of Abbottabad. Understandably, many have suggested that Pakistan is not sincere, and thus Washington should contemplate breaking off ties.

I, however, believe the U.S. should see this extremely difficult moment as an opportunity to strengthen the bilateral relationship. America has tried the 'walk away' route before. It left Afghanistan and Pakistan just after the disintegration of the former Soviet Union. Irresponsible and haste withdrawal of the US economic political and diplomatic support is primarily the reason for our presence in Afghanistan today. But this time, US winding up of its mission in haste, withdrawing of forces from Afghanistan, and behaving like an enemy towards Pakistan will rupture relationship with Pakistan and will be even more detrimental. The US war on terror has rendered Pakistan much weaker and fragile than it was at the end of the Soviet disintegration.

Pakistan has learned few lessons from its past intimacy with the US. Islamabad's number one complaint vis à vis the U.S. has always been, and is, that Washington has proven to be an untrustworthy partner. It left Pakistan during 1960s due to the détente phenomenon between the two super powers of that time. It left Pakistan, besides an incomplete horrendous story started by the US in Afghanistan, immediately after the end of the Cold War. Pakistan had to bear the brunt of Afghanistan's incomplete story in shape of terrorism, extremism and enemy at the gates. Similarly, it was not long after the news of Bin Laden's death in Pakistan that analysts were questioning the U.S. packing up from the region and leaving another dangerous story incomplete. Many predicted that the US mission impossible is "mission accomplished" and that it would abandon its partnership with Pakistan. Indeed, it is very common thought in Pakistan's policy making corridors that the U.S. will not fulfill promises to stick with Pakistan over the long haul. It is the high time and an opportunity in shape of the death of OBL to convince them otherwise. A demonstration of U.S. resolve to stand by Pakistan despite the world's most wanted man's killing in Abbottabad will send an extremely affirmative message to a common Pakistani.

OBL's killing resulted in public support for the slain Al-Qaeda leader. His funeral prayers were offered in absentia in different parts of Pakistan. Huge processions were taken out against the U.S. for killing Bin Laden. All this shows the extreme pace with which extremism and intolerance is growing in Pakistani society. If this remained the state of affairs, Pakistan's demographic divide will become a gun-powder-magazine. It would need a spark and it will explode; resulting in burnt fingers of all-the US, Afghanistan and India. Instable Pakistan, like Afghanistan of 1990s, will provide opportunities for terrorists and extremists to operate and connive against the US and the West in general. I definitely believe that the Pakistan's nuclear program is safe and secure. However, under the extreme circumstances that I just mentioned above, the fears about the security and protection of the nuclear arsenal would become genuine. Such a dangerous Pakistan will be due to the negligence of the US from the region. Such dangerous Pakistan would also be detrimental to the US interests not only in the region but in the entire world.

Osama Bin Laden's presence in Abbottabad especially in a cantonment area is precarious and shocking to say the least. It raises questions ranging between national security, sovereignty, and worse yet, competence of the country's intelligence agencies. Not enough facts are available yet to decipher where the reality lies. However, it is hard to find a sense for Pakistan or state agencies to harbor Bin Laden. Brain cells do not accept it. US and Pakistan agencies in collaboration have nabbed and killed numerous Al-Qaeda leaders and activists inside Pakistan. After all, Pakistan and the U.S. have collaborated in previous operations/strikes against senior Al Qaeda leaders inside Pakistan. In fact, it was Pakistan's security agencies which broke the back bone of the Al-Qaeda network inside Pakistan and resultantly in the entire world. It was a case of sheer

incompetence on the part of Pakistan's spy agencies. This not only brought an embarrassment for the entire country but also forced the US forces to act unilaterally and violate Pakistan's territorial sovereignty. The US act to kill OBL without any Pakistani involvement is going to create further gaps between the two countries relations and will widen the trust deficit on both ends. However, Abbottabad operation leaves more questions and less answers for Pakistan and its agencies.

Regardless, while Bin Laden's killing will likely dent Al Qaeda globally, it neither reduces Pakistan's internal security challenges, nor completes the mission in Afghanistan. Pakistan's internal security was not challenged by Al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda was and is behind the *Tahreek-e- Taliban Pakistan* (TTP). For Pakistan, the most dangerous terrorists are those who are playing havoc with its security TTP. Al-Qaeda comes later. Similarly, the US mission in Afghanistan is least against Al-Qaeda. Its main opponents are the Taliban, who have already distanced themselves from the Al-Qaeda. Bin Ladin's importance was very high till 2005. Afterwards, Al-Qaeda was just an organization with very broken line of command and their attacks were also very least. Hence, OBL's killing today does not make a drastic effect on the war on terror. Its fulfills only one point: the agenda of the US to nab or kill OBL.

However, finding OBL in Abbottabad and killing him is a reminder that Pakistan has truly become the global epicenter for Islamist terrorists. Other than Al-Zarqawi, all the top most leaders of Al-Qaeda were and found in Pakistan. The Pakistani state is challenged by multiple militant outfits with different agendas and capacities. This is a result of three decades of misplaced policies which saw militants as tools of foreign policy. In other words, had the US not left this region in haste after the Soviet disintegration in 1991-92, Pakistan and Afghanistan would not have been a safe haven for the world terrorists and extremists.

From a practical point of view, there are four types of insurgent/terrorist groups operating in Pakistan: Anti Pakistan (Baluchistan Liberation Army and the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan TTP), Anti US presence in Afghanistan (Afghan Taliban and Al-Qaeda), Anti India (Harkat-ul Mujahideen, and Jesh-e-Tayyaba), and sectarian (Lashkar-e-Jehngavi). Some of them are financed and supported indigenously for seeking a separate territory as their ultimate objective. Others are fighting against Pakistan and its allies in the war on terror and are supported by the foreign intelligence agencies. The purpose is not only to keep the US and its allies engaged in the region but also to weaken Pakistan as a state. All four groups blurredly distinct themselves from each other. However, the Pakistani state has accepted them as one and the same thing. The Pakistan Army is focusing more upon the TTP and some of sectarian organizations. Any organization working against India is not the Pakistan Army's cup of tea. Rather they would be happy to have them against India. The Afghan Taliban operate more efficiently from Afghanistan. Their cross- border operations are hindered by the NATO/US forces.

And the Al-Qaeda: its backbone was already broken during Tora Bora operation anaconda.

It's a fact that the Pakistan Army is stretched in countering anti state elements in Pakistan. They conducted very successful operation in Swat and Buner. However, civilian administration is still hesitant to take control from the uniformed officers and hence military is forced to continue holding areas till to date. It is alleged that the Pakistani security forces give a cold shoulder to the activities of Afghan insurgents inside Pakistan. It is partly due to its lack of capacity to deal of all the four groups at a time and partly due to the Kabul's antagonistic posture against Pakistan. However, Pakistan's such reaction is increasing western costs in Afghanistan.

Similarly, the US drone attacks inside Pakistan's tribal belt is raising costs in Pakistan. More and more people have turned against the US which is contributing to the notoriety of the war on terror. I personally conducted a survey in tribal areas (four tribal cities) and asked who is the enemy number one of tribal people? It was surprising that out of the options like Afghanistan, India, Israel and the US, 86% declared the US as their top enemy. From here, one can judge that the US drone attacks as well as its billions of dollars aid for uplifting of FATA area is going in vain.

The Pakistan Army and the US policies regarding war on terror are going in divergent ways. They don't complement each other rather counter each other. This means a lack of coherence in their joint policy to counter terrorism. It is also contributing to bring a bad name to both parties in their respective support base. No doubt the government of Pakistan is the US ally but the Pakistanis are anti-Americans. Looking at the war on terror, Pakistan has been and will remain an invaluable lifeline and a hindrance to the U.S. mission in Afghanistan. Their divergent ways and dual policies in the region will not muster fulfillment of any of the war on terror objectives. However as the U.S. strategy moves towards the reconciliation phase, Pakistani and U.S. strategic interests are likely to converge on the question of cooperation.

The Abbottabad incident has broken the trust between the two nations. Both countries are at the cross roads of annoyance to each other. Obama administration is coming hard on Pakistan after Osama's presence in Abbottabad. On the other hand Pakistani people and leaders are very grumpy over the US secret operation of killing Osama on its soil without any prior notice to political or military leadership of the country. This trust was attempted to be reconstructed by the recent visit of Senator John Kerry, Chairman US Foreign Affairs Committee, 'who pledged that two sides will work together in any future operations against high-value Al-Qaeda targets in Pakistan' (The News, May 17, 2011). He realized the deteriorating situation between the two countries' relations and stated that 'it was important to press the "reset button" on US-Pakistan relations and use this opportunity to put relations back on track'(The News, May 17, 2011). He also dispelled the impression that the US was interested in taking over Pakistan's nuclear

installations. According to Senator Kerry, 'I can write with my blood that the US has no interest in Pakistan's nuclear assets' (The News, May 17, 2011). Need of the moment is to base relations between the two countries on mutual respect, trust and interest. As the US is a big brother in their relations, Pakistan's sovereignty and national interests must be given due place and respect. Senator Kerry also warned in veiled words to the Pakistani military and political establishment that 'the road ahead will not be defined by words. It will be defined by actions' (The News, May 17, 2011). These actions could be firstly, scrutinizing the Pak-US relations by the American Congress. Secondly, the Congress can halt ongoing American economic assistance to Pakistan because of the presence of Osama Bin Ladin's presence in Pakistan.

A country with wounded pride and sovereignty first by Al-Qaeda's terrorist bombings and now by the US drone attacks and Abbottabad operation, Pakistan is in search of its place in the war on terror. It has become a battlefield for the US and Al-Qaeda. US drone attacks against Al-Qaeda hide-outs are causing Pakistanis' killings in the tribal areas and the violation of its sovereignty. And Al-Qaeda, in taking revenge, is also targeting and blowing Pakistanis and its military and paramilitary forces. 'The suicide bombings at the training centre of Frontier Constabulary in Charsadda is the kind of revenge that Pakistani Taliban and its allies are capable of taking to avenge Osama's assassination in Abbottabad'. They are unable to inflict any harm upon the Americans who killed the most wanted man. Fellow-Muslims and fellow Pakistanis will be their targets. This suicide bombing killed 98 people (The News, May 17, 2011). The innocent 98 paid the price of someone else's sins. In their attacks and counter attacks upon each other, the ultimate sufferers are the poor Pakistani nation. At the same time, the ultimate twin-fold winners are Americans. Such attacks on innocent Pakistanis will result in the loss of public support for the Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. And over and above, Pakistan will be under immense pressure to be hard on militants like the TTP.

War on terror was America's war. It was thrust upon Pakistanis. The US was attacked on 9/11 which mustered the US attack on Afghanistan to take revenge from Al-Qaeda and therefore from Taliban who were harboring Osama. This American war was imposed upon Pakistan which brought untold sufferings and misery upon this nation. People of Pakistan are today sandwiched between the terrorist activities of the Al-Qaeda and the Taliban at one end and the US drone attacks and its secret operations inside Pakistan's territory without any intimation to its military and political leadership on the other hand. Pakistan's leadership has also failed completely to identify limits of its involvement in such an open-ended war.

Implications of Osama Bin Laden assassination on War against Terror:

The US wants to start pulling out its troops from Afghanistan in July, 2001. Even before the killing of Bin Laden most of the European allies of the US in the 'War on Terror' (WOT) were talking excessively of troops withdrawal which is scheduled to begin from July. The US political and military establishments were quite concerned over this attitude of its western allies, and were therefore, asking its allies to think of finishing the job first and leaving the country then. Robert Gates, the US Defense Secretary, had also issued a warning to US allies against a withdrawal in haste (MacAskill: *The Guardian*, March 11, 2011).

Now after Bin Laden has been eliminated it will be hard for the US to convince its allies to stay in Afghanistan and fight the WOT. Although the killing of Bin Laden doesn't signal that his ideology has also been eliminated. The real task for the US and its allies is still ahead which is its success in the WOT; the killing of Bin Laden means anything but success in WOT. As we have discussed that the elimination of Bin Laden increased risk of an extremely violent reaction from Al-Qaida and Taliban, therefore, it will be very premature on the part of the US and NATO if they decided to go ahead with the planned withdrawal, which at the moment they seem would go for.

There are some factions in the Muslim world like the Muslim brotherhood in Egypt and many religious groups in Pakistan etc; which are calling for the US to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan and Iraq because what they call is the lack of a just cause for the US presence in both these countries after the killing of Bin Laden (The Washington Times, May 02, 2011). What they forget in the frenzy is that the job is still unfinished and withdrawal of the US at this point of time would mean leaving a ripe ground for another 9/11 in future. With the presence of the US in this region the writ of the states have been weakened, and with the US withdrawal from the region a power vacuum will be created in different states of the region, this space would be filled in by the militants who became strong during the course of US presence in this region for, still, unknown reason.

In the midst of all these events and mixed reaction from across the world over the death of Bin Laden. Senator John Kerry has voiced his point in the congressional Committee on Foreign Relations (CFR) to reassess the Afghan strategy in the pursuit of achieving the goal of minimum feet on ground goal. This will no doubt initiate a debate in Washington DC about the troops' withdrawal from Afghanistan. The main point which the CFR is raising right now is the lack of justification to spend more than \$10 billion per month on troops in Afghanistan after the death of Bin Laden (The New York Times, May 10, 2011). The CFR should not forget that leaving at this stage would mean losing those trillions of dollars which the US has spent on this war so far; because withdrawal at this stage would indicate nothing but the inability of US to tackle the end of WOT in such a

manner to make it impossible for the militants to meddle with the power structures in the region after the US withdrawal.

Ironically, the US government is ready to negotiate peace in Afghanistan with those insurgents who would have no contacts with Al-Qaida (http://www.newyorker.com/talk/comment/2011/02/28/110228taco_talk_coll).

Their main aim is to begin the July withdrawal and make the Afghan National Army enable to take effective control of the country once the US would completely withdraw by 2014. It is obvious from the address of US foreign secretary Hilary Clinton soon after the assassination of Bin Laden. The Afghan government is also in a welcome mode to this US initiative. It rather expects that the talks with Taliban will move to an advance level which, in their opinion, could not move beyond the establishment of contacts with Taliban in the presence of OBL (<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/05/11/us-afghanistan-taliban-idUSTRE74A1UC20110511>). There is no denying the fact that every initiative for peace in this region should be hailed; but the US withdrawal at this stage would make the situation worse than the Taliban era, in retrospect common men in the street of Afghanistan would appreciate Taliban government from 1996-2001 against any government in the US and post-US Afghanistan. This in self would highlight the US failures over its achievements in Afghanistan. It is right that Bin Laden the most wanted man on the face of the earth has been eliminated and it will demoralize the militants (http://centralasiaonline.com/cocoon/caii/xhtml/en_GB/features/caii/features/pakistan/main/2011/05/05/feature-01); but still if we analyze the pattern of attacks on US and its allies in Afghanistan we easily draw the conclusion that the number of attacks has been evidently increased in the past couple of years. These are the years which according to the US version Bin Laden spent in his compound in Abbottabad. Bin Laden seemed to be more inactive in the final years of his life than he used to be. And the number of attacks on US and its allies increased during his seclusion which clearly indicates the command and control of such operations carried out by Al-Qaida rested somewhere else.

In order to be victorious in the WOT the Obama should postpone his decision of initiating a pullout of troops from Afghanistan in July 2011. US should stay there for, at least, a period of two more years with no reduction in troops and funding to completely eliminated militancy from the region, because Osama has gone but his ideology is still intact. In order to win WOT the US should try to eliminate the militant ideology which is threat to not only the countries of the region, including Pakistan, but also to the US interests in the region.

The Afghan National Army is still much untrained to perform the job it has been created for. After a minimum US presence in the background and the Afghan National Army on the front there is a fair amount of chance that it will loss control over key cities and points in Afghanistan against Taliban or the highly trained remnants and splitters of Al-Qaida, as a power vacuum will becreated(<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/05/16/us-russia-afghanistan->

security idUSTRE74F1HJ20110516). It will take Afghanistan back to the stage of early 1990's where there used to be the rule of lawlessness everywhere and Dr. Najeebullah was just a nominal head of the state.

Effects of OBL Assassination on Pakistan

May 2nd 2011 will go down in history as the day Pakistan lost whatever credibility it had left. Osama bin Laden's death on Pakistani soil and that too in a garrison town has severely diminished Pakistan's commitment to ostensibly fighting terrorism, casting Pakistan in an unsavory light. The US and the rest of the allies are deeming Pakistan an unreliable ally in the war on terror. This could mean unforeseen repercussions for Pakistan. Pakistan being a key ally in the war against terror, has become an embarrassment to the rest of the allies and is being treated like the recalcitrant child that it is.

Operation Geronimo (or Operation Neptune Spear-the names given to the Abbottabad operation) was a triumph for the US led coalition forces. After 10 years of war in Afghanistan, America had nothing to show for its efforts. The perpetrator of the 9/11 attacks still eluded it even after the billions of dollars America poured into the hunt for Osama bin Laden. In this regard the successful operation against Osama bin Laden was a great ego boost for US. But for Pakistan it is another story altogether. From the very beginning of the war against terror, Pakistan has been eager to please America and the coalition forces, laying all of its resources at their disposal including air bases. The Pakistani newspaper 'The Nation' puts it very aptly saying, "Pakistan has been religiously carrying out its end of the bargain in the war on terror, having sacrificed over 35,000 people including security personnel and apprehending over 600 Al-Qaeda operatives" (The Nation, May 18th 2011). However, the CIA has been accusing Pakistan, its military establishment and its intelligence agencies of harboring Osama bin Laden for the last 9 years, with vehement denials from Pakistan (Pak articles hub, May 4th 2011). Now the killing of Osama bin Laden deep inside Pakistani territory has raised questions about Pakistan's role in protecting bin Laden. The Obama administration has been deeply suspicious of Pakistan from the very beginning, which is evident from their Af-Pak policy.

Pakistan's problems were further compounded by a lack of clear, unified and immediate responses by its government and military to the operation inside Pakistan (Congressional Research Service, May 5th 2011). It was reported that no intelligence was shared between the two countries about the operation and that the Pakistani intelligence services were in the dark about the impending operation on Pakistani territory. American military analysts believe that "Either Pakistan's intelligence service is terribly incompetent, fatally compromised, or both, raising questions about its suitability as a partner" (Congressional Research Service, May 5th 2011). Pakistani military and defense establishments are being accused of either complicity to some degree with protecting bin Laden or gross incompetence

South Asian Studies 26 (2)

in intelligence gathering, by American analysts. Leading US counterterrorism advisor John Brennan has stated that there is no evidence Pakistani officials knew of OBL's whereabouts, but that the United States is not ruling out the possibility (Congressional Research Service: May 5th 2011).

Pakistani government's meek initial response to the US violation of its sovereignty was a cause for immense public outrage in Pakistan. Popular public sentiment in Pakistan regarding the operation is one of anger and disgust *vis-a-vis* the military and the government. The operation is widely regarded as a failure on the part of the already weak PPP led government and Pakistan's military establishment. The government is viewed as being too compliant to American policies and not being able to stand up to foreign pressure, while the military is in an even worse position as far as the public goes. Anti American sentiment too has been spiked by America's unilateral raid deep inside Pakistan. America is already seen as an enemy by many Pakistanis because of the drone attacks on Pakistani soil and many now believe that America's presence in the region is unjustified after Osama bin Laden's death.

Pakistani government has stiffened its stance on the violation of its territory stating that "this event of unauthorized unilateral action cannot be taken as a rule. The Government of Pakistan further affirms that such an event shall not serve as a future precedent for any state including the U.S. Such actions undermine cooperation and may also sometime constitute threat to international peace and security" (www.fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/R41809.pdf). This was especially possible after the in-camera joint session of the Pakistani parliament held on 13th May 2011, wherein the government was asked to review its relations with the US. It was revealed in the in-camera session by DG ISI that US used stealth aircrafts to conduct the operation inside Pakistan and that Pakistan did not have the technology to detect these aircrafts. This revelation on the part of the head of Pakistan's foremost intelligence agency has raised concerns about future incidents of the same nature by America and other states. The Parliament passed a unanimous resolution, which among other things stated that NATO supply lines would be blocked in case of drone attacks or any such incidents in the future. Such statements have strained the already tenuous relations between Pakistan and the US.

To the US, Pakistan has become a necessary evil as far as the fight against terrorism goes because of their decade long strategic partnership. President Obama has stated that, "going forward, it is essential that Pakistan continue to join us in the fight against Al Qaeda and its affiliates" (www.fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/R41809.pdf). American analysts agree that distancing itself from Pakistan would be an unwise move on America's part but congressional debates over the assistance provided to Pakistan over the years have ensued following the Abbottabad incident. Pakistan is one of the biggest recipients of American aid and stopping this aid could mean disastrous results for the Pakistani economy and Defence machinery especially when the annual budget is

about to be announced. The American congress is demanding scrutiny of the aid given in the past and a transparency of the process of aid given in the future.

On the other hand Islamabad is caught between a rock and a hard place with its need to keep up pretences of strength and a forceful response to the US over its breach of Pakistani sovereignty, and of keeping ties with the US pleasant. The US's unapologetic attitude towards Pakistan as evident by Senator John Kerry's visit, is making the Pakistani governments position even more difficult. Since the operation was such a huge success, it has provided the Obama administration with enough leverage to push Pakistan towards making more visible and strenuous efforts to track down the rest of the AL-Qaeda members residing in its territory. In this regard a positive development took place when a top Al-Qaeda operative, Anwar Al-Makki, was arrested just outside of Karachi.

On the home front Pakistan is facing a slew of problems after the Abbottabad debacle. Osama bin laden was popular in the xenophobic and anti American circles of Pakistan mainly because of his anti American policies and his war on America (Congressional Research Service, John Rollins, May 5th 2011). Many fear that his death would see a sharp incline in terrorist activities inside Pakistan. *Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan* (TTP) have vowed to avenge bin laden's death saying, "President Zardari and the Army will be our first targets, America will be our second target" (Congressional Research Service, John Rollins, May 5th 2011). The government and the army is under fire for their part or lack of, in the operation. Frustration at America's unwillingness to stop drone attacks inside Pakistani territory, even after the resolution to block NATO supply lines to Afghanistan, is rampant in the country. Pakistan cannot retaliate to the airstrikes because it would mean an open war with the US, as in the event of retaliation by Pakistan army, America will have sufficient grounds to launch a full scale offensive against Pakistan (www.pkarticleshub.com/2011/05/04/obl-his-death-and-its-implications).

Implications of Osama Bin Laden Killing on Al-Qaeda

Osama bin laden was a unifying figure for the jihadists. His modesty and personal bravery inspired many young Muslims to take up arms and follow him. He believed that united states is the sole enemy of Muslim world and all the Muslim should get united to fight against united states and other shared enemies. He never took into consideration the internal problems of the Muslims. One of Osama's biggest successes is creating al-Qaeda, that will survive him (Daniel L.Byman: May 12, 2011).

The death of Osama bin laden is a big blow for al Qaeda. He slowly and gradually built a strong organization which killed thousands of Americans and thousands of Muslims in the Middle East. Al Qaeda relatively have small number of skilled and dedicated fighters, which are alive and active. But the death of bin laden is the biggest blow to al Qaeda. Now this organization needs a new leader which can be Ayman al zawahiri, an Egyptian deputy who is a potential successor

of Osama. He needs to consolidate his powers and gain loyalty and support of his followers, which is very difficult as he is on the run and cannot communicate freely (Byman: May 12,2011).

Ayman al zawahiri an Egyptian jihadist ,who is presumed to be Osama's heir as head of al Qaeda would do well. Although he does not have the same charisma as Osama and he has a history of angering and alienating other jihadists. It would be hard for him to assume Osama's mantle and even if he do so, his hold on al Qaeda would be precarious. Zawahiri,s background seems perfect for an inspiring terrorist leader as he was jailed when he was 15 years old. He then plotted against Egyptian regime ,which he felt had surrendered to legitimacy by making peace with Israel and failing to establish an Islamic state. He was also declared "chatty Cathy" by Bruce Riedel, an analyst at Brookings institute. He spent some years in Egypt's jail, after that he fled to Pakistan during the anti-soviet jihad. When al Qaeda was founded in 1988, he was by bin laden's side. After 9/11 a US airstrike killed Zawahiri,s wife and his child ,which increased his hatred for US (Daniel L.Byman: May 12, 2011).

The biggest danger comes from Al Qaeda affiliates, such as Yemen based al Qaeda of Arab peninsula or al-Qaida of the Islamic Maghreb. These organizations have their own structure independent of al Qaeda. But these organizations are linked to al Qaeda's core. After bin laden's death these organizations retain their operational capabilities .They will try to undermine US and its allies, and will try to attempt to strike US targets beyond the region in which they operate. It was bin laden's hard work which made these organizations far more lethal. He wanted to unite these disparate organizations. He had access to funding, which the leader like Zawahiri and Anwar al awlaki does not have. They are less charismatic than Osama (Daniel L.Byman: May 12, 2011).

Al Qaeda have many potential supporters who are not formally part of this organization, they have been inspired and motivated by al Qaeda's message. Al-Qaida has helped radicalize these individuals, often sending them to Pakistan to train or to Afghanistan or Iraq to fight. Bin laden is a house hold name: the millionaire who gave up everything to fight the enemies of Islam. Even many Muslims who deplore his killing of many people (particularly Muslim men, women and children) admire him for standing against United States (Daniel L.Byman: May 12, 2011).

To some degree, various al Qaeda affiliated networks operated without any instruction of Bin Laden or Zawahiri and this means that they will keep on operating even in the absence of them. The killing of bin laden has both short and long term implications on Al Qaeda. After the death of Osama, Al Qaeda is full of vengeance and they want to retaliate in a vicious manner and for the time being this organization would seem to be strong and sturdy as they have lost their leader who they believed was given divine protection. In the near future we can expect a lot many threats from al Qaeda as it is global menace now. The al Qaeda affiliates too would join hands with the core of al Qaeda to show their devotion to the

mission against US even after the death of their saint leader. Global affiliates may now focus on financial, human and other resources; they would try to exploit the political grievances and social dynamics. They would try to align their current local operations to respond to bin laden's killing or change the terms of ongoing hostage negotiations that would have transnational implications. The other affiliates may replace the core Afghanistan Pakistan based leadership because of the current events (John Rolins: Congressional research service May 5, 2011).

Since years, Al Qaeda core and affiliates operated without any instruction of bin laden so that his demise wouldn't affect their organization. Even bin laden used to operate independent of his command and control. Bin laden was a religious and philosophical guide (Human security report project, May 02, 2011).

Osama bin laden was a man who united these core and affiliates of al Qaeda, he was the founder of this organization to unite Muslims from all over the world against western propagandas. The killing of Osama was no wonder a big blow for al Qaeda and a success for United States. Bin laden was a paramount leader of Muslim jihadists and his killing has shaken the whole organization. Although these effects won't be manifested soon because his followers are full of enthusiasm to take revenge of their eminent leader. They have got united for this sole purpose but after quite some time we will see that power of al Qaeda will be broken because it needs funding and bin laden was the only one who had access to funding, if they don't get funding it would affect their power to operate. Second most important thing is, different al Qaeda affiliates and core won't be having unity because their expected leaders themselves are on the run and they can't communicate freely, and after Osama there is no such charismatic leader who will get all these organizations and groups united.

Osama bin laden remained strenuous participant in both strategic directions and operational activities of all facets of al Qaeda movements. After the death of Osama and US capturing of all the documents and electronics devices, some analysts think that there would be further disruption to al Qaeda activities because of the infighting of the remaining leaders (<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/R41809.pdf>). US security forces and other agencies may get a chance to exploit the vulnerabilities of al Qaeda after the killing of their leader. Speeding up the goal of dissolution of this organization and its affiliates is the motive of US. To some extent the killing of bin laden has upheaved the connectedness of al Qaeda. The killing bin laden may also propel US to target other key leaders of regional groups (<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/R41809.pdf>).

Conclusion

After the killing of Osama things are getting worse. His followers are provoked and they want to get even. We might see a very devastating scenario because on the one hand US is motivated to kill the key leaders and on the other hand al

Qaeda core and its affiliates want to retaliate forcefully. Although it won't be long term situation because the leader (bin laden) who controlled and operated this organization is no more there to unite them and to provide them with funds. Their two key leaders have already been arrested (Muhammad Ali Qasim and Sohaib Al Makki). This is leading to Al Qaeda disintegration and slowly and gradually we would see this organization collapsing.

On the other hand, Pakistan is up for difficult times ahead. The ramifications of Osama bin laden's death on Pakistani soil are immense and will manifest themselves soon. The Western media is hurling accusations at Pakistan left, right and centre, while the Pakistani media and analysts are in acute shock at this embarrassment. The media is flailing to get plausible answers as to what happened and why, while the government top brass behave with nonchalance.

What is needed at this point of time is that the US should take the countries of the region like Pakistan into full confidence on the WOT and all day to day progress in Afghanistan, for two major reasons i.e. First of all, it is a country which shares 2400 km border with Afghanistan and any settlement in Afghanistan will directly affect Pakistan therefore, leaving Pakistan in isolation and mistrust would mean leaving room to destabilize the region. Secondly, Pakistan has long suspected the presence of 21 Indian consulates on the western side of the Pak-Afghan border. Therefore, the US should also take concrete steps to satisfy Pakistan that in the event of a pullout from Afghanistan the US would balance the stakes of Pakistan against India in the country.

And finally, the last thing which US needs to do in Afghanistan before implementing a pullout plan is to harness the anti-Pakistan elements within the Afghan Government because not doing so will be one and the same to leaving Pakistan free to get the job done by its own means, which will be acceptable neither to India nor to Afghanistan. Resultantly, any action, overt or covert, by Pakistan in its national interest in Afghanistan would aggravate the precarious security situation in the region. This will be very beneficial for the Al-Qaeda and very harmful to the cause of the War on Terror.

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Syed Hussain Shaheed & Shahid Ali **Operation Geronimo: Assassination**

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