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Nailing Osama Bin Laden: Was it a military or a media operation? Why now?

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The tip on bin Laden's whereabouts came in back in 2010. You have to assume the house was under surveillance. If they thought they "bagged him" they would be watching closely and choosing the right time to deep six the target (I actually wrote this lead paragraph sentence before reading this "Breaking News" from the Washington Post: "CIA had secret outpost in Abbottabad").

> "The CIA maintained a safe house in the Pakistani city of Abbottabad for a small team of spies who conducted extensive surveillance over a period of months on the compound where Osama Bin Laden was killed by U.S. special operations forces this week (U.S. officials)."

Both Afghan agents and Pakistani intelligence now say they told the US about the house as early as 2001.

So, they knew he was there. That was a reason drones weren't used.

The CIA wanted a more controlled high profile and dramatic intervention for public consumption, for what, in the end, was a marketing campaign— marketing the centrality of the agency's role in a war whose main audience is not on the battlefield, but in the homeland.

They needed a heroic narrative to revive support for a war they have been losing, and a scalp to sell to a conflict-weary and disillusioned population. It is no surprise that the Seals labeled UBL "Geronimo" reviving memories of fighting guerilla-style Indian wars. Muslim renegades are apparently our new "savages."

The Native Americans took their enemy's head and hair—Donald Trump, beware; we shoot out their eyes and waterboard their brains.

The target was not "the terror mastermind" but the American people. It was an exercise in political mobilization and perception management. It was the ultimate media operation, relying on many of the tactics used in Iraq that I document in my film "WMD: Weapons of Mass Deception."

We are as conscious about what we say as what we do, we always fashion a propaganda storyline demonizing the enemy who is often compared to Hitler. Bin Laden lived in a "million dollar mansion" (It cost $48,000 to buy six years ago). He was heavily armed (he wasn't). He hid behind female human shields (he didn't). Who cares about facts… this was a

TV orchestrated event. The Daily Mail in London complained that their raising questions led to being derided as "cheese eating surrender monkeys."

They could have captured him, but that would lead to the hassle of putting him on trial. Besides, what if he revealed his long connection with the CIA and US officials? Can't have that. So the kill order was given, along with a quick disposal of the body, mafia-style (as in "sleeping with the fishes)."

The legal justification was self-defense, an argument that any government can use to dispatch its enemies.

Why was it done, and why now?

It was certainly not because Al-Qaeda is ascendant. Our experts believe only 100 of them remain in Afghanistan, where their capacity has been diminished. Remember: Al-Qaeda is not a centralized top-down machine but a decentralized and sophisticated network.

We can only surmise all the factors, but the larger context here has fallen away with the focus on the narrowness of the dirty details, many calculated to inspire enthusiasm for the bravery and heroism of the death squad, but not any reflection of the strategy and larger context of the events.

Even as the cover stories about what happened fell away into the foggy soup of covert action and its contradictions, it devolved into to a case of excuses about haste– 'he said that but didn't mean it'. Even as the raid inspires mass euphoria and self-righteous blood lust, the full meaning of it is missing in a media that is much better at the how than the why.

First of all, this operation reflected the reorganization of the national security state with the CIA taking over from the soldiers. This operation was Leon Panetta's last hurrah as Spook-in Chief before he uses his covert ops portfolio to takeover the Pentagon.

Second, that most hyped soldier's soldier, Generalissimo David Petraeus, who has failed to end the insurgency in Afghanistan (and who is now warring on Pakistan) is being moved into Panetta's job. A Navy Seal Commander has now been promoted to the Central Command.

The bottom line: public accountability and open disclosure has become a thing of the past. No wonder the ongoing campaign to 'get Wikileaks' before it exposes more secrets.

As the military privatizes wars, and, in effect, goes underground, there is a recognition that, despite the size of our forces and the power of our technology, we have, in effect, been losing to peasants with suicide belts and unconventional tactics we continually underestimate.

Writes former Assistant Treasury Secretary Paul Craig Roberts, "Americans are too busy celebrating to think, a capability that seems to have been taken out of their education.

"Americans are so enthralled over the death of bin Laden that they do not wonder why information gleamed years ago would take so long to locate a person who was allegedly living in a million-dollar building equipped with all the latest communication equipment next to the Pakistani Military Academy. Allegedly, the "most wanted criminal" was not moving from hide-out to hide-out in desolate mountains, but ensconced in luxury quarters in broad

daylight. Nevertheless, despite his obvious location, it took the CIA years to find him after claiming to have gained information of his whereabouts out of captives in secret prisons. This is the image of the CIA as the new Keystone Cops."

Like the Canadian Mounties, in the end, Navy Seal Unit 6, armed with lethal weapons and an attack dog, got their man—with not inconsiderable collateral damage — in what the New York Times called an "extremely one-sided encounter."

It was, let's admit, a liquidation, right out of the KGB playbook.

Politically— and yes, there was a political agenda here too: the bin Laden operation was part of a chain of calculated presidential promoting exercises including the announcement of his re-election campaign and massive fund-raising effort, his deals with the Repugs on the budget, the release of his birth certificate, his interview with Oprah, his shakeup of sorts of the Pentagon, his bringing the CEO of GE and William Daley into the White House, on and on.

The "new" Obama wants to be seen as a warrior, not a wuss, as long as he is not forced to go after Wall Street. Right now, his victory is viewed widely for what it is; vengeance. Or in the words of the street, "payback."

Nailing Bin-Laden has to be seen in the context of his Spring offensive grounded in symbolic advances, to get his poll numbers up and his campaign rolling, to make him look invincible, and to "triangulate," by moving to the center and pre-empting/co-opting the right. He now has Bush and Cheney praising him.

Concludes Roberts, "Obama needed closure of the Afghan war and occupation in order to deal with the US budget deficit. Subsequent statements from Obama regime officials suggest that the agenda might be to give Americans a piece of war victory in order to boost their lagging enthusiasm. The military/security complex will become richer and more powerful, and Americans will be rewarded with vicarious pleasure in victory over enemies."

> Adds Tom Engelhardt, "Consider it an insult to irony, but the world bin Laden really changed forever wasn't in the Greater Middle East. It was here. Cheer his death, bury him at sea, don't release any photos, and he'll still carry on as a ghost as long as Washington continues to fight its deadly, disastrous wars in his old neighborhood."

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Read about Osama Bin Laden in Michel Chossudovsky's international best-seller

According to Chossudovsky, the "war on terrorism" is a complete fabrication based on the illusion that one man, Osama bin Laden, outwitted the $40 billion-a-year American intelligence apparatus. The "war on terrorism" is a war of conquest. Globalisation is the final march to the "New World Order", dominated by Wall Street and the U.S. military-industrial complex.

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America's "War on Terrorism"

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