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Obama and Osama

Here Lies the truth

by IBRAHIM BAHATI

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Since Osama bin Laden's death 2 May 2011, the official account of the Navy Seals' raid has been challenged, most recently and cogently by journalist Seymour Hersh, alleging that "Washington's official account of the hunt for Bin Laden and the raid that led to his death was a lie." In fact, there have been more "conspiracy-factual theories" about this event than there are on Illuminati. Was OBL there? Was he even alive then? Is he still?

Indeed, mere days after the 9/11/01 attacks, on 18 September, 2001, George Monbiot wrote in the Guardian that "If Osama bin Laden did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him" since "his usefulness to Western governments lies in the power to terrify," enabling the continuous unleashing of billions of dollars in military spending—on any given day, all year, the Pentagon spends almost \$2 billion. No wonder the ghost of Osama rises from Pakistan, from Sudan, from Afghanistan, or from the open ocean. A lie to gin up demand for obscene profits and power? That is easy to believe. The truth? That is tougher to find.

Origins

Since the collapse of the Soviet Era in 1990, America found itself with all its threats seemingly neutralized. War, however, is always great business venture, not only for nation-states but for all

manner of military contracting corporations, the gateway to amass profits at rates no legitimate business can produce. Enemies are required—real, imaginary, or manufactured. In 1995, Ray Moseley wrote in the Chicago Tribune: Could it be that NATO discovered the Islamic threat because, after the demise of communism it desperately needed a new threat to survive as an organization?

Controversial lies in plain sight?

If the Pakistanis were left out of the operation as Obama alleged, where does this leave us with the notions by Pakistani Ex-Spy Chief General Asad Durrani that “ISI probably knew of the al-Qaeda chief’s whereabouts until his death”? The US has underwritten ISI by the \$billions for decades. When will the US taxpayer start to wonder about the value of this?

And most interestingly, why has there come no vivid clinical information (rather than verbal claims) about Osama’s DNA, his death-in-combat pictures and his burial. Obama asserted that Osama was given a proper Muslim burial. Says who? Says which Muslim authority? Which Imam was present? Where is it written that proper Islamic burial takes place at sea? Nowhere! It is as if we have settled for a reality that might have scored as a poor episode of 24.

Now what?

Separating fact from fiction is an endless labor. Leaks by Edward Snowden that the NSA actually forced Google and Samsung to allow a Trojan horse to surveil Americans and international citizens shows the ongoing erosion of civil liberties. People are no longer citizens of their nations but instead are often “persons of interest” for entirely legal conduct. Are we an autocracy or a democracy? Dictatorial regimes like Saudi Arabia have been massively supported under the banner of ‘ally’ despite their bad record on human rights and governance issues. In fact today’s war on terrorism has played the total replica of the much worse unending, unfinished Cold War. We support state terrorists in the name of opposing non-state terrorists.

Whether events surrounding Osama death were a spoof or as Seal Team 6 claimed, questions continue and the US seems arrogantly proud of its “global manhunting machine.” Osama’s ghost has not rested. Seymour M. Hersh notes, “Obama today is not facing re-election as he was in the spring of 2011. His principled stand on behalf of the proposed nuclear agreement with Iran says much, as does his decision to operate without the support of the conservative Republicans in Congress. High-level lying nevertheless remains the modus operandi of US policy, along with secret prisons, drone attacks, Special Forces night raids, bypassing the chain of command, and cutting out those who might say no.” In 1969, Hersh was the young investigative journalist who broke the story of the My Lai massacre in Vietnam after the Army covered it up and lied consistently about it; he is still on point today.

Whatever happened to Osama bin Laden, his ghost may be found in the spirit of ISIS and all other US enemies, real and imaginary, urging the US empire to crack its hull on the rocks of war and militarism and join him in a watery, bloody grave. Will we let bin Laden’s ghost have the last laugh?

