

FAISAL SHAHZAD GETS A LAWYER

Faisal Shahzad rather suddenly got arraigned and got a lawyer yesterday. Josh Gerstein noted that the arraignment happened on the 15th day since Shahzad's arrest—the lower range of time the Obama Administration has floated for its changes to Miranda. But the LAT reports that Shahzad decided he no longer wanted to be questioned by interrogators.

Shahzad did not enter a plea. But he spoke briefly during the 10-minute appearance with his attorney, public defender Julia Gatto, in the courtroom. He reportedly asked earlier in the day for an attorney and said he no longer wished to speak with interrogators, a decision that prompted the court arraignment.

There's no reporting on it, but I do wonder whether this docket item is related:

ORDER FOR MEDICAL ATTENTION FORM as to Faisal Shahzad. (Signed by Magistrate Judge James C. Francis on 5/18/2010)(gq).

(Shahzad's lawyer didn't mention medical attention in the court appearance, as far as I can tell, though she did request that he start receiving Halal food.)

In a separate story, the LAT reported that Pakistan has arrested an Army major in connection with Shahzad's attack.

Investigators have arrested a Pakistani army major linked to the prime suspect in the botched attempt to bomb New York City's Times Square early this month, Pakistani law enforcement sources said Tuesday.

The major's involvement with suspect Faisal Shahzad, who was arrested at John F. Kennedy International Airport as he attempted to fly to Dubai, United Arab Emirates, remains unclear. Law enforcement sources said the major had met Shahzad, a naturalized U.S. citizen of Pakistani descent, in Islamabad, the capital, and was in cellphone contact with him.

The LAT doesn't say when the arrest happened, but it coincides with a sudden visit by Leon Panetta and National Security Advisor to Pakistan.

Obama's National Security Advisor Jim Jones and CIA Director Leon Panetta have arrived in Pakistan, and unusually, given security concerns, the White House is acknowledging their travel while they are on the ground.

"In light of the failed Times Square terrorist attack and other terrorist attacks that trace to the border region, we believe that it is time to redouble our efforts with our allies in Pakistan to close this safe haven and create an environment where we and the Pakistani people can lead safe and productive lives," National Security Council spokesman Mike Hammer, accompanying them, explained the trip.

[snip]

Jones' trip seemed to come about at short notice. He had been due to speak tonight at a conference in Washington, but the group announced yesterday that it had been informed he had to travel.

Also yesterday, the John Brennan stated that the High Value Interrogation Group (HIG) had been involved in Shahzad's interrogation, which may be a response to Mark Hosenball's reporting that

the HIG had only a limited role in Shahzad's interrogation. The LAT provides more details on the Administration's description of the HIG's role (which doesn't, ultimately, explain precisely how HIG was involved):

The new unit that has been assisting in Shahzad's questioning is known as the High-Value Interrogation Group, or HIG. It was activated several months ago and is staffed mainly by personnel from the FBI, CIA and Defense Department, according to senior administration officials who on Tuesday provided the fullest description of the unit's procedures to date. They were not authorized to comment publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

[snip]

Because of concerns about CIA personnel being involved in domestic law enforcement, its personnel assigned to the HIG only advise FBI and other agencies when suspects are being held on U.S. soil, a senior official said.

But if a detainee is being held by a foreign government, the CIA "may participate in the questioning," the official said.

One suggestion. Last weeks stories said that HIG wasn't involved—in Pakistan—because the country had not invited it to be involved. Given the arrests there, perhaps that's one purpose of Panetta and Jones' visit today?