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Death of Osama bin Ladin-Respect for Pakistan's Established Policy Parameters on Counter Terrorism

The Government of Pakistan recognizes that the death of Osama bin Ladin is an important milestone in fight against terrorism and that the Government of Pakistan and its state institutions have been making serious efforts to bring him to justice.

However, the Government of Pakistan categorically denies the media reports suggesting that its leadership, civil as well as military, had any prior knowledge of the US operation against Osama bin Ladin carried out in the early hours of 2nd May 2011.

Abbottabad and the surrounding areas have been under sharp focus of intelligence agencies since 2003 resulting in highly technical operation by ISI which led to the arrest of high value Al Qaeda target in 2004. As far as the target compound is concerned, ISI had been sharing information with CIA and other friendly intelligence agencies since 2009. The intelligence flow indicating some foreigners in the surroundings of Abbottabad, continued till mid April 2011. It is important to highlight that taking advantage of much superior technological assets, CIA exploited the intelligence leads given by us to identify and reach Osama bin Ladin, a fact also acknowledged by the US President and Secretary of State, in their statements. It is also important to mention that CIA and some other friendly intelligence agencies have benefitted a great deal from the intelligence provided by ISI. ISI's own achievements against Al Qaeda and in War on Terror are more than any other intelligence agency in the World.

Reports about US helicopters taking off from Ghazi Airbase are absolutely false and incorrect. Neither any base or facility inside Pakistan was used by the US Forces, nor Pakistan Army provided any operational or logistic assistance to these operations conducted by the US Forces. US helicopters entered Pakistani airspace making use of blind spots in the radar coverage due to hilly terrain. US helicopters' undetected flight into Pakistan was also facilitated by the mountainous terrain, efficacious use of latest technology and 'nap of the earth' flying techniques. It may not be realistic to draw an analogy between this undefended civilian area and some military / security installations which have elaborate local defence arrangements.

On receipt of information regarding the incident, PAF scrambled its jets within minutes. This has been corroborated by the White House Advisor Mr John Brennan who while replying to a question said, "We didn't contact the Pakistanis until after all of our people, all of our aircraft were out of Pakistani airspace. At the time, the Pakistanis were reacting to an incident that they knew was taking place in Abbottabad. Therefore, they were scrambling some of their assets. Clearly, we were concerned that if the Pakistanis decided to scramble jets or whatever else, they didn't know who were on those jets. They had no idea about who might have been on there, whether it be US or somebody else. So, we were watching and making sure that our people and our aircraft were able to get out of Pakistani airspace. And thankfully, there was no engagement with Pakistani forces. This operation was designed to minimize the prospects, the chances of engagement with Pakistani forces. It was done very well, and thankfully no Pakistani forces were engaged and there were no other individuals who were killed aside from those on the compound."

There has been a lot of discussion about the nature of the targeted compound, particularly its high

walls and its vicinity to the areas housing Pakistan Army elements. It needs to be appreciated that many houses occupied by the affectees of operations in FATA / KPK, have high boundary walls, in line with their culture of privacy and security. Houses with such layout and structural details are not a rarity.

Questions have also been asked about the whereabouts of the family members of Osama bin Ladin. They are all in safe hands and being looked after in accordance with law. Some of them needing medical care are under treatment in the best possible facilities. As per policy, they will be handed over to their countries of origin.

Notwithstanding the above, the Government of Pakistan expresses its deep concerns and reservations on the manner in which the Government of the United States carried out this operation without prior information or authorization from the Government of Pakistan.

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.

Pakistan, being mindful of its international obligations, has been extending full and proper cooperation on all counter terrorism efforts including exchange of information and intelligence. Pursuant to such cooperation, Pakistan had arrested several high profile terrorists.

The Government of Pakistan and its Armed Forces consider support of the people of Pakistan to be its mainstay and actual strength. Any actions contrary to their aspirations, therefore, run against the very basis on which the edifice of national defence and security is based. Pakistan Army and intelligence agencies have played a pivotal role in breaking the back of Al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations in Pakistan as well as around the World. Most of the successes achieved by the US and some other friendly countries have been the result of effective intelligence cooperation and extremely useful military support by Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan and its security forces have resolved to continue their fight against terrorism till people of Pakistan can live in peace and security.

Islamabad

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