

US drone targets key Qaeda figure in Yemen



AFP, Aden

US-Yemeni cleric and terror suspect Anwar al-Awlaki escaped unhurt from a US drone attack which killed two local al-Qaeda members in restive southern Yemen, a tribal source told AFP yesterday.

A US drone targeted Awlaki's car had on Thursday at Abadan in Shabwa province, where al-Qaeda is well entrenched, the source from Awlaki's tribe said.

He said Awlaki was travelling with a Saudi al-Qaeda member and that both were unhurt, but their car was "slightly damaged."

"Their car had minor damage, but they were able to proceed in another car," said the source who is linked to the local administration in the region where Awlaki's tribe has considerable influence.

The drone attack hit another car in which two local Qaeda members, both brothers, were travelling. It killed them and wounded a third.

The attempt on Awlaki came three days after US forces killed al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden.

Obama's counterterrorism chief, Michael Leiter, has said al-Awlaki posed a bigger threat to the US homeland than bin Laden did.

But al-Awlaki is considered a long shot to replace bin Laden as leader of al-Qaeda, according to CNN terrorism analyst Paul Cruickshank.

'We have cut off their head and will defeat them'

Mission 'well done,' Obama tells troops

AFP, Fort Campbell

"We have cut off their head and we will ultimately defeat them," Obama said, at the Fort Campbell army base in Kentucky.

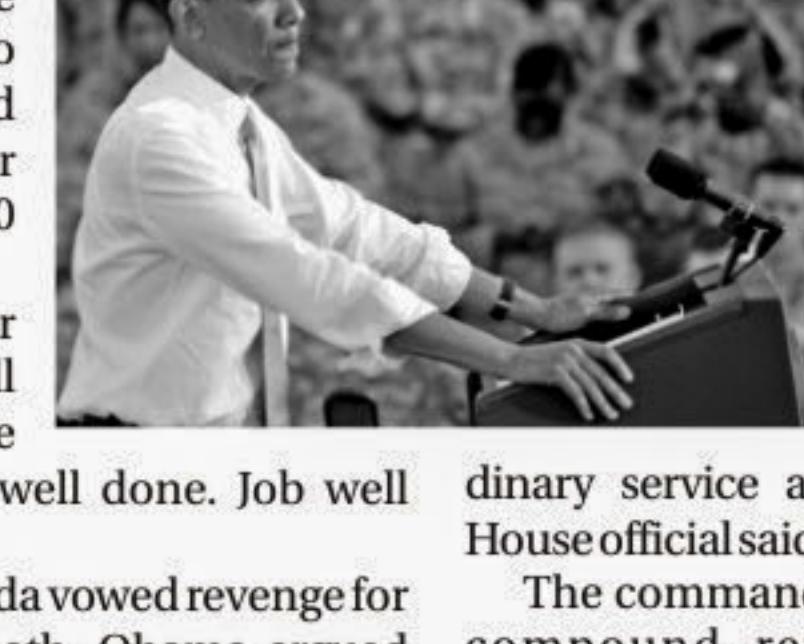
Obama marvelled at the bravery of the bin Laden assault force.

"When I gave the order, they were ready. And in recent days the whole world has learned just how ready they were."

"These Americans deserve credit for one of the greatest intelligence and military operations in our nation's history."

Obama handed out Presidential Unit Citations -- the highest such honor that can be given to a unit -- "in recognition of their extraordinary service and achievement," a White House official said on condition of anonymity.

The commandos who swooped in on the compound reportedly came from a renowned squad known as "Team Six," an elite unit drawn from the already elite ranks of the SEALs.



It was a chance for me to say on behalf of all Americans and people around the world, job well done. Job well done," Obama said.

On a day when al-Qaeda vowed revenge for its founding leader's death, Obama argued that the mission showed his policies in the long war in Afghanistan were working, and vowed ultimate victory over the terror group.

NEWS IN brief

Blast, gun attacks kill seven in Thai south

AFP, Yala

Seven people were killed and 16 wounded in a string of attacks across Thailand's far south that included two roadside bombs detonating within minutes of each other yesterday, police said.

The first blast hit a military patrol vehicle on a village road in Yala. A second device, buried in the car park of a football field in Pattani province, killed three police officers and wounded 14 others.

In a separate attack, four gunmen riding motorbikes shot dead a 45-year-old Muslim man as he drove his car

China archaeologists uncover more Great Wall ruins

AFP, Beijing

Chinese archaeologists have uncovered previously unknown Great Wall ruins in a mountainous area in northeast China, state media reported Saturday.

The bricks and stones that once formed a section of the wall were found in mountains in Suizhong County in Liaoning province, the official Xinhua news agency said, citing a report by provincial relics and mapping

Britain decisively rejects voting change

AFP, London

Britons have voted by a majority of 67.9 percent to 32.1 percent against making historic changes to the electoral system, final results from a referendum showed yesterday.

With all the results in from Thursday's referendum, there were 13,013,123 votes against changing the current first-past-the-post system to elect lawmakers at

Troops kill two students south of Yemeni capital

AFP, Sanaa

Troops opened fire to break up a Yemeni student demonstration yesterday killed two students and wounded 15 others, a protest organiser told AFP.

Hundreds were taking part in the protest at Al-Maaf, a village in Taiz province, some 200 kilometres south of the capital Sanaa, when security forces fired live bullets

Bin Laden directing al-Qaeda figures

Seized documents reveal facts about operations

AP, Washington

The wealth of information pulled from Osama bin Laden's compound has reinforced the belief that he played a strong role in planning and directing attacks by al-Qaeda and its affiliates in Yemen and Somalia, senior US officials said Friday.

And the data further demonstrates to the US that top al-Qaeda commanders and other key insurgents are scattered throughout Pakistan, not just in the rugged border areas, and are being supported and given sanctuary by Pakistanis, a senior defence official said.

US counterterrorism officials have debated how big a role bin Laden and core al-Qaeda leaders were playing in the attacks launched by affiliated terror groups, particularly al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, which is based in Yemen, and al-Shabab in Somalia.

Information gathered in the compound, officials said, strengthened beliefs that bin Laden was a lot more involved in directing al-Qaeda personnel and operations than some-

times thought over the last decade. And it suggests bin Laden was "giving strategic direction" to al-Qaeda affiliates in Somalia and Yemen, the defence official said.

Bin Laden's first priority, the official said, was his own security. But the data shows that he was far more active in providing guidance and telling affiliated groups in Yemen and Somalia what they should or should not be doing.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive material.

The American public, meanwhile, will get a peek at bin Laden's life inside the secret compound in Abbottabad today, according to US officials, speaking on condition of anonymity because the data has not yet been released.

Officials say they have already learned a lot from bin Laden's cache of computers and data, but they would not confirm reports that it yielded clues to the whereabouts of al-Qaeda deputy Ayman al-Zawahri.

Officials say the handwritten notes and computer material are being scoured for intelligence that could help track down new targets.

Al-Qaeda chief's death 'game changer'

AFP, Washington

US Defence Secretary Robert Gates said Friday the death of Osama bin Laden could be a "game-changer" for the US-led war effort in Afghanistan.

Gates said it was too soon to say for certain what the effect of the raid might be on the nine-year-old war in Afghanistan.

"I think in terms of the impact of the killing of Osama bin Laden, in terms of the situation in Afghanistan, I think that there is a possibility that it could be a game changer," Gates told service members at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in North Carolina.

The Pentagon chief suggested the killing of Bin Laden could aggravate tensions between the Taliban insurgency, which includes spiritual leader Mullah Omar, and al-Qaeda.

Former Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf has slammed the United States for violating Islamabad's sovereignty in carrying out the raid that killed Osama bin Laden, a media report said yesterday.

The former military strongman told the expatriate Pakistani community in Dubai that all "peace loving people" should be happy that bin Laden was killed, but no Pakistani accepted the violation of their sovereignty.

However, Musharraf insisted that Pakistan and the US must work together to eliminate terrorism.

Musharraf said he did not believe that Pakistani government or military officials had knowledge of bin Laden's presence or were harbouring him.

"It is not unusual for blunders to occur," he said. "Look at 9/11 - unfortunately those attacks did happen, so where was their [US] intelligence then?"

In an interview with the National Public Radio in the US, Musharraf had on Friday blamed incompetence by his country's intelligence agencies for allowing Al-Qaeda leader to live undetected in Pakistan for years.

"One can draw only two conclusions," Musharraf told NPR. "One is complicity from our intelligence agencies. The second is incompetence and I strongly believe in the latter," Musharraf said.

"I cannot imagine that there was complicity."

LADEN KILLING AFTERMATH

Al-Qaeda to release Laden's last tape message

PTI, Dubai

Al-Qaeda has promised to "soon" release its slain chief Osama bin Laden's final audio message, which was recorded a week before his killing by the US special forces in Pakistan's garrison city of Abbottabad.

In a four-page statement, the terror group said bin Laden recorded the audio message a week before his death which will be released "soon", according to the

US eyed strike in 2007: Rice

AFP, Washington

The United States drew up a plan to kill Osama bin Laden in 2007 in Afghanistan's Tora Bora region, former secretary of state Condoleezza Rice said Friday, confirming a New York Times report.

The administration of George W Bush considered bombing a meeting of al-Qaeda leaders during the summer of 2007, in what would be the last chance to kill bin Laden before the 2008 presidential election, the Times reported.

Rice, in an interview with ABC News to be broadcast Sunday, confirmed the information.



Laden lived longer in Pak urban areas than thought

AFP, Washington

Pakistani investigators involved in piecing together Bin Laden's life during the past nine years said this week that he had been living in Pakistan's urban centres longer than previously believed, "The New York Times" said.

Two Pakistani officials say that bin Laden's Yemeni wife, one of three wives now in Pakistani custody, told investigators that before moving in 2005 to the mansion in Abbottabad, bin Laden had lived with his family for nearly two and a half years in a small village, Chak Shah Mohammad.

One of the officials said this means that bin Laden left Pakistan's rugged tribal region sometime in 2003.

Pakistan's ex-FM urges resignations

AP, Islamabad

Pakistan's former foreign minister called on the country's president and prime minister to resign yesterday following the American raid that killed Osama bin Laden, one of the highest-profile calls so far for senior officials to be held accountable.

Some Pakistanis have focused their anger on the country's powerful army and intelligence chiefs. But former Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Yousaf Raza

Pakistan arrests 25 suspects

PTI, Islamabad

Pakistani intelligence and security agencies have conducted a sweep in the garrison city of Abbottabad, where al-Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden was killed in a US raid on Monday, and arrested at least 25 suspects.

The search operation was conducted to deal with the potential consequences of the US military operation in Abbottabad, the channel said.

A local politician claimed the security forces had rounded up "hundreds of people" during the search operation.

There was no official word on the number of arrests.

Before the search was launched, members of the media were "driven out of the city," Arab News reported.

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Musharraf slams US over bin Laden raid

AFP, Dubai

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Britain's colonial past to be revealed

Secret papers are set to be made public for the first time

BBC Online

A collection of sensitive documents from Britain's colonial past are to be made public through the National Archives for the first time.

The files were sent to the UK from various former territories, mostly at the time they achieved independence.

The documents emerged when four Mau Mau veterans sued the UK, saying they were tortured by Kenyan colonial government in the 1950s.

The British government says it cannot be held responsible.

It wants the claim thrown out by the High Court.

Foreign Secretary William Hague said the Foreign Office only became aware of the significance of the files in January because of research linked to the court case.

'ENORMOUS SIGNIFICANCE'

He said: "I believe that it is the right thing to do for the information in these files now to be properly examined and



recorded and made available to the public.

"It is my intention to release every part of every paper of interest, subject only to legal exemptions."

Hague said the job of making the papers public would be done "rapidly", but that it might take some time to complete because of the size of the archive.

David Anderson, professor of African politics at Oxford University, told the BBC the files were of "enormous significance".

He said: "These are a set of selected documents withheld for their sensitivity.

ity. We will learn things the British government of the time didn't want us to know."

"They are likely to change our view of some key places", he said. "It will clarify the last days of Empire in ways that will be shocking for some people in Britain."

REBELLION

The Foreign Office says officials have briefed the governments of those former British territories which might be affected.

The four Kenyans suing the UK say they were assaulted between 1952 and 1961 by British colonial officers in detention camps during the Mau Mau rebellion.

Britain says it cannot be held responsible for the actions of a colonial government.

The Kenya Human Rights Commission has said 90,000 Kenyans were executed, tortured or maimed during the crackdown, and 160,000 were detained in appalling conditions.

Gaddafi forces shell Misrata fuel depots, drop mines

Tribal chiefs urge amnesty to all fighters

AFP, Benghazi