

Scenario 86

US-OSAMA BIN LADEN OPERATION-II:

Killing of Osama Bin Laden [OBL] by the American troops on 2nd May 2011 in Abbotabad triggered a debate in Pakistan and abroad, especially amongst the Americans themselves, that what actual benefits were brewed out of that humiliated operation. There were questions like:

- Osama was in fact not there, he had been killed seven times before; as per Western claims.
- If alive, Osama was not active at all; he was hiding himself since 2005 in Abbotabad.
- Osama had no wireless or electronic communication link with the outer world then how he could influence the war like situations on Afghan soils.
- Al Qaeda, once known as CIA's brainchild, was [perhaps] practically non-operational at least in Afghanistan. Afghan Taliban was a different entity.
- The US has been striving to control this region in the name of '***Al Qaeda eradication***' whereas the Afghan Taliban were fighting to get their homeland free from all foreign forces whether they were Al Qaeda or Americans or NATO or Russians of the past.

In addition to the details given in the previous chapter, the first question was immediately answered by the White House. The US intelligence knew about Osama's presence in Abbotabad since August 2010 but they decided not to share the information with anyone, including their allies such as Pakistan, Britain, Canada and Australia. By mid-February 2011, the officials were convinced that a "high-value target" was hiding in the given compound. President Obama wanted to take action.

WHO ENCASHED OBL'S NAME THEN:

Another question arises; where the Al Qaeda was based or centred then and who used to float orders in the name of Osama Bin Laden.

Referring to **John Rollins**, Coordinator US National Security [**Osama bin Laden's Death: Implications and Considerations** dated 5th May 2011] appearing in Congressional Research Service Papers, a cogent policy question was placed before the Congress:

'Did the operation necessarily constitute a cover action? Could it have been considered a traditional military activity? Was the role of the CIA Director essential to carrying out the operations? Could it have been carried out by the Secretary of Defence? Other than the role of Director Panetta what was the contribution of CIA officials to carrying out the raid?'

It may not be out of place to mention that shortly after the attacks of 9/11 of 2001, Congress had passed the Authorization to Use Military Force (AUMF: PL 107 - 40), which authorized the President:

'... to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harboured such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons.'

In this back-drop, one should also ponder upon an article published in the ***Washington Post*** dated 2nd May 2011, in which the writer, Pakistan's President Zardari had said that:

'... [Although] the events...were not a joint operation, a decade of cooperation and partnership between the United States and Pakistan led up to the elimination of Osama bin Laden as a continuing threat to the civilized world.

And we in Pakistan take some satisfaction that our early assistance in identifying an al-Qaeda courier ultimately led to this day.'

[One can contemplate that how Mr Zardari's article reached the press & editorial staff of the '*Washington Post*' of 2nd May 2011; till then the Operation Geronimo had hardly finished; hats off to Ispahanis & Haqqanis and alikes sitting abroad.]

The last sentence above should be enough to solve the dilemma of ever prevailing question in Pakistani media that ***'whether the Pak-Army or the government knew about Osama's living in Abbotabad or not'***. Evidence of knowing by the army was not needed because the above sentence in Mr Zardari's essay had made it clear that ***'the government knew about the operation, may not be sure of time'***; they were able to identify the Osama's courier through the IB perhaps.

Pakistan's Foreign Office press release of 2nd May 2011 endorsed the international resolve saying that: *'Al Qaeda had declared war on Pakistan and OBL's killing illustrates the resolve of the international community including Pakistan to fight and eliminate terrorism and constitutes a major setback to terrorist organizations around the world'*.

Another question was echoed then that whether killing Osama in a foreign sovereign state was legal by American Law. It was answered by the US government immediately after; saying that:

'Although US employees are generally barred from engaging in 'political assassinations' abroad but US policymakers do not apply this prohibition to the targeting of an enemy's command and control structure during periods of armed conflict'. [**CRS Report RL 31133 & 'Declarations of War and Authorizations for the Use of Military Force'** by Jennifer K. Elsea and Richard F. Grimmett pp 35-36 are referred]

Earlier, Jeffrey Toobin in his essay *'Killing Osama: Was It Legal?'* published in ***'New Yorker'*** of 2nd May 2011 had also pointed towards the same principle saying *'that the prohibition on political assassinations did not apply to bin Laden or other belligerents in the conflict with Al Qaeda.'*

One should also keep in mind that the power to terminate the military conflict with Al Qaeda reside exclusively with the political branches of government. The American Supreme Court had recognized it decades ago that the termination of a military conflict is a ***'political act'*** and it historically refused to review the political branches' determinations of when a conflict had officially ended. [***Ludecke v. Watkins, 335 US 168-169 (1948) & Baker v. Carr, 369 US 213-214 (1962)*** are referred to in this context]

PAKISTAN NOT ASKED TO JOIN GERONIMO:

Referring to a briefing to the American Congress through ***'CRS Report no: 7-5700 [R41809]'*** dated 5th May 2011, the White House's notes revealed that the said operation was carried out by US Navy SEALs from the US Special Operations Command. It also suggested that the military operation to kill Osama was commanded by the CIA as opposed to the more traditional military chain of command. It was not unprecedented but considered unusual. However, as that arrangement went highly successful and problem-free, the CIA / military command interactions were allowed for similar operations in future.

Why Pakistan, ten years old ally, was not asked to share the said operation. The answer lies in the fact that in 2010, Pakistan started taking a more aggressive approach in peace nego-

tiations and potential reconciliation in Afghanistan. Certain Taliban figures in Pakistan who were pursuing reconciliation with the Karzai government were arrested. Some issues also developed for Pak-Army's purported protection of the hard liner Jalaluddin Haqqani in North Waziristan. Whether there was some truth in it or not but it certainly played a role in widening gulf between the two giant intelligence agencies, CIA and the ISI.

[Subsequently Gen Pasha, the then DG ISI, confirmed Pak-Army's relations with Haqqani group in his statement before the Abbotabad Commission.]

On 1st May 2011 [US time, in Pakistan it was 2nd May], a senior White House Official told the media that:

'OBL was relatively affluent with lots of retired military. The structure of the property [Osama's residence], valued at some \$1 million, was roughly eight times larger than surrounding homes. Intelligence analysts concluded that this compound was custom built to hide someone of significance.

OBL's whereabouts led to immediate questioning of Pakistan's role and potential complicity in his refuge; we are "very concerned" about it.'

The '**Foreign Policy**' magazine on **2nd May 2011** held that:

'Their worst suspicions confirmed by the fact that Osama bin Laden lived in a large, well protected compound right under the Pakistani military's nose. Either Pakistan's intelligence service is terribly incompetent, fatally compromised, or both, raising questions about its utility as a partner.'

Despite the above given tall statements, the leading US counter-terrorism advisor John Brennan had stated the same day that **'there is no evidence Pakistani officials knew of OBL's whereabouts.'**

With the Osama Killing Operation at Abbotabad, the Americans at once turned their eyes and started counting dollars they gave to Gen Musharraf in the name of War on Terror (WOT). In post 9/11 era, the Congress [as per their claim] had appropriated about \$20 billion in foreign assistance and military 'reimbursements' for Pakistan, placing the country among the top recipients of US financial support over the past decade.

For FYs 2002-10, the US appropriated about \$4.43 billion in security assistance, \$6.22 billion in economic & humanitarian assistance and \$8.88 billion in Coalition Support Fund (reimbursements) for its operational and logistical support of US-led military operations. Nearly \$3 billion assistance under 'development' in Pakistan for FY2012 along with about \$1 billion under 'reimbursements' to the Pak-Army was also on cards.

After Osama's trace-out, many in Congress started questioning the usefulness of that aid to Pakistan; which sharpened with the early 2011 Raymond Davis affair.

On 3rd May 2011, just the next day Osama was eliminated; the Pakistan Foreign Aid Accountability Act (PFAAA) was introduced in the House; designated to prohibit future foreign assistance to Pakistan unless the Secretary of State certifies that the Pakistani government was not complicit in hiding OBL. The fact remained that funding flows were already hindered by US concerns about corruption and lack of transparency in Pakistan.

The Pak-Army and the intelligence services remained under pressure to answer the above questions of incompetence or complicity; the dynamics provided the Americans an effective leverage to twist Pakistan. Islamabad had to show a stiffened stand expressing their concerns by saying 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 US. Such actions undermine cooperation and may also sometime constitute threat to international peace and security.'

Despite the anger and anti-American sentiments amongst general masses in Pakistan, the tone and tenor of Pakistani media did not show any sympathy with Osama; taking him as a foreigner. Some high-profile critics demanded end of US presence in the region but even those did not exhibit any sympathy for Osama. Contrarily, only two notable rallies were seen next day mourning Osama's death [in Quetta and Karachi], comprised of about one thousand participants each, but mainly divulging their Anti-American emotions.

Leaving aside the possible reaction from the so called 'affiliate' groups of Al Qaeda on Osama's killing, the Afghan government's official stand was notable while they held that '*Pakistan's security services should have known about Osama's whereabouts.*' President Karzai had claimed that:

'Osama's killing inside Pakistan vindicated his government's opposition to increased US military operations in Afghanistan; the WOT should be focussed on the safe havens of terrorism outside Afghanistan. Osama's death should provide justification for a "premature" US disengagement from the region.' [**The guardian' dated 3rd May 2011 is referred**]

Pakistan had also seen a high wave of revengeful attacks from Al Qaeda affiliates like 'Pakistani Taliban (TTP)', experiencing a steep rise in domestic terrorist attacks over government and military installations.

WHY US DID NOT QUIT THE REGION then; was a cogent question.

Another big question: Pondering at President **Obama's speech** on Afghan policy at West Point **on 1st December 2009**, in which 'mission in Afghanistan' was defined as follows:

'Our overarching goal [in this Asian region] remains the same: to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat Al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and to prevent its capacity to threaten American and our allies in the future.'

With Osama's operation accomplished, the US forces could have been withdrawn from Afghanistan but NOT [till immediate after there was no such announcement]. Fresh arguments were developed that '*Al Qaeda's network of operatives and supporters in Afghanistan has gone more robust, though their nominal leader is lost.*' The 99,000 US troops in Afghanistan as such believed that Osama's death had brought minimal effect on the threat profile in Afghanistan; and that the US mission would be jeopardized by a rapid withdrawal.

US Defence Department's report dated 3rd May 2011 carried that '*... of these groups, Al Qaeda has been among the least materially significant to the fighting in Afghanistan, but may pose the greatest regional threat to the US and its allies.*'

[The fact remained that Director of Central Intelligence Leon Panetta had earlier said on 27th June 2010 that '*Al Qaeda fighters in Afghanistan itself might number 50-100.*'

ISAF officials said in October 2010 that '*Al Qaeda cells may be moving back into remote areas of Kunar and Nuristan provinces particularly in areas vacated by US-led forces.*'

Gen David Petraeus had said in April 2011 that '*the AQ presence in Afghanistan remains small at less than 100 or so.*']

But the last question arises then that why America needed to launch such offensive operation and why to plan killing Osama. Not so badly needed but the US only wanted to tell the world that '***other nation's sovereignty can be played with any moment, if they are weak; even though it was a compromised operation.***'

Beggars are given no choices, they had to die sooner or later even they are labelled as friends; think Pakistan.

PAK-ARMY'S BRIEFING OF 13TH MAY 2011:

A well played act of historical drama; see the details.

Those were extraordinary moments and it was an unprecedented day. 13th May 2011 will be remembered in the history of Pakistan when the three chiefs of armed forces presented their case in a joint session of the Parliament explaining their shortcomings regarding Osama's event in Abbotabad. PM Gilani was in haste [on 3rd May 2011] for making a pre-determined announcement that **'America has performed an uphill task and has done right'** without appreciating its repercussions ignoring the fact that Pakistan's sovereignty was interfered and country's image was washed out due to their under the table compromise with US.

On the Briefing Day, Federal Information Minister Firdaus Ashiq Awan, could not behave 'minister like' divulging her hatred for a respectable institution. Just a short while after the session started she came out of the Parliament's building and proudly told the media that **'DG ISI Mr pasha has SURRENDERED himself before the PM and Parliament'**.

It was not required to be so jubilant; it was not an occasion to use such derogatory word at all. There were other nice words available in the dictionary with parallel meanings but she did not act 'gracefully'. It was deliberate effort to shoot an impression in air that the general public had gone against 'the army'.

It was not the case and there was no truth in it; the Army as an institution had paid much price for some Generals; more than the people. The session's details indicated that people were more worried about PPP's sitting leadership than army.

Everyone could feel that Gen Ashfaq Kayani was from a different breed. He had the courage to come with proposal, solely his proposal, to call that parliamentary session for putting facts before them. In the last 63 years history, no General did so; not even after 1971's catastrophe.

Mistakes happen every where. Zardari and Gilani did not stand by Benazir Bhutto's pledge and words once uttered at confined CJ's residence that **'Justice Iftikhar M Chaudhry would be our Chief Justice'**; both the President and the PM declined to show wisdom and ultimately **'had to surrender'** before the lawyer's march on 16th March 2009.

It was also a mistake on the part of the PPP. The people ignored it though Justice Iftikhar M Chaudhry could not forget those humiliating moments that is why an unprecedented row between Presidency and judiciary was there. Mistakes happen, the people forget them, give chances to 'some' [but only if they are nationalists], this is democratic way.

ISI's Chief, Gen Ahmed Shuja Pasha also surfaced as an unlike class. He admitted his department's failure, offered his resignation to the COAS and then placed it before the Parliament. Nice gesture it was; very healthy signal but Pakistani politicians would learn something from it or not, let us wait for time. The people should have recalled the stern moments of about two months earlier when Gen Pasha travelled to Washington all the way to have a meeting with his counterpart CIA Chief but then travelled back just after 40 minute's stay there in the US.

What happened there in Washington? That was the starting point of 'going apart' between Pakistan and America. Gen Pasha could only tell his COAS that:

'There has been a strong disagreement between us, the two chiefs. I've not agreed with anything he suggested. I told him clearly that we are not under Obama.'

In the past, our Generals never dared to behave so with CIA Chiefs. Now think about Osama's episode at Abbotabad. It had to be there. A natural outcome of US frustration!

Coming back to the parliamentary session; DG ISI Gen Ahmed Shuja Pasha and DG MI explained the 2nd May's episode and admitted that they failed to keep track of Osama's presence in Abbotabad. The ignorance and guilt was openly confessed.

The Air Chief, when questioned by members, admitted that their radars were working as usual but as the Americans had used 'stealth' choppers in this operation, which could fly at very low level without making any noise or vibration, so their air system could not trace them in Pakistani air space. Pakistan was not yet equipped with latest type of radars to be effective in such situations. In sixty years history of Pakistan, it was the first occasion that the armed forces chiefs were attending a joint Parliamentary session and that too, to admit their guilt what ever it was.

When DG ISI placed his resignation before his Army Chief, unanimously the whole house said 'NO' except Ch Nisar Ali Khan of PML(N) and his handful colleagues who remained mum at that sentimental moment. The army officers remained in the house for more than five hours to answer all the questions relating to the aforesaid event (some were out of context also; it is Pakistan's history).

PML(N) alone asked 47 questions where one lady member tried to drag politics in the session by pointing out, in extra loud voice, that why **'you army people under the command of Gen Musharraf had ousted our beloved Nawaz Sharif'**. Purely it was a point scoring game trying to win her next ticket from PML(N) but asserting at the same time that *'army should shun playing in politics like in Gen Musharraf's era'*. No body gave attention to her.

Most widely asked question from COAS and the Air Chief was that why the drone attacks were not being checked. **During 2011 alone there were 228 deaths till that moment** and three attacks even after 2nd May event, and why so. Some members also indicated that the drone attacks were never checked despite the fact that *'this house had passed a joint unanimous resolution in 2008 that the drone attacks should be stopped with strength and use of force if needed'*.

Then the moment came that whole of the house went silent, mum and astonished when ***the army people told them that the resolution passed in 2008 by this Parliament was never forwarded to the GHQ for want of action.*** Either it did not come out of the Speaker's Office or the PM Gilani; the head of the executive never bothered to refer it to the GHQ or COAS for implementation.

On the same issue, the Air Chief Rao Suleman Qamar told the house that PAF got the technical equipment, will and know how of shooting the drones in the air but they were never ordered to do so. He again reiterated that even now they promise with the nation that ***'there would not be a single drone attack if there is political will'***.

[When the Air Chief said it loudly, the PM Gilani and the whole cabinet went pale and they pushed their heads into their knees, did not utter a single word and Air Chief's phrase kept on echoing in the house for many minutes.]

The Pakistani people knew that ***the drone attacks in FATA area***, then and since long, killing hundreds of innocent women and children, were being done with the approval and the ***connivance of Pakistan government.*** Wikileaks had rightly pointed out once that:

'There exists, may be unwritten, a pact between the two governments for continuing drone attacks, hue & cry would also be there in media and newspapers, but the America should never take these protests seriously.'

An MNA from FATA was seen launching a strong protest in this context pointing towards the PPP benches; a fact which was known by all then.

After this particular discussion, the COAS laid down the core announcement that ***'from today onwards, the army will take orders from the government, this Parliament and will not go beyond their given commandments'***.

It was the first ever policy statement from the GHQ to strengthen democracy in the country. It was made clear that to give policy directions for army would remain the prerogative of the

political government and army's duty would be to obey. The government was urged to tell the army that:

'How we have to take this war on terror and we'll achieve results. [The first step towards this direction was considered and held that] The government may make an independent commission for Abbotabad event and the required army officers will be there to answer when called'.

13th May 2011's joint Parliamentary session was an in-camera meeting in which only six guests were invited. Those were chief ministers of all the four provinces, one of AJK and one of Gilgit but they were not permitted to put any question. CM Punjab Shahbaz Sharif did not attend the session on the instance of his party decision. It was an in-camera session but certain members were seen periodically passing the minutes of on-going meeting to the outer world, of course to certain media men dear to them.

There came a moment when an MNA Ata ur Rehman from DI Khan, brother of Maulana Fazalur Rehman of JUI, started questioning and pleading the army that **'Osama was Shaheed (martyr)....'** Immediately DG ISI interrupted and told the house that:

'ISI got a full record with proof that you are being regularly paid by Saudi Arabia and Libya in the past and that you label Osama Bin Laden as Shaheed to get more dollars from them'.

There were roaring voices of 'shame, shame' from the whole house including opposition benches. Maulana Ata ur Rehman had no answer and he preferred to walk out in the wake of humiliation, disgrace, dishonour and sorrow but came back at his own after ten minutes. History will remember those uproarious but hysterical moments, too.

The atmosphere in the joint session remained tense most of the time. S M Zafar, Sh Waqas Akram and Waseem Sajjad succeeded in conveying to the house that *'it is a commendable occasion where historians can see coordination and understanding between the government, army and the people.'* PML(N) had succeeded in achieving that the inquiry committee would be chosen in consultation with the Leader of Opposition in which involvement of judges were also expected.

In the joint Parliamentary session, the best moment appeared when a 12 point unanimous resolution was passed. The salient features were:

- The government should revisit Pak-American relationship in the light of recent developments concerning Pakistan's sovereignty and putting country's interest first.
- If Abbotabad like attack would be repeated in Pakistan, the supply line of NATO and ESAF forces would be permanently blocked; the pact, if any, would stand nullified and facility withdrawn.
- Drone attacks would no more be tolerable. The practice would be discontinued.
- The people of Pakistan and government gave accent of full confidence over the armed forces and would stand behind them in all hours of need.
- Government promised to announce an independent inquiry commission to probe into the lapses of Abbotabad episode which would recommend steps to avoid such misery in future.
- The commission would be framed and announced by leaders of the House and Opposition both in consultancy and mutual agreement.
- The joint session affirmed their concerns over the behaviour of some enemy countries trying to defame Pakistan while nullifying their sacrifices in WOT.

A worrying flash was also seen on the faces of all parliamentarians when, replying a question: if PAF gives assurance that such lapse would not occur again; the Deputy Air Chief instantly nodded his head. He told the house that *'Pakistan does not have the latest radar technology in this regard so they would be helpless if such event occurs again.'*

The house murmured for a while and then asked the government to give immediate attention to the budgetary needs of PAF for their safe future.

At another occasion, when DG ISI conceded their departmental failure in grasping Osama's location in Pakistan since five years, one of the members asked the army team that if there was a likelihood of presence of Mulla Umar and Aiman Azzawahri in Pakistan; the officer told the house that *'the possibility cannot be ruled out.'* The Pakistani nation was united on 13th May 2011 once more but unsure of the next move.

American Senator John Kerry was there in Pakistan the very next week with a new agenda of carrots and stick with him. He was sent back empty handed. He was sent back with his chip of \$1.5 billion for current year considering it a peanut comparing with Pakistan's accumulative losses.

Senator Kerry had come to convey a threat that they would launch more attacks for Mulla Umar and Aiman Azzawahri if found in Pakistan but the army did not retaliate those threats. More heads were required to sit together to formulate a nationalistic way-out; no individual decision, neither from Presidency nor from the PM Secretariat alone; the world was told.

JUDICIAL COMMISSION ANNOUNCED:

After the joint Parliamentary session of 13th May 2011, the Pakistan government announced to engage Gen Iqbal with two more army officers to probe into the Abbottabad episode but the PML(N) rejected it out rightly demanding that a judicial commission should be formed. Obliging the opposition's demand when the government announced another commission, the PML(N) Chief Nawaz Sharif rejected it too in the last week of May 2011 on the pretext that they [PML(N)] were not formally consulted.

The 5-member commission announced by PM Gilani was headed by Justice Javed Iqbal, a senior sitting judge of the Supreme Court. Other members of the commission were Justice Fakhruddin G Ebrahim, Lt Gen (retd) Nadeem Ahmed, former police chief Abbas Khan and Ashraf Jahangir Qazi; Cabinet Secretary was designated as Secretary of the Commission.

The main terms of reference included:

- Thorough probe to ascertain facts regarding Osama's presence in Pakistan;
- To investigate the circumstances surrounding the US operation;
- To determine the nature, background and the security lapse on part of the authorities and;
- To make consequential recommendations.

There was an exhausted list of witnesses; just to satisfy the false ego of the Commission's members otherwise useless. To mention a few of them were Chairman CDA Islamabad, Wajid Shamsul Hasan [Pakistan's High Commissioner sitting in London], Sheikh Rashid, Secretary Foreign Affairs, Office bearers of Jama'at e Islami, Amir Haider Hoti [Chief Minister Khyber PK], Nawaz Sharif, Asfand Yar Wali, Imran Khan, Khawaja Asif, Interior Secretary Siddique Akbar, Chief Commissioner ICT Tariq Pirzada, IG Police Islamabad Bani Amin Khan, DG FIA Javed Iqbal, DG Passports Syed Wajid Ali, DG Foreign Affairs on America, Deputy DG Civil Aviation Authority, IG Police Punjab, Home Secretary Punjab, Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar, Defence Minister Ahmed Mukhtar, former ISI chiefs Gen (Retd) Ziauddin Butt and Lt Gen (Retd) Nadeem Taj, Brig (Retd) Ijaz Shah former DG (IB) and tens of media columnists, TV live program analysts, newspaper reporters including Dr Shireen Mazari, Nasim Zahra, Rahimullah Yusufzai, Saleem Bukhari, Fahad Hussain, Farrukh Saleem, Maria Sultan, Asif Ezdi and Saleem Safi etc etc.

Senior Air Traffic Controllers from Islamabad, Lahore, Chaklala and Chirat were called who briefed the Commission on the technical aspects of the whole air-traffic monitoring as well as radar system on ground. If believed that the US choppers flew from Jalalabad (Afghanistan), then only Peshawar air radar could have noticed them but Senior Traffic Controllers from four unconcerned stations were called [for what?] whereas Peshawar's Air Traffic Controller was not seen amongst them.

The intelligentsia were expecting that the Commission would call the decision maker officers from Army, PAF, Presidency, PM Secretariat, ISI, IB, DG MI, the communication officers of concerned offices, Abbottabad's local SHO, DSP, SSP, Special Branch's local officers, Bilal Colony's Wapda and Municipal officers and others but concerned to point out the lapses in national security. The Commission narrated the logic in calling the others like few mentioned above, that **'we called them to know the public opinion'** forgetting that the same was abundantly available in daily media reports then why wasting high official's time and money for extensive travelling and staying in Islamabad and making the whole nation fool.

Brig (rtd) Shaukat Qadir had rightly opined that:

*'With such high military and political stakes, many Pakistanis believe that the truth will remain as elusive as Bin Laden once was. **You have to ask the right questions to get the right answers.** I doubt this report will explain anything to anyone's satisfaction.'*

The Commission sometimes passed administrative orders also; for instance, during the first week of October 2011, Dr Shakeel Afridi was put on trial for conspiracy against the State and for high treason. The Commission decided that in the light of record and evidence placed before it, prima facie, Dr Afridi did not have a clean slate, and therefore, a case under the relevant law be registered against him.

During the same session, the Commission also withdrew the restraining order against the wives and daughters of Osama after recording their statements and then handed over the OBL compound to the civil administration Abbottabad for disposal in accordance with law. During the night of **25th February 2012**, Osama's whole compound and structure was bulldozed by Abbotabad Municipality; a chapter closed for ever.

During the first week of December 2011, the Commission declared that the US action in Abbotabad on 2nd May had violated the sovereignty of the country and Osama could have been arrested alive. **Hussain Haqqani and Rehman Malik were summoned to state that under what law they had issued so big numbers of visas to Americans.** Till then there were more than 20 sessions, more than 100 witnesses examined, 5 field missions conducted and final report was expected to be completed till the end of December but could not. All proceedings of the commission were taken place behind closed doors.

Replying to a media question in a press conference held in PID on 7th December 2011, a member [Lt Gen (ret'd) Nadeem Ahmad] said that:

'When the ISI was discussed regarding the Abbotabad incident, the Commission had recorded only one statement and I had given my personal opinion that Al-Qaeda declared ISI as their enemy then how they had relations with ISI.'

In July 2011, Gen Nadeem Ahmed had told the Australian journalists that he had firmly believed **'that no intelligence organization in Pakistan would do such a stupid thing as harbouring Bin Laden'**.

2nd January 2012's media reports told that the Commission retrieved 1,87,000 documents from Osama's compound whereas a large number of documents had already been taken away by the US-SEALs on the raiding night. The recovered documents included Osama's diaries, correspondence, and other material in black and white.

BBC Urdu Report [no: 120315] of March 2012, however, narrated that the findings of the Commission were different from the report given by US authorities. It included statements from Osama's family, neighbours and government officials who immediately visited 'the compound' after the US raid. The most crucial finding being that **'the compound had dozens of armed men during the raid, however, only one bullet mark and one bullet shell was found.'**

The bullet mark was found on the wall of the room where Osama used to sleep and there he was killed. The height of the mark suggested that someone had knelt down and taken a shot;

the bullet had pierced through Osama's head and struck the wall leaving a mark there with fading splash of blood, the report claimed. Other than this mark, there was no other bullet mark in the entire house, nor was there any other bullet shell. [*As per Brig Shaukat Qadir's opinion, a bunch of bullet holes were marked in the stairs where Osama's 22 years old son was ambushed*]

Six Kalashnikovs recovered from the house were less than a yard away, from deceased's gunmen. The report posed more questions including: when so many armed men were present in the house during the raid, why did Osama's men not fire even once.

Interior Minister Rehman Malik once told the Commission and the media in early March 2012 that:

'Pakistani security agencies were a few days late; they were very close to capturing Osama. We were about to catch Osama when US Navy SEALs raided his compound'

Mr Malik was known to release such amusing statements; the media held.

It was also a fact that Osama had undergone a kidney transplant operation in 2002 [*Osama's last and youngest wife, Amal Ahmed al-Sadah had confirmed before the Pakistani interrogators*] and as he survived till 2011, then who has been helping him. During his kidney operation days, Osama had shaved his beard and disguised himself as an ailing Pashtun elder. Osama's elder wife Khairiah Saber, an older woman who occupied a separate floor, was accused by Amal of having betrayed their husband to American intelligence.

The record also pointed out that Osama was 'practically removed' from Al Qaeda's controlling position and was hiding in Abbotabad only waiting for death. Even some officials of White House had known such claims and reports that Osama and his deputy, Ayman al-Zawahri, had suffered serious disagreements that pushed Osama to the sidelines. '*This divide grew with time, and remained a source of tension until the day Bin Laden died; his role was diminished*', one of the White House summary contained.

Referring to the ***NY Times dated 7th March 2012***, several American and Western officials in Washington and Pakistan said that the CIA had scanned millions of documents taken from computer disks found in Bin Laden's house yet found no evidence of official Pakistani support. But for some analysts, that proves nothing. '*There is no smoking gun, but there is also no evidence that firmly rules out complicity*,' said Bruce Riedel, a former CIA officer and Obama's Adviser.

Suggestions to the contrary were the product of American media conspiracy; '*there is a deliberate design to undermine the ISI*', the Pak-Army believed; and it was proved true subsequently.

Till the first anniversary of the Osama's killing, 2nd May 2012, the Abbotabad Commission was not able to compose its final report despite the day to day working. The speculation amongst the media, however, gave some indications that the Commission had not found any institution or individual responsible for the episode but they were trying to find a neck for the loop they held.

The Abbotabad Commission had in fact made mockery of judicial process and with such inordinate delay the people and the media got so fed up that no political faction or individual would dare to raise a demand of 'judicial probe' in future; share wastage of public funds, poor people's money and hope. The Commission, just to prolong the enquiry for an indefinite period, called so many unconcerned office holders and 'other people' who had virtually narrated and got recorded their statements mostly based on hearsay or media news.

The true accountability demanded that when the Commission's report would be placed before the CJP or the Chief Executive, the expenditure incurred on its proceeding [*remuneration and TA / DA paid to the members, expenditure incurred on the travelling and daily allowances paid to all persons called for 'statements', staying expenses for all in hotels & their transpor-*

tation and other resources consumed by TV teams, camera men, security officials and journalists for more than a year] should also be made public – but that day had never seen dawn.

DR SHAKIL AFRIDI FIGURED UP:

After Osama's killing, during investigation process, the fact surfaced that one Dr Shakil Afridi acted as CIA's paid agent and used to keep surveillance over Osama's residence and its inhabitants. The official investigating team detained that doctor for further interrogation.

Afridi was one of several Pakistanis who were detained by the country's security agencies over allegations of working for the CIA. Dr could face the death penalty for collaborating with a foreign spy agency. It was no more mystery that how CIA recruited Afridi to work for the United States.

Dr Afridi came from a humble background, graduated from the Khyber Medical College, Peshawar in 1990 and was working as doctor in-charge of Jamrud Hospital in Khyber Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan. He was in his 40s when arrested in 2011.

The investigations revealed that Dr Afridi's colleagues at Jamrud Hospital in Khyber tribal agency were suspicious of his activities. The hospital's chief surgeon told about his absences which he explained as "business" to be attended in Abbotabad. Dr Afridi was accused of having taken half-dozen World Health Organization cooler boxes without authorization. The containers were for inoculation campaigns, but no immunization drives were underway in Abbotabad or the Khyber agency.

Dr Afridi, after getting married to one Imrana Ghafoor of Multan having American nationality, often visited the US embassy and held meetings with the US officials in different hotels. His colleagues started suspecting the activities of Dr Afridi when he started going absent from duty for days on a stretch. The FATA directorate had issued his transfer orders thrice but he was successful in getting the orders reversed within few days. Imrana Ghafoor was working as headmistress at a government-run Girls High School in Darra Adamkhel.

The record of Jamrud Tehsil Hospital proved that Dr Afridi had taken away six polio kits illegally from the hospital on 17th March 2011 despite the fact that he was not given any such task. Dr Afridi conducted three fake anti-polio campaigns in Abbotabad to reach his target Osama bin Laden. He conducted the first anti-polio campaign on 17th March 2011 and then on 1st April and 20th April to reach Osama's compound. He had succeeded in getting the blood sample from the compound and handed it over to CIA agents for their consumption [in DNA tests].

Within a few days of the last fake polio campaign visit, the US helicopters came and conducted the said operation in Abbotabad. When the operation was completed, Dr Afridi disappeared for some days and did not turn up for duty at the Jamrud Hospital. But 20 days later, Dr Afridi was arrested from Karkhano Market in Hayatabad [Peshawar].

Media sources opined that he was arrested from Torkham border while trying to escape the country [*and only his arrest was shown from Karkhano market Peshawar*]. Soon the Pakistan government was pressurised by the US agencies that Dr Afridi be released which proved the suspicions. Not for the first time, the US was demanding the release of a CIA covered agent in Pakistan, Raymond Davis; the complication this time was that the agent was a Pakistani citizen.

US Secretary of Defence, and former head of the CIA, Leon Panetta, on 22nd February 2012 made his pitch for the release of Dr Afridi, who had, during that fake polio campaign in Ab-

botabad, obtained DNA evidence confirming the Osama's presence there. Neighborhood residents had confirmed the CNN team that two women who appeared to be nurses visited homes around and offered free vaccinations.

The US Secretary Hilary Clinton's anger and the then CIA Chief, Leon Panetta's chase confirmed the role of Dr Afridi in ascertaining the whereabouts of Bin Laden in Abbotabad but the Americans were hoping to get Afridi released in the back drop of 'the deal' under which the Operation Geronimo was launched – that Pakistan would be a silent party. That was why **on 6th October 2011**, the Commission on OBL recommended that Dr Afridi be charged with "conspiracy against the state of Pakistan and high treason" on the basis of available evidence. Pakistan seized Dr Afridi's assets; his residence was sealed and his family was moved to an undisclosed location. The 15 lady health workers, that assisted Dr Afridi in the fake vaccination program, were also declared not fit for future employment.

FACTS REVEALED -DR PLAYED WELL:

A known Western journalist named **MATTHIEU AIKINS**, based in Kabul, travelled to Pakistan to investigate how one mysterious man [Dr Shakil Afridi] led the US to Bin Laden's doorstep. **On 28th December 2012**, his findings were published at the '**Opinion-Maker**' website; see what it concluded.

When did Dr Afridi start working for the CIA? Copies of a sealed court record contained diversified statements; yet its overall gist was confirmed by the US officials offering a window into Dr Afridi's recruitment and handling by CIA agents working undercover in Pakistan.

As per recorded documents, the doctor was recruited in 2008 after attending a workshop for medical professionals in Peshawar, hosted by **Save the Children**, an international NGO that carries out extensive humanitarian operations in Pakistan. There he met with Michael McGrath, the then country director of the said NGO [McGrath left Pakistan in August 2009] who asked Afridi if he was the same doctor who was recently kidnapped by Mangal Bagh, a warlord who headed the militant group called **Lashkar-e-Islam**. Afridi answered that yes; in April that year he had been abducted from his hospital and held for ransom equivalent of around £7500. The incident had made local headlines.

Afterwards, Dr Afridi met McGrath at Saeed Book Bank in Jinnah Super Market Islamabad on one Saturday morning. A week later, they met again in the same busy market; Dr Afridi was picked up and was driven to a residence where he was introduced to 'Kate'; described as a blue-eyed, blond-haired woman in her late thirties. Over dinner, Kate and Afridi talked about his abduction, his family, and the political situation in Khyber Agency, where militants had taken over several main towns. About 90 minutes later, Afridi was dropped off at a gas station down the road.

After Kate, three more CIA handlers named Thoni, Sara, and Sue worked with Dr Afridi; each of them was female - perhaps the CIA knew the doctor's reputation. Dr Afridi used to meet them at gas stations or taxi stands, and then, after driving a short distance to a secluded spot [*he used to get in the back of his handler's vehicle and hide underneath a blanket*] and used to be taken into the US embassy. Eventually, Dr Afridi was given his mission: to create and administer a vaccination program focusing on a specific suburb of Abbottabad.

Due to extreme secrecy of the mission, Dr Afridi was never told the identity of his target. He was given a device capable of communicating by satellite with his handlers - and that the CIA paid him about \$55,000 to conduct that fake vaccination campaign; about nine times his official annual salary plus his clinic's income.

It was, on **21st April 2011**, a grey jeep, an official vehicle with the logo of the Health Department painted on the door, pulled into Abbottabad town and parked in front of one Big House. A doctor stepped down, stood out among the wheat fields and dirt paths of this semi-rural suburb, leaving his driver behind the doctor set off smoothly ahead.

[The people around Osama's residence believed that the said 'big house', [*commonly known as Waziristan House also*] belonged to two brothers, Arshad and Tariq Khan, [*subsequently both names surfaced as fake; their real names were Ibrahim & Abrar*] who lived with their wives and kids, as well as a mysterious uncle who was said to be ill; wasn't all that unusual for conservative *Pashtuns* from the tribal areas.

No one was invited inside the house nor the family ventured outside. Since 2005, they had never caused anyone any trouble either.]

Waiting for him outside the compound's forest-green metal gate were two nurses, Bakhto and Amna, as part of a hepatitis B vaccination team. The nurses had been canvassing the area, knocking on doors and looking for women aged 15 to 45 to cajole into taking the needle. Amna wondered why Dr Shakil was so interested in this house in particular, the only one whose vaccination he had bothered to personally supervise. He rapped sharply on the metal door, they waited, again he knocked, but there seemed to be no one home.

Amna shrugged, Dr Shakil hastily went across the street and called a neighbour, whose son used to do the occasional odd jobs for the Big House. ***Dr Shakil had the cell number of one of the Khan brothers***, he dialled it and handed his phone to one of the nurses. The man on the other side had answered that the family was away on a trip, the doctor almost snatched the phone hurriedly.

"Hello?" he said. "*This is Dr Shakil Afridi.*" The doctor urgently explained the need for the hepatitis test. *'It was crucial that it happen soon. The vaccine would be very good for them'*, Dr Shakil urged.

Simultaneously, in Washington, President Obama was upset with only one single question: Was Osama bin Laden concealed inside that three-story house? For months, the CIA had conducted intensive surveillance without coming to a definitive answer; their assessment went astray. Such an extraordinarily risky mission - sending a team of commandos deep inside Pakistan without Pakistani political or military's information - could only be argued in vacuum. The operation might have negotiated in principle amongst all but at what time it would be launched - it was not settled. Dr Afridi had helped them to get out of that puzzle.

Due to excessive and 'managed' Pakistani visas issued by Hussain Haqqani and Rehman Malik, a network of Pakistani 'assets' - locals on the CIA payroll - could visibly be seen in Khyber PK and FATA. What exactly Dr Afridi did for the Osama mission, could be judged from American's praise for his key role. "*This was an individual who in fact helped provide intelligence that was very helpful with regards to this operation,*" Defence Secretary Leon Panetta had said. Within a few days of the last fake vaccination campaign visit, the US helicopters accomplished their mission in Abbottabad.

Dr Afridi had actually collected DNA evidence from the Bin Laden house with the help of Amna and Bakhto, the two nurses who had been part of the 22 members' vaccination team; later, the whole team had been arrested, interrogated, and subsequently fired.

[*Any DNA obtained from the people in the compound could then be compared with a sample from bin Laden's sister, who died in Boston in 2010, as evidence the family was in the compound.*]

Nurse Bakhto had first time met Dr Afridi on 16th March, during a short briefing of the vaccination campaign at Abbottabad [especially designed to reach the Bin Laden house]. Then

they met on 21st April 2011, amidst the vaccination campaign, at the gate of Osama's residence.

After their investigations, Amna and Bakhto had confirmed to the media that they had indeed gotten into the house and successfully collected blood samples from a young woman, might be bin Laden's daughter. Bakhto in fact had vaccinated seven children for polio there the year before, when one of the brothers brought them to the gate to receive the oral vaccine; this time they were there with hepatitis injections.

Dr Afridi was again in Abbottabad on 27th April, this time driving his personal vehicle, to collect the vaccination records and materials in person. As per ISI's investigation report '**..... that same day Dr Afridi drove with his driver and a social worker to Islamabad. After dropping them off, he met with his CIA handler "Sue" and gave her the used vaccination kits and records, and she paid him for the job.**' All their activities were regularly monitored from a safe house in the neighbourhood of Osama's house since late 2010.

On 28th April 2011, President Obama went 50:50 odds but the Vice President Joe Biden had advised against going ahead. Next day, when DNA test report reached White House, the president ordered the mission to go ahead on immediate basis. Just one day after the Operation Geronimo was to be launched but the Navy SEALs could not proceed due to bad weather reports; however, next day [1st May 2011 as per American calendar] the mission was successfully accomplished.

US PRESSURE STORIES:

Pakistan's military had long grown fed up with the American drone attacks and various other '**unilateral missions**,' in which the CIA operated without its knowledge and consent. Military officials believed the CIA bribed a vast network of local informants inside the country, not only to hunt Al Qaeda and the Taliban but also to spy on Pakistan's nuclear weapons, in the garb of '**falling into the wrong hands**'.

The mistrust between US & Pakistan could be seen at the gates of the US Consulate in Peshawar, where Pakistani armed police guard used to question journalists and anyone leaving the compound and sometimes chased. Pakistani intelligence suspected the Consulate of being a hotbed of spies. ISI's officers maintained that:

'Peshawar was just like Berlin at the height of the Cold War; every agency worth their name has people here. We found they were conducting unilateral operations from inside Afghanistan, not just on Osama bin Laden but on so many other issues. We've been restricting access to certain people, tailing them, monitoring them.'

The spy games had created an atmosphere of extreme paranoia in Peshawar. Not surprisingly, mentioning Dr Afridi's name was not at all liked by many since the Osama incident, and no one was eager to admit any association with the doctor. Dr Afridi's story was wrapped in a protective layer of facts about his secret relationship with the CIA and his mission accomplished at Osama's residence in Abbottabad.

In Dr Afridi's case, one lawyer named Nadeem, in the Peshawar High Court held:

"Shakil Afridi was part of a big game; a pawn in the struggle between the US and Pakistan. At stake was the future of CIA operations against Al Qaeda and billions of US dollars in aid to the Pakistani military; he was the hundred – million - dollar man."

Dr Shakil was later charged not with treason for his work with the CIA but with supplying *Lashkar e Islam* - the militant group - with money and medical treatment for its fighters. Under the tribal code, Dr Afridi was sentenced to 33 years in prison.

The terrorism charges were rightly and intelligently applied in Dr Afridi's case as there was no charge in the Pakistani criminal code for taking money from a foreign government. The actual charge was for waging war against the state; but Pakistan was not in a position of debating that the US was their enemy. The American concern about Afridi might be genuine in the said case but Dr Afridi had not offered his services to the CIA for the sake of humanity [while helping them identify Osama in Abbottabad] but he was in the game for money.

Later a group of lawyers from the tribal areas [*of course financed by the CIA again*] appealed against Dr Afridi's sentence on the basis that he had been tortured into false confessions by the ISI [but what Americans do in Guantanamo Bay – the same story].

Dr Shakil once sent a hand-written letter from the jail:

"I received death threats, I have been tortured, and my body has suffered serious violence. All of this is an untrue story fabricated by the ISI, and they have been telling it to me for the last year."

However, no one going to believe him in an arena of pressures extended on Pakistani Authorities by Hilary Clinton and Leon Panetta AND the statements given by them on live TV talks at various American media channels AND the fact that a bill was moved in American Congress to grant Dr Shakil & his family the American Nationality through naturalization.

[One can recall here the statement of Gen Pasha, former DG ISI, given before the Abbottabad Commission that the US authorities did their best to get Dr Afridi released through Saudi Arabia's immense pressure; offered him and his family the American nationality straightaway – but the Pak-Army flatly refused to bow down. If Dr Afridi had no connections with the CIA then how come America went so far to get him bailed out.]

Rand Paul, the Republican senator from Kentucky, made a lot of noise going to the extent that *"America should not give foreign aid to a country whose government is torturing the man who helped us kill Osama bin Laden."*

Panetta told ***CBS's "60 Minutes program on 27th January 2012,"*** in a profile to be broadcast that Dr Afridi helped provide intelligence for the raid on bin Laden's compound in Abbotabad, Pakistan. Moving further the US argued that Dr Afridi should be freed and allowed to live in the US.

In early July 2011, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said that *"his help, after all, was instrumental in taking down one of the world's most notorious murderers"* and had urged for Dr Shakil's release which was rejected.

Desperately then the ***US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton had telephoned President Zardari on 28th July 2011 to seek his help in securing Dr Afridi's release;*** urging that ***'Pakistan has no justification for holding Dr Shakil Afridi'***. It was extremely humiliating for a sovereign nation at least. [*An essay published at www.Pakspectator.com on 2nd May 2012 is referred*]

Dana Rohrabacher asked President Obama to intercede on Afridi's behalf, and moved a bill [H.R.4069 & H.R. 3901] to award a Congressional Gold Medal to Dr Afridi AND declaring him a naturalized US citizen. The two moves were sufficient to prove that Dr Afridi was on CIA's roll thus guilty of high treason charges under Article 6 of the Pakistan's Constitution.

There is no death of Mir Jaffers & Mir Sadiqs in Pakistan.

On 22nd November 2013; Dr Shakil Afridi was charged with murder, relating to the death of a patient eight years ago at his private clinic in the Khyber Agency region. A woman had come forward blaming Dr Afridi for the death of her son at a clinic in 2005; stating that he operated on her son even though he was not a surgeon, and that caused her son's death.

Earlier, **on 28th August 2013**, a court overturned a previous sentence given to Dr Afridi [*citing procedural errors and ordered a retrial*] in which he had been given a 33-year jail sentence in May 2012 by a court in the Khyber Agency for alleged links to a banned militant group. A 3-member bench comprising its Chairman Shah Wali Khan and two members Pir Fida Muhammad and Akbar Khan reissued notice to Political Agent Khyber Agency to submit original record.

Shakil Afridi, hailed a hero by US officials, was arrested after American SEALs had killed bin Laden on 2nd May 2011 in Abbotabad. Initially he was charged with treason, but court documents showed he was jailed for being a member of a militant group, *Lashkar-e-Islam*.