

The U.S. Attack “against Al Qaeda” In Yemen, “They Killed Anyone in Sight”

By [Moon of Alabama](#)

Global Research, February 03, 2017

[Moon of Alabama](#) 2 February 2017

Region: [Middle East & North Africa, USA](#)

Theme: [Terrorism, US NATO War Agenda](#)

The [Fake Outrage About Trump](#) piece included a part on a U.S. special force attack in Yemen that had happened just hours before:

The rural home of a tribal leader’s family, friendly with some Yemeni al-Qaeda members, was raided by a special operations commando. A U.S. tiltrotor military aircraft was shot down during the raid. One soldier was killed and several were wounded. The U.S. commandos responded with their usual panic. They killed anyone in sight and bombed the shit out of any nearby structure. [According to Yemeni sources](#) between 30 and 57 Yemenis were killed including eight women and [eight children](#) (graphic pics). The U.S. military claimed, as it always does, that no civilians were hurt in the raid.

One of the killed kids was the 8 year old daughter of al-Qaeda propagandist Anwar al-Awlaki.

That early description holds up well against recent reporting by [NBC](#), the [Washington Post](#) and the [New York Times](#). The incident happened as described.

But an open question is still why the raid happen. The military and the administration claim it was to get intelligence, laptops, hard-drives and the like. But that is not a good explanation for an elaborate raid that needed lots of resources and backup. We had noted that “Yemeni sources say that at least two men were abducted by the U.S. military.” The U.S. Central Command [claims](#) that no prisoners were taken only intelligence material. But a few days ago it also claimed that no civilians were hurt which it now admits indeed happened. My gut tells me that we will hear more on this issue.

There are also some weir conspiracy theories around the raid.

Marcy Wheeler aka Emptywheel headlined: [Trump Fulfills Another Campaign Promise: Kills 8-Year Old American Girl](#) and asked “Was that the point?”

That is crazy and impossible theory. Trump had been in office for less than ten days. The “raid” included SEAL Team 6 forces, UAE special forces, attack helicopters, U.S. Marine MV-22 tiltrotor planes, various drones and intelligence assets, a ship off the coast that launched Harrier jets and who knows what else. An organization like the U.S. military can not possibly vet, arrange and coordinated such a collection of different units and assets without several weeks of intense preparations. It is impossible that Trump ordered this raid up within very few days and just to kill some girl. Also – the military hierarchy would have very likely rejected such an order.

One can file Marcy's piece next to the dissection about the [Liberals On the Edge of a Nervous Breakdown](#). Note: A loudmouth ruling in the White House does not make the sky fall down.

Another crazy piece was [published](#) by Reuters today:

U.S. military officials told Reuters that Trump approved his first covert counterterrorism operation without sufficient intelligence, ground support or adequate backup preparations. As a result, three officials said, the attacking SEAL team found itself dropping onto a reinforced al Qaeda base defended by landmines, snipers, and a larger than expected contingent of heavily armed Islamist extremists.

One wonders who these three "U.S. military officials" are who try to back-stab Trump and his advisors. The raiders surely had prior and current intelligence, they surely had enough forces on the ground and in the air. Lots of backup actually did come in when needed.

The "three military officials" are also lying about the "reinforced al-Qaeda base". The pictures show a few normal houses in a small tribal village. All reports from Yemen speak of a few local families of which men were hired by the Saudis as anti-Houthi fighters. Such may at times align with local al-Qaeda groups who are also supported by the Saudis but that does not make them al-Qaeda terrorists.

The attack in Yemen must have been planned for months under the Obama administration for reason we likely do not yet know. It was then delayed and handed over "ready to go" to the Trump administration. That was my [best guess](#) days ago and it is also what the NYT now reports:

[O]ver dinner with his newly installed secretary of defense and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, President Trump was presented with the first of what will be many life-or-death decisions [...] Vice President Mike Pence and Michael T. Flynn, the national security adviser, also attended the dinner.

...
Mr. Obama did not act because the Pentagon wanted to launch the attack on a moonless night and the next one would come after his term had ended.

...
[M]onths of detailed planning that went into the operation during the Obama administration [...] the Defense Department had conducted a legal review of the operation that Mr. Trump approved and that a Pentagon lawyer had signed off on it.

The "U.S. military officials" Reuters quotes must know this. Why do they try to plant their false story and thereby blame not only Trump but also Mattis, Dunford and Flynn – (former) generals who agreed on the mission? Is there some nonsense ongoing like an amateurish "military coup" attempt against Trump that Rosa Books [fantasizes](#) about?

The military attack in Yemen was a bad idea. Killing some local Yemenis who work the U.S. "ally" Saudi Arabia for what? To be hated by their families, clansmen and tribal allies for the next decades?

Then there is the operational failure. According to the NYT and others the SEALs were detected early on, recognized they had been detected and still proceeded. The surprise

effect was gone and they ran into an ambush. The operation should have been stopped as soon as they noticed that it was not going as planned. They screwed up just as their command screwed up – up to the strategic level of Obama and Trump.

Just think about the background fight between the local “allies” in the war on Yemen. From my [comment](#) at Mary’s site:

Take the bigger view. The Saudis want a united Yemen under their full control. The UAE (while said to be allied with Saudis) supports the southern separation movement in Yemen. Dubai Port (DPWorld) wants exclusive rights to Aden and the south Yemeni oil terminals. (These to avoid the strategic problems of the street of Hormuz passages.) After UAE forces took Aden they were attacked by Saudi supported al-Qaeda (and ISIS) groups. The U.S. military supports the UAE in this family strife because it dislikes the Saudi support for al-Qaeda.

The U.S./UAE hit against that “al-Qaeda aligned” Saudi mercenary gang was as much against the Saudis themselves as it was against al-Qaeda.

Unless there is a really big secret about it yet to unveil, the raid was planned and done for little effect and more out of (Obama typical) pettiness than out of sound strategic necessity. That Trump agree to it was a stupid mistake he by now probably regrets.

That all can and should be criticized. But that does not require unfounded conspiracy theories about some spontaneous raid Trump ordered out of malice or incompetence.

There are plenty of reasons to attack him for what he does. Inventing “bad Trump” stories will only help him along.

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