

Terror and the Osama bin Laden assassination

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Very little is known about the top-secret U.S. operation that executed Osama bin Laden, except what President Barack Obama chose to announce: that U.S. secret forces found bin Laden, killed him May 1 and disposed of his body at sea on May 2.

Although Obama hailed this as a “turning point in the war on terror,” it is clear that he was not proposing any plans to bring U.S. troops home. Instead, the resulting jingoistic media barrage is being used to celebrate the three unpopular wars that have devastated Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan, at the cost of more than 1 million lives and \$1 trillion over the past 10 years.

The orchestrated celebration of this military operation will justify further expansion of the military budget, weapons systems and tactics like targeted assassinations, secret rendition and new drone attacks.

The threat of shadowy bin Laden and the al-Qaida network has been used again and again to build support for U.S. wars, repressive legislation, maximum security measures and wide-ranging attacks on civil liberties.

Obama warned of “violent attacks around the world after the death of bin Laden.” Such dire yet vague warnings might also be used to push through new legislation giving a blank check to wildly increased levels of repression within the U.S. and to waging new U.S. wars abroad without any form of Congressional debate or authorization.

Such pieces of legislation are already introduced in both houses of Congress.

House bill H.R.968 and Senate bill S.551 are expected to be included in the upcoming military appropriations bill. These ever-expanding annual military appropriation budgets now sail through Congress without question or discussion.

Creating anti-Muslim bigotry

The constant threat of terror attacks has whipped up a climate of anti-Muslim hate and fear in large parts of the population. Racism and fear are essential props of imperialist war. Whenever support for U.S. wars and the mood of hatred seems to wane, U.S. officials from local prosecutors to FBI and national police agencies uncover a new “plot.” Many have been exposed as scurrilous acts of entrapment against immigrants. But the media feeding frenzy lasts for weeks and poisons all relations.

Although no other attack blamed on Muslims has taken place since Sept. 11, 2001, hundreds of Muslims in the past 10 years have been sentenced to decades and even life in prison based on frenzied and flimsy charges. Thousands of Arab and South Asian immigrants

have been deported without any appeal or due process. Thousands more have simply “disappeared,” as victims of extra-judicial kidnapping and secret rendition.

This is hardly the first U.S. political assassination. Progressive and revolutionary figures like Che Guevara in Bolivia, Patrice Lumumba in Congo and Salvador Allende in Chile were killed at the behest of the CIA. Today hundreds of drone attacks routinely target thousands of nameless civilians in villages from Libya, Pakistan and Afghanistan to Yemen, Sudan and Somalia. No declaration of war, no evidence and no discussion precede or follow these attacks. Similar targeted assassinations by Israel are now considered routine in the West Bank and Gaza.

The assassination of bin Laden completely overwhelmed all coverage of NATO’s attempt to assassinate Moammar Gadhafi in Libya, which resulted in the death of Gadhafi’s son and three grandchildren in a missile strike.

It is significant that the operation against bin Laden comes at the very beginning of President Obama’s announced new presidential campaign. It immediately raised his ratings in the corporate media, which are tied to the largest military corporations at a time when big business is demanding more givebacks and every state and city are instituting cutbacks.

U.S. war created bin Laden

Of course, the assassination of bin Laden raises many questions. He was not killed in a cave in Afghanistan or even near the border area, but in the center of the military stronghold of Abbottabad, just 100 yards from the Kakul Military Academy, the school for training officers of the Pakistani Army. It is a little like finding bin Laden in an estate next door to West Point Military Academy.

It is difficult to imagine that this elaborate compound was unknown. In the past decade U.S. military aid to Pakistan has surpassed \$20 billion. It has left the people of Pakistan impoverished and the military more bloated, repressive and corrupt than before. The war in Afghanistan continues at a cost of \$2 billion a week. U.S. wars and unlimited military aid are a source of fantastic profit to private contractors and hundreds of U.S. military corporations and banks.

It is almost impossible to find a description of bin Laden that does not include the role of U.S. secret agencies in funding and training him during the years of war against the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in the 1980s. The U.S. had no trouble supporting a reactionary political outlook then that was disconnected from mass movements and progressive social issues and willing to use political terror, fanaticism and sectarian violence.

Again and again divisive sectarian bombings and attacks in Iraq and Afghanistan have been blamed on al-Qaida operatives, even when these acts have seemed to put a brake on unified mass resistance, thus assisting the continuing U.S. occupation.

In the past three months unified resistance by millions of people across the Arab world has challenged U.S. corporate domination and U.S.-supported dictators in a way that isolated sectarian bombing never could. It is no stretch to speculate that U.S. and Israeli “secret ops” may turn to bombings and massacres by unknown groups to create fear, sectarian divisions and new excuses for massive repression against the Arab Spring of revolutionary upheavals.

This is an old police tactic, used all too effectively against workers' struggles in the past. On May Day in Chicago 125 years ago, a bomb thrown by police agents in what came to be called the Haymarket Riot was used to frame up organizers advocating the eight-hour workday and break up the workers' movement.

An April 28 bombing at a café in Marrakesh, Morocco, that killed 16 people, many of them Western tourists, seemed to be directed not at the corrupt monarchy but at dampening the mass resistance that was spreading.

That bombing was immediately an excuse for a crackdown by the government and a reversal of the constitutional reforms that King Mohammed VI had promised after massive demonstrations demanding reforms and democracy. Security forces have since been stationed in Morocco's main cities, supposedly to protect the public.

It is too soon to know the fallout of the latest U.S. secret operation in Pakistan. But we do know the U.S. has no plans to end the terror of its "war on terror."

Every effort must be made to challenge the ugly, pro-war climate being whipped up. Demands to end these wars and bring all U.S. troops home must become part of every struggle generated by the cutbacks and the growing attacks on unions.

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

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