

# Kidnapping and Deporting Civilians to Guantanamo, Providing a Safe-haven to Al Qaeda Fighters

The Pentagon's Diabolical Intelligence Operation in Afghanistan

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*Almost without exception, those arbitrarily arrested and sent to Guantanamo were civilians rather than "enemy combatants".*

*Did the Bush administration "recruit detainees" among the civilian population and pass them off as "terrorists"?*

*Fourteen years later, the evidence amply confirms that those detained in Guantanamo were not "enemy combatants". They were arrested and sent to Guantanamo as part of a diabolical propaganda campaign, the purpose of which is twofold:*

- 1. To perpetuate the legend that the Western is threatened by Islamic Terrorists;*
- 2. To provide legitimacy to the Global War on Terrorism as well obfuscate the fact that the Islamic terrorists are trained and recruited by the Western military alliance and its Persian Gulf allies.*

*But there is another diabolical dimension. What happened to the bona fide Al Qaeda "enemy combatants" who were arrested by US-NATO forces in November 2001?*



*In November 2001, at least 4000 Al Qaeda fighters had been airlifted to Northern Pakistan on the orders of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. And these Al Qaeda units were also being supplied by Pakistan's ISI. According to Seymour Hersh, "The Administration ordered the US Central Command to set up a special air corridor to help insure the safety of the Pakistani rescue flights from Kunduz to the northwest corner of Pakistan"*

*What was the purpose of the airlift?*

*We are dealing with a intelligence operation: By airlifting “enemy combatant” to safety in Northern Pakistan, the Bush administration had created the pretext for intervening militarily within Pakistan as part of the “Global War on Terrorism”.*

*The preconditions for the subsequent launching of the CIA drone attacks had been established in November 2001 by relocating Al Qaeda enemy combatant to the northern Tribal areas of Pakistan.*

*Without the airlift of al Qaeda fighters in Pakistani military planes, the drone war would not have a leg to stand on.*

Compare Seymour Hersh’s account in the “Getaway” pertaining to the US sponsored evacuation of hard core Al Qaeda and Taliban fighters with the various accounts and testimonies pertaining to the deportation of innocent civilians to Guantanamo.

What these comparisons convey is that Al Qaeda fighters and their senior Pakistani advisers were “saved” on the orders of Donald Rumsfeld. Meanwhile, also on the orders of the Secretary of Defense, innocent civilians who had no relationship whatsoever to the war theater were categorized as “enemy combatants”, kidnapped, interrogated and sent to Guantanamo.

Why?

Did the Bush administration need to “recruit detainees” among the civilian population and pass them off as “terrorists”?

Why did they not arrest the al Qaeda fighters in November 2001?

...

Is it incompetence or poor military planning? Or is it a diabolical covert op to safeguard and sustain “enemy number one”? Because without this “outside enemy” personified by Osama bin Laden and Ayman al Zawahri, there would be no “war on terrorism”.

(quoted from March 2004 article)

Michel Chossudovsky, Global Research, May 9, 2014

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## Kidnapping and deporting Civilians to Guantanamo, Providing a Safe-haven to Al Qaeda Fighters

by Michel Chossudovsky

Global Research, March 20, 2015

In late November 2001, the Northern Alliance supported by US bombing raids took the hill town of Kunduz in Northern Afghanistan. Eight thousand or more men “had been trapped inside the city in the last days of the siege, roughly half of whom were Pakistanis. Afghans, Uzbeks, Chechens, and various Arab mercenaries accounted for the rest.” (Seymour M. Hersh, [The Getaway](#), The New Yorker, 21 January 2002, )

Also among these fighters were several senior Pakistani military and intelligence officers, who had been sent to the war theater by the Pakistani military.

The presence of high-ranking Pakistani military and intelligence advisers in the ranks of Taliban/ Al Qaeda forces was known and approved by the Washington.

Moreover, Pakistan's military intelligence, the ISI, which was overseeing the operation, had a close and longstanding working relationship with the CIA; since the 1980s it has channeled support to a number of terrorist organizations, including Al Qaeda and the Taliban, acting on behalf of its US counterpart. (See Michel Chossudovsky, *War and Globalization, the Truth behind September 11* , 2002. Ch. 2, 3 and 4.

According to Seymour M. Hersh:

“President Bush said, ‘We’re smoking them out. They’re running, and now we’re going to bring them to justice.’” (Seymour Hersh, op cit)

In fact, most of them were never brought to justice, nor were they detained or interrogated. On the orders of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, they were flown to safety:

“The Administration ordered the US Central Command to set up a special air corridor to help insure the safety of the Pakistani rescue flights from Kunduz to the northwest corner of Pakistan” (Ibid)



“Musharraf won American support for the airlift by warning that the humiliation of losing hundreds-and perhaps thousands-of Pakistani Army men and intelligence operatives would jeopardize his political survival. ‘Clearly, there is a great willingness to help Musharraf,’ an American intelligen

ce official told me. A C.I.A. analyst said that it was his understanding that the decision to permit the airlift was made by the White House and was indeed driven by a desire to protect the Pakistani leader. The airlift ‘made sense at the time,’ the C.I.A. analyst said. ‘Many of the people they spirited away were the Taliban leadership’-who Pakistan hoped could play a role in a postwar Afghan government. According to this person, ‘Musharraf wanted to have these people to put another card on the table’ in future political negotiations. ‘We were supposed to have access to them,’ he said, but ‘it didn’t happen,’ and the rescued Taliban remain unavailable to American intelligence.

According to a former high-level American defense official, the airlift was approved because of representations by the Pakistanis that “there were guys-intelligence agents and underground guys-who needed to get out.” (Seymour Hersh, op cit)

In other words, the official story was: “we were tricked into it” by the Pakistani ISI.

Out of some 8000 or more men, 3300 surrendered to the Northern Alliance, leaving between 4000 and 5000 men “unaccounted for”. According to Hersh’s investigation, based on Indian

intelligence sources, at least 4000 men including two Pakistani Army generals were evacuated. (Ibid)

US officials admitted, however, that

“what was supposed to be a limited evacuation apparently slipped out of control, and, as an unintended consequence, an unknown number of Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters managed to join in the exodus.” (quoted in Hersh op cit)

An Indian Press report confirms that those evacuated courtesy of Uncle Sam were not the moderate elements of the Taliban, but rather the “hard-core Taliban” and Al Qaeda fighters. (Times of India, 24 January 2002).

### **“Terrorists” or “Intelligence Assets” ?**

As part of an operation led by Pakistan’s ISI, the foreign and Pakistani Al Qaeda fighters were flown to North Pakistan. Many of these fighters were subsequently incorporated into the two main Kashmiri terrorist rebel groups, Lashkar-e-Taiba (“Army of the Pure”) and Jaish-e-Muhammad (“Army of Mohammed”).

The Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) confirms that both Jaish and Lashkar are supported by Pakistan’s ISI:

“through its Interservices Intelligence agency (ISI), Pakistan has provided funding, arms, training facilities, and aid in crossing borders to Lashkar and Jaish...Many were given ideological training in the same madrasas, or Muslim seminaries, that taught the Taliban and foreign fighters in Afghanistan. They received military training at camps in Afghanistan or in villages in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir. Extremist groups [supported by the ISI] have recently opened several new madrasas in Azad Kashmir.”

(Council on Foreign Relations at <http://www.terrorismanswers.com/groups/harakat2.html> , Washington 2002)

What the CFR fails to mention is the crucial relationship between the ISI and the CIA and the fact that the ISI continues to support Lashkar, Jaish and the militant Jammu and Kashmir Hizbul Mujahideen (JKHM), while also collaborating with the CIA. Coinciding with the 1989 Geneva Peace Agreement and the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the ISI was instrumental in the creation of the militant Jammu and Kashmir Hizbul Mujahideen (JKHM).(See K. Subrahmanyam, Pakistan is Pursuing Asian Goals, India Abroad, 3 November 1995.).

In the wake of the US bombing of Afghanistan, US press reports confirmed that one of the main consequences of (the US sponsored) evacuation of Al Qaeda fighters out of Kunduz in November 2001 was to reinforce the Kashmiri terrorists organisations:

Even today [March 2002], over 70 per cent of those involved in terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir are not Kashmiri youths but ISI trained Pakistani nationals. There are also a few thousand such Jihadis in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir prepared to cross the LOC. It is also a matter of time before hundreds from amongst those the Bush Administration so generously allowed to be airlifted and escape from Kunduz in Afghanistan join these terrorists in J&K. (Business

Line, 4 March 2002)

A few months following the November 2001 “Getaway”, the Indian Parliament in Delhi is attacked by Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Muhammad. (January 2002)

Moreover, since the onslaught of the US bombing of Afghanistan (October 2001), the Al Qaeda-ISI sponsored Ansar al-Islam in Northern Iraq has grown in size, most probably incorporating Al Qaeda fighters who fled Afghanistan in the wake of the US bombings. (Christian Science Monitor, 15 March 2002). While there was no firm evidence, one suspects that some of the Mujahideen fighters airlifted out of Kunduz in the US sponsored evacuation were subsequently relocated to other countries including Northern Iraq. (See Michel Chossudovsky, [Who is behind the “Terrorist Network” in Northern Iraq, Baghdad or Washington?](#) February 2003 )

Kidnapping Civilians



The plight of the Guantanamo detainees is now coming to light with the release of prisoners from the Camp Delta Concentration camp in Guantanamo, after more than two years of captivity.

The evidence suggests that most of the detainees are in fact civilians.

Compare Seymour Hersh’s account in the “Getaway” pertaining to the US sponsored evacuation of hard core Al Qaeda and Taliban fighters with the various accounts and testimonies pertaining to the deportation of innocent civilians to Guantanamo.

What these comparisons convey is that Al Qaeda fighters and their senior Pakistani advisers were “saved” on the orders of Donald Rumsfeld. Meanwhile, also on the orders of the Secretary of Defense, innocent civilians who had no relationship whatsoever to the war theater were categorized as “enemy combatants”, kidnapped, interrogated and sent to Guantanamo.

Why?

Did the Bush administration need to “recruit detainees” among the civilian population and pass them off as “terrorists”?

Did they need to boost up the numbers “to fill the gap” resulting from the several thousand Al Qaeda fighters, who had been evacuated on the orders of Donald Rumsfeld and flown to safety? Were these “terrorists” needed in Kashmir in the context of a CIA covert op?

Whatever the motivation, we are dealing with a diabolical intelligence operation.

Some 660 people from 42 countries, are currently being held in the Camp Delta concentration camp in Guantanamo. While US officials claim that they are “enemy combatants” arrested in Afghanistan, a large number of the civilian detainees have never set foot in Afghanistan. They were kidnapped in several foreign countries including Pakistan, Bosnia and Gambia on the West Coast of Africa, and taken to the US military base in Bagram, Afghanistan, before being transported to Guantanamo.

Kellogg, Brown & Root (KBR), the British subsidiary of Vice President Dick Cheney’s company Halliburton has a multimillion dollar contract to expand the facilities of the Guantanamo concentration camp including the construction of prisoner cells, guard barracks and interrogation rooms. The objective is to bring “detainee capacity to 1,000” (Vanity Fair, January 2004)

At least three children are being held at Guantanamo, aged between 13 and 15 years old. According to Pentagon officials: “the boys were brought to Guantanamo Bay because they were considered a threat and they had “high value” intelligence that U.S. authorities wanted.” (Washington Post, 23 August 2003). According to Britain’s Muslim News: “out of the window has gone any regard for the norms of international law and order ... with Muslims liable to be kidnapped in any part of the world to be transported to Guantanamo Bay and face summary justice.” ( <http://www.muslimnews.co.uk/index/press.php?pr=177> )

### **Recent Developments in Northern Pakistan**

As the US elections approach, the search for bin Laden and his deputy Ayman al-Zawahri has picked up pace in the border regions of Northern Pakistan. This search has been carefully timed to coincide with the election campaign.

In October 2003, in coordination with the Pentagon, the Pakistani military launched an operation in the tribal areas of northern Pakistan, following the visit in October to Islamabad of Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage and Assistant Secretary of State Christina Rocca.

The Pentagon describes the strategy to go after bin Laden as a “hammer and anvil” approach, “with Pakistani troops moving into semiautonomous tribal areas on their side of the border, and Afghans and American forces sweeping the forbidding terrain on the other”. (The Record, Kitchener, 13 March 2004).

In March 2004, Britain’s Sunday Express, quoting “a US intelligence source” reported that

“bin Laden and about 50 supporters had been boxed in among the Toba Kakar mountainous north of the Pakistani city of Quetta and were being watched by satellite... Pakistan then sent several thousand extra troops to the tribal area of South Waziristan, just to the north.” (quoted in South China morning Post, 7 March 2004)

In a bitter irony, it was to this Northern region of Pakistan that at least 4000 Al Qaeda fighters were airlifted in the first place, back in November 2001, on the orders of Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. And these Al Qaeda units were also being supplied by Pakistan’s ISI. (UPI, 1 November 2001)

In other words, units of Pakistan’s military intelligence, the ISI, -which had coordinated the



November 2001 evacuation on behalf of Uncle Sam- are now involved in the “hammer and anvil” search for Al Qaeda in northern Pakistan, with the support of Pakistani regular forces and US Special Forces.

From a military standpoint, it does not make sense. Evacuate the enemy to safe-haven, and then two years later in the months leading up to the presidential elections, “go after them” in the tribal hills of North Pakistan.



Why did they not arrest the al Qaeda fighters in November 2001?

Is it incompetence or poor military planning? Or is it a diabolical covert op to safeguard and sustain “enemy number one”? Because without this “outside enemy” personified by Osama bin Laden and Ayman al Zawahri, there would be no “war on terrorism”.

And Bush needs more than the rhetoric of the “war on terrorism”, he desperately needs a “real” war on terrorism, within the chosen theater of the tribal areas of Northern Pakistan, which can be broadcast on network TV in the US and around the World. “The war on terrorism” is the cornerstone of Bush’s presidential election campaign. A media propaganda and PR operation has been launched.

Yet if the truth trickles down to the broader public regarding the administration’s covert support to Al Qaeda, this campaign strategy may in fact backlash.

A major war in Central Asia and the Middle East, supposedly against international terrorism, has been launched by a government which is harboring international terrorism as part of its foreign policy agenda.

In this context, the hidden agenda behind “Operation Enduring Freedom” launched in October 2001, was precisely to ensure that Al Qaeda leaders (i.e. US sponsored intelligence assets) be able to escape. This operation was an integral part of the propaganda ploy. Al Qaeda fighters were flown to safety to keep the war on terrorism alive.

Al Zawahri is now being identified by the media as the brain behind 9/11, which usefully serves to distract public attention from the fact, amply documented, that the Bush administration had foreknowledge of the September 11 attacks.

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