

# Where was Osama bin Laden on September 11, 2001?

By [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#)  
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Theme: [Terrorism](#)

## Author's note

*The following article was first published by Global Research 17 years ago on the 9th of September 2006, in the context of the 2006 commemoration of the tragic event of September 2001. We are now commemorating the 22nd anniversary of 9/11. May the Truth Prevail.*

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*"Going after bin Laden" has served to sustain the legend of the "world's most wanted terrorist", who "haunts Americans and millions of others around the world."*

*Donald Rumsfeld has repeatedly claimed that the whereabouts of Osama bin Laden remain unknown: "It is like looking for a needle in a stack of hay".*

*In November 2001, US B-52 bombers carpet bombed a network of caves in the Tora Bora mountains of eastern Afghanistan, where Osama bin Laden and his followers were allegedly hiding. These caves were described as "Osama's last stronghold".*

*CIA "intelligence analysts" subsequently concluded that Osama had escaped from his Tora Bora cave in the first week of December 2001. And in January 2002, the Pentagon launched a Worldwide search for Osama and his top lieutenants, beyond the borders of Afghanistan. This operation, referred to by Secretary of State Colin Powell as a "hot pursuit", was carried out with the support of the "international community" and America's European allies. US intelligence authorities confirmed, in this regard, that*

*"while al Qaeda has been significantly shattered, ... the most wanted man - bin Laden himself remains one step ahead of the United States, with the core of his worldwide terror network still in place. (Global News Wire - Asia Africa Intelligence Wire, InfoProd, January 20, 2002)*

For the last five years, the US military and intelligence apparatus (at considerable expense to US taxpayers) has been "searching for Osama".

A CIA unit with a multimillion dollar budget was set up, with a mandate to find Osama. This unit was apparently disbanded in 2005. "Intelligence experts agree", he is hiding in a remote area of Pakistan, but "we cannot find him":

"Most intelligence analysts are convinced that Osama bin Laden is somewhere

on the Afghan-Pakistan border. Lately, it has been said that he's probably in the vicinity of the a 7700m Hindu Kush peak Tirich Mir in the tribal Chitral area of northwest Pakistan." Hobart Mercury (Australia), September 9, 2006)

President Bush has repeatedly promised to "smoke him out" of his cave, capture him dead or alive, if necessary through ground assaults or missile strikes. According to a recent statement by president Bush, Osama is hiding in a remote area of Pakistan which "is extremely mountainous and very inaccessible, ... with high mountains between 9,000 to 15,000 feet high....". We cannot get him, because, according to the president, there is no communications infrastructure, which would enable us to effectively go after him. (quoted in Balochistan Times, 23 April 2006)

The pursuit of Osama has become a highly ritualized process which feeds the news chain on a daily basis. It is not only part of the media disinformation campaign, it also provides a justification for the arbitrary arrest, detention and torture of numerous "suspects", "enemy combatants" and "accomplices", who allegedly might be aware of Osama's whereabouts. And that information is of course vital to "the security of Americans".

The search for Osama serves both military and political objectives. The Democrats and Republicans compete in their resolve to weed out "islamic terrorism".

*The Path to 9/11*, a five-hour ABC series on "the search for Osama" -which makes its debut on the 10th and 11th of September to marks the fifth anniversary of the attacks- casually accuses Bill Clinton of having been "too busy with the Monica Lewinsky scandal to fight terrorism." The message of the movie is that the Democrats neglected the "war on terrorism".

The fact of the matter is that every single administration, since Jimmy Carter have supported and financed the "Islamic terror" network, created during the Carter administration at the outset of the Soviet-Afghan war. (See Michel Chossudovsky, [Who is Osama bin Laden](#), 12 September 2001). al Qaeda is a instrument of US intelligence: a US sponsored intelligence asset.

## Where was Osama on Septembers 11?

There is evidence that the whereabouts of Osama were known to the Bush Administration.

On September 10. 2001, "Enemy Number One" was in a Pakistani military hospital in Rawalpindi, courtesy of America's indefectible ally Pakistan, as confirmed by a report of Dan Rather, CBS News. ([See our October 2003 article on this issue](#))

He could have been arrested at short notice which would have "saved us a lot of trouble", but then we would not have had an Osama Legend, which has fed the news chain as well as George W's speeches in the course of the last five years.

According to Dan Rather, CBS, Bin Laden was hospitalized in Rawalpindi. one day before the 9/11 attacks, on September 10, 2001.

## CBS Video with Dan Rather. Barry Petersen Reporting from Rawalpindi

"Pakistan. Pakistan's Military Intelligence (ISI) told CBS that bin Laden had received

dialysis treatment in Rawalpindi, at Pak Army's headquarters.

DAN RATHER, CBS ANCHOR: As the United States and its allies in the war on terrorism press the hunt for Osama bin Laden, *CBS News has exclusive information tonight about where bin Laden was and what he was doing in the last hours before his followers struck the United States September 11.*

This is the result of hard-nosed investigative reporting by a team of CBS news journalists, and by one of the best foreign correspondents in the business, CBS's Barry Petersen. Here is his report.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE) BARRY PETERSEN, CBS CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): Everyone remembers what happened on September 11. Here's the story of what may have happened the night before. It is a tale as twisted as the hunt for Osama bin Laden.

*CBS News has been told that the night before the September 11 terrorist attack, Osama bin Laden was in Pakistan. He was getting medical treatment with the support of the very military that days later pledged its backing for the U.S. war on terror in Afghanistan.*

Pakistan intelligence sources tell CBS News that bin Laden was spirited into this military hospital in Rawalpindi for kidney dialysis treatment. On that night, says this medical worker who wanted her identity protected, they moved out all the regular staff in the urology department and sent in a secret team to replace them. She says it was treatment for a very special person. The special team was obviously up to no good.

"The military had him surrounded," says this hospital employee who also wanted his identity masked, "and I saw the mysterious patient helped out of a car. Since that time," he says, "I have seen many pictures of the man. He is the man we know as Osama bin Laden. I also heard two army officers talking to each other. They were saying that Osama bin Laden had to be watched carefully and looked after." Those who know bin Laden say he suffers from numerous ailments, back and stomach problems. Ahmed Rashid, who has written extensively on the Taliban, says the military was often there to help before 9/11.

(...)

PETERSEN (on camera): Doctors at the hospital told CBS News there was nothing special about that night, but they refused our request to see any records. Government officials tonight denied that bin Laden had any medical treatment on that night.

(voice-over): But it was Pakistan's President Musharraf who said in public what many suspected, that bin Laden suffers from kidney disease, saying he thinks bin Laden may be near death. His evidence, watching this most recent video, showing a pale and haggard bin Laden, his left hand never moving. Bush administration officials admit they don't know if bin Laden is sick or even dead.

DONALD RUMSFELD, DEFENSE SECRETARY: With respect to the issue of Osama bin Laden's health, I just am — don't have any knowledge.

PETERSEN: *The United States has no way of knowing who in Pakistan's military or*

*intelligence supported the Taliban or Osama bin Laden maybe up to the night before 9/11 by arranging dialysis to keep him alive. So the United States may not know if those same people might help him again perhaps to freedom.*

Barry Petersen, CBS News, Islamabad.

(END VIDEOTAPE) END

(CBS News, 28 January 2002 emphasis added, the complete transcript of CBS report is contained in annex to this article)

It should be noted, that the hospital is directly under the jurisdiction of the Pakistani Armed Forces, which has close links to the Pentagon. U.S. military advisers based in Rawalpindi. work closely with the Pakistani Armed Forces. Again, no attempt was made to arrest America's best known fugitive, but then maybe bin Laden was serving another "better purpose". Rumsfeld claimed at the time that he had no knowledge regarding Osama's health. (CBS News, 28 January 2002)

The CBS report is a crucial piece of information in our understanding of 9/11.

It refutes the administration's claim that the whereabouts of bin Laden are unknown. It points to a Pakistan connection, it suggests a cover-up at the highest levels of the Bush administration.

Dan Rather and Barry Petersen fail to draw the implications of their January 2002 report. They suggest that the US had been deliberately misled by Pakistani intelligence officials. They fail to ask the question:

Why does the US administration state that they cannot find Osama?

If they are to stand by their report, the conclusion is obvious. The administration is lying. Osama bin Laden's whereabouts were known.

If the CBS report is accurate and Osama had indeed been admitted to the Pakistani military hospital on September 10, courtesy of America's ally, he was either still in hospital in Rawalpindi on the 11th of September, when the attacks occurred or had been released from the hospital within the last hours before the attacks.

In other words, Osama's whereabouts were known to US officials on the morning of September 12, when Secretary of State Colin Powell initiated negotiations with Pakistan, with a view to arresting and extraditing bin Laden. These negotiations, led by General Mahmoud Ahmad, head of Pakistan's military intelligence, on behalf of the government of President Pervez Musharraf, took place on the 12th and 13th of September in Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage's office.

He could have been arrested at short notice on September 10th, 2001. But then we would not have been privileged to five years of Osama related media stories. The Bush administration desperately needs the fiction of an "outside enemy of America".

Known and documented Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda is a construct of the US intelligence apparatus. His essential function is to give a face to the "war on terrorism". The image must be vivid.

According to the White house, "The greatest threat to us is this ideology of violent extremism, and its greatest public proponent is Osama bin Laden. Bin Laden remains the number one target, in terms of our efforts, but he's not the only target." Recent Statement of White House Assistant for Homeland Security Frances Townsend, 5 September 2006).

The national security doctrine rests on the fiction of Islamic terrorists, led by Osama who are portrayed as a "threat to the civilized World". In the words of President Bush, "Bin Laden and his terrorist allies have made their intentions as clear as Lenin and Hitler before them. The question is will we listen? Will we pay attention to what these evil men say? We are on the offensive. We will not rest. We will not retreat. And we will not withdraw from the fight until this threat to civilization has been removed." (quoted by CNN, September 5, 2006)

The "hot pursuit" of Osama in the rugged mountainous areas of Pakistan must continue, because without Osama, referred to ad nauseam in news reports and official statements, the fragile legitimacy of the Bush administration collapses like a deck of cards.

Moreover, the search for Osama protects the real architects of the 911 attacks. While there is no evidence that Al Qaeda was behind the 911 attacks, as revealed by numerous studies and documents, there is mounting evidence of complicity and coverup at the highest levels of the State, Military and intelligence apparatus.

The continued arrest of alleged 911 accomplices and suspects has nothing to do with "national security". It creates the illusion that Arabs and Muslims are behind the terror plots, while shunting the conduct of a real criminal investigation into the 911 attacks. And what were dealing with is the criminalization of the upper echelons of State.

Michel Chossudovsky is the author of the international best [America's "War on Terrorism"](#) Global Research, 2005. He is Professor of Economics at the University of Ottawa and Director of the Center for Research on Globalization.

To order Chossudovsky's book [America's "War on Terrorism"](#), [click here](#)

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CBS Evening News with Dan Rather;

Author: Dan Rather, Barry Petersen

CBS, 28 January 2002

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"The military had him surrounded," says this hospital employee who also wanted his identity masked, "and I saw the mysterious patient helped out of a car. Since that time," he says, "I have seen many pictures of the man. He is the man we know as Osama bin Laden. I also heard two army officers talking to each other. They were saying that Osama bin Laden had to be watched carefully and looked after." Those who know bin Laden say he suffers from numerous ailments, back and stomach problems. Ahmed Rashid, who has written extensively on the Taliban, says the military was often there to help before 9/11.

AHMED RASHID, TALIBAN EXPERT: There were reports that Pakistani intelligence had helped the Taliban buy dialysis machines. And the rumor was that these were wanted for Osama bin Laden.

PETERSEN (on camera): Doctors at the hospital told CBS News there was nothing special about that night, but they refused our request to see any records. Government officials tonight denied that bin Laden had any medical treatment on that night.

(voice-over): But it was Pakistan's President Musharraf who said in public what many suspected, that bin Laden suffers from kidney disease, saying he thinks bin Laden may be near death. His evidence, watching this most recent video, showing a pale and haggard bin Laden, his left hand never moving. Bush administration officials admit they don't know if bin Laden is sick or even dead.

DONALD RUMSFELD, DEFENSE SECRETARY: With respect to the issue of Osama bin Laden's health, I just am — don't have any knowledge.

PETERSEN: The United States has no way of knowing who in Pakistan's military or intelligence supported the Taliban or Osama bin Laden maybe up to the night before 9/11 by arranging dialysis to keep him alive. So the United States may not know if those same people might help him again perhaps to freedom.

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(END VIDEOTAPE) END

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2002/01/28/eveningnews/main325887.shtml>

Hospital Worker: I Saw Osama

Jan. 28, 2002

Quote

"They military had him surrounded. I have seen many pictures of the man. He is the man we know as Osama bin Laden." Hospital employee

*(CBS) Everyone remembers what happened on Sept. 11 and, reports CBS News Correspondent Barry Petersen, here's the story of what may have happened the night before.*

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Those who know bin Laden say he suffers from numerous ailments — back and stomach problems.

Ahmed Rashid, who has written extensively on the Taliban, said the military was often there to help before Sept. 11.

"There were reports that Pakistan intelligence had helped the Taliban buy dialysis machines and the rumor was that these were for wanted for Osama bin Laden," said Rashid.

Doctors at the hospital told CBS News there was nothing special about that night, but they declined our request to see any records. Government officials reached Monday night denied that bin Laden received any medical treatment that night.

A U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Tuesday the United States has seen nothing to substantiate the report.

It was Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf who said in public what many suspected: that bin Laden suffers from kidney disease, saying he thinks bin Laden may be near death.

His evidence — watching the most recent video, showing a pale and haggard bin Laden, his left hand never moving. Bush administration officials admit they don't know if bin Laden is sick or even dead.

"With respect to the issue of Osama bin Laden's health, I just am...don't have any knowledge," said Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld.

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