

Phone Call Led U.S. To Bin Laden's Doorstep

WASHINGTON (AP) — When one of Osama bin Laden's most trusted aides picked up the phone last year, he unknowingly led U.S. pursuers to the doorstep of his boss, the world's most wanted terrorist.

That phone call, recounted Monday by a U.S. official, ended a years-long search for bin Laden's personal courier, the key break in a worldwide manhunt. The courier, in turn, led U.S. intelligence to a walled compound in northeast Pakistan, where a team of Navy SEALs shot bin Laden to death.

The violent final minutes were the culmination of years of intelligence work. Inside the CIA team hunting bin Laden, it always was clear that bin Laden's vulnerability was his couriers. He was too smart to let al-Qaida foot soldiers, or even his senior commanders, know his hideout. But if he wanted to get his messages out, somebody had to carry them, someone bin Laden trusted with his life.

In a secret CIA prison in Eastern Europe years ago, al-Qaida's No. 3 leader, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, gave authorities the nicknames of several of bin Laden's couriers, four former U.S. intelligence officials said. Those names were among thousands of leads the CIA was pursuing.

One man became a particular interest for the agency when another detainee, Abu Faraj al-Libi, told interrogators that when he was promoted to succeed Mohammed as al-Qaida's operational leader he received the word through a courier. Only bin Laden would have given al-Libi that promotion, CIA officials believed.

Corps Prepares To Blow Up Miss. River Levee

SIKESTON, Mo. (AP) — The Army Corps of Engineers pumped liquid explosives into an earthen levee Monday as demolition crews prepared to blow a two-mile-wide hole in the barrier — part of a desperate bid to save an Illinois town imperiled by rising floodwaters.

Engineers went on with their work, even though the agency did not plan to announce a final decision on the plan until later Monday.

But doubts persisted about whether breaking open the levee will provide the relief needed. How much water would the blast really divert from the Mississippi River? And will authorities have to do the same thing at other trouble spots downstream?

Time was running short to find answers. Five more inches of rain fell overnight, further straining the flood wall protecting tiny Cairo, Ill.

The seemingly endless rain has overwhelmed rivers and strained levees, including one protecting Cairo, at the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers.

Mourners In Libyan Capital Demand Revenge

TRIPOLI, Libya (AP) — Libyans shouting for revenge buried Moammar Gadhafi's second youngest son to the thundering sound of anti-aircraft fire Monday, as South Africa warned that the NATO bombing that killed him would only bring more violence.

Libya's leader did not attend the tumultuous funeral of 29-year-old Seif al-Arab, but older brothers Seif al-Islam and Mohammed paid their respects, thronged by a crowd of several thousand. Jostling to get closer to the coffin, draped with a green Libyan flag, mourners flashed victory signs and chanted "Revenge, revenge for you, Libya."

Three of Gadhafi's grandchildren, an infant and two toddlers, also died in Saturday's attack, which NATO says targeted one of the regime's command and control centers. Gadhafi and his wife were in the compound at the time, but escaped unharmed, Libyan officials said, accusing the alliance of trying to assassinate the Libyan leader.

NATO officials have denied they are hunting Gadhafi to break the battlefield stalemate between Gadhafi's troops and rebels trying for the past 10 weeks to depose him. Rebels largely control eastern Libya, while Gadhafi has clung to much of the west, including the capital, Tripoli.

Obama Awards Posthumous Medals Of Honor

WASHINGTON (AP) — When President Barack Obama expressed his pride in America's men and women in uniform, he was speaking about those who hours earlier had killed al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden and those who six decades earlier had given their lives in the Korean War.

During a somber ceremony Monday in the White House East Room, Obama bestowed the Medal of Honor posthumously on two Army privates — Anthony T. Kaho'ohanohano of Pukalani, Hawaii, and Henry Svehla of Belleville, N.J.

"Today we remember them with the highest military decoration that our nation can bestow," Obama said, describing the pair as "hometown kids who stood tall in America's uniform."

The commander in chief also reflected on the news of bin Laden's death at the hands of U.S. forces during a raid in Pakistan, saying "I think we can all agree this is a good day for America."

Kaho'ohanohano was in charge of a machine-gun squad with Company H, 17th Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division on Sept. 1, 1951, when they were overrun by enemy forces. He ordered the squad to fall back and seek cover, then gathered up some grenades and fought the enemy alone. When his ammunition ran out, he fought them hand-to-hand until he was killed.

Weak \$\$ Gives U.S. Factories A Lift In 2011

WASHINGTON (AP) — The nation's manufacturing sector has expanded this year at the fastest pace in a quarter-century, boosted by a weak dollar that has made U.S. goods cheap overseas.

Strong factory production could help the economy rebound after experiencing weak growth in the first three months of this year. But the construction industry is struggling and manufacturing won't drive enough job growth by itself. Rising prices are also threatening many companies' profit margins.

The Institute for Supply Management said Monday that manufacturing activity expanded in April for the 21st straight month. While the trade group's index dipped to 60.4, it's down only slightly from the previous two months. And February's reading of 61.4 was the fastest expansion in nearly seven years. Any reading above 50 signals growth.

"In April, there was no meaningful slowdown in what has become the most important sector in the economy," said Dan Greenhaus, economic strategist at Miller Tabak.

The index has topped 60 in every month this year, the best four-month stretch in 27 years, said David Resler, an economist at Nomura Securities.

Companies are buying more industrial machinery, heavy equipment, and computers, spurring much of the growth in factory output. And consumers are buying more cars, helping the beleaguered U.S. auto industry recover after General Motors and Chrysler declared bankruptcy two years ago.

Another reason for the growth is the falling dollar. It has declined 8 percent in value this year against a basket of six other currencies. That helped fuel a 7.8 percent rise in exports in the first three months of this year. A weaker dollar makes U.S. goods cheaper overseas, and imports more expensive in the U.S.

BIN LADEN

Chase Ends In Burst Of Gunfire

BY ADAM GOLDMAN
 AND CHRIS BRUMMITT
 Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Osama bin Laden, the terror mastermind killed by Navy SEALs in an intense firefight, was hunted down based on information first gleaned years ago from detainees at secret CIA prison sites in Eastern Europe, officials disclosed Monday. The U.S. said a DNA match proved the man behind the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, was dead, and millions of Americans rejoiced.

After the gunfire, U.S. forces swept bin Laden's fortified compound in Pakistan and left with a trove of hard drives, DVDs and other documents that officials said the CIA was already poring over. The hope: clues leading to his presumed successor, al-Qaida No. 2 Ayman al-Zawahiri.

"The world is safer. It is a better place because of the death of Osama bin Laden," declared President Barack Obama, hours after U.S. forces killed the al-Qaida leader. They then ferried the body out for a quick burial at sea.

Bin Laden's death after a decade on the run unloosed a national wave of euphoria mixed with remembrance for the thousands who died in the Sept. 11 2001, terror attacks. Crowds celebrated throughout the night outside the White House and at ground zero in Lower Manhattan where the Twin Towers once stood. Thousands of students at Penn State University and in other college towns spilled into the streets and set off firecrackers to mark the moment.

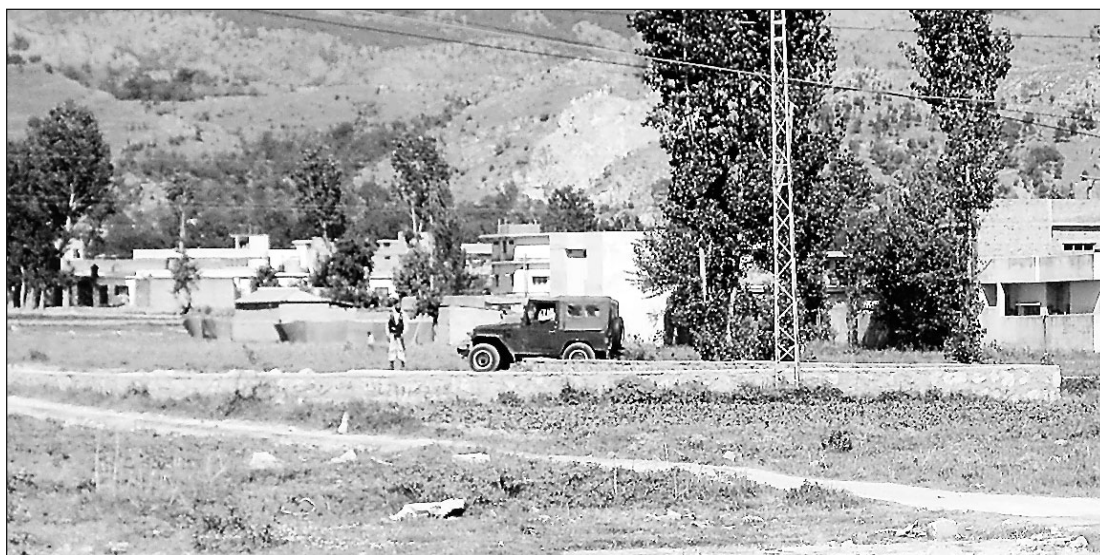
"For my family and I, it's good, it's desirable, it's right," said Mike Low of Batesville, Ark., whose daughter Sara was a flight attendant aboard the hijacked plane that was flown into the World Trade Center North Tower. "It certainly brings an ending to a major quest for all of us."

Halfway around the world, a prominent al-Qaida commentator vowed revenge for bin Laden's death. "Woe to his enemies. By God, we will avenge the killing of the Sheik of Islam," he wrote under his online name Assad al-Jihad2. "Those who wish that jihad has ended or weakened, I tell them: Let us wait a little bit."

U.S. officials conceded the risk of renewed attack. The terrorists "almost certainly will attempt to avenge" bin Laden's death, CIA Director Leon Panetta wrote in a memo that congratulated the agency for its role in the operation. "Bin Laden is dead. Al-Qaida is not."

Within a few hours, the Department of Homeland Security warned that bin Laden's death was likely to provide motivation for attacks from "homegrown violent extremists" seeking revenge.

FBI spokesman Paul Bresson



SAEED SHAH/MCT

The house where Osama bin Laden was finally hunted down is large but rather ordinary-looking, set in a compound in an affluent suburb of Abbottabad, only about a mile from the Pakistan Military Academy, Pakistan's most prestigious military training center. The 3-story house is white with a little brick structure on the roof. The red cloth screen erected on one side of the compound, is where the helicopter is said to have crashed.

Army and intelligence agency "have a lot of questions to answer, given the location, the length of time and the apparent fact that this was actually — this facility was actually built for bin Laden, and its closeness to the central location of the Pakistani army."

By their condemnations, bin Laden's supporters confirmed his death in what U.S. officials said was an operation years in the making. Even so, officials were weighing the release of at least one photo taken of bin Laden's body as part of what Brennan called an effort to make sure "nobody has any basis to try and deny" the death.

U.S. officials said the information that ultimately led to bin Laden's capture originally came from detainees held in secret CIA

prison sites in Eastern Europe. There, agency interrogators were told of an alias used by a courier whom bin Laden particularly trusted.

It took four long years to learn the man's real name, then years more before investigators got a big break in the case, these officials said. Sometime in mid-2010, the man was overheard using a phone by intelligence officials, who then were able to locate his residence — the specially constructed \$1 million compound with walls as high as 18 feet topped with barbed wire.

U.S. counterterrorism officials considered bombing the place, an

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said, "While there are no specific, bin Laden-related threats at this time, every logical and prudent step is being taken to mitigate any developing threats." There were questions, as well, about Pakistan's role in bin Laden's years in hiding. Both Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said cooperation from the Pakistani government had helped lead U.S. forces to the compound where he died.

But John Brennan, White House counter-terrorism adviser, told reporters it was inconceivable that the terrorist fugitive didn't have some support in Pakistan, where his hideout had been custom built six years ago in a city with a heavy military presence. "I am not going to speculate about what type of support he might have had on an official basis," he added.

Others were not as reticent. Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said the Pakistani

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