

PAKISTAN PAYS BLOOD MONEY SO WE DON'T HAVE TO

As Jim White reported this morning, Raymond Davis has been released after the families of his victims were paid blood money per Sharia law.

We've really gotten to bizarro-land when a possible Blackwater contractor has been saved by Sharia law.

But wait! Hillary says **we** didn't pay the blood money ourselves.

QUESTION: Okay, we'll jump right into it. Again, I'll try not to take up too much of your time. Before I ask about Egypt, I'm obliged to ask you about one other thing – Raymond Davis. Can you explain why, in your view, it was a wise idea in the long term to pay blood money for Davis's release?

SECRETARY CLINTON: Well, first of all, the United States did not pay any compensation. The families of the victims of the incident on January 27th decided to pardon Mr. Davis. And we are very grateful for their decision. And we are very grateful to the people and Government of Pakistan, who have a very strong relationship with us that we are committed to strengthening.

QUESTION: According to wire reports out of Pakistan, the law minister of the Punjab Province, which is where this took place, says the blood money was paid. Is he mistaken?

SECRETARY CLINTON: Well, you'll have to ask him what he means by that.

QUESTION: And a lawyer involved in the case said it was 2.34 million. There is

no money that came from anywhere?

SECRETARY CLINTON: The United States did not pay any compensation.

QUESTION: Did someone else, to your knowledge?

SECRETARY CLINTON: You will have to ask whoever you are interested in asking about that.

Josh Rogin explains what really happened:
Pakistan paid our blood money. And we'll make it up to them ... somehow.

The truth is that the Pakistani government paid the victims' families the \$2.3 million and the U.S. promised to reimburse them in the future, according to a senior Pakistani official.

[snip]

"The understanding is the Pakistani government settled with the family and the U.S. will compensate the Pakistanis one way or the other," the senior Pakistani official told *The Cable*.

The U.S. government didn't want to set a precedent of paying blood money to victims' families in exchange for the release of U.S. government personnel, the source said, adding that the deal also successfully avoided a ruling on Davis's claim of diplomatic immunity — an issue that had become a political firestorm in Pakistan.

Now, this is weird on several fronts. The people in the US who would be really opposed to a blood money payment under Sharia law are the same nutcases who have managed to roll back funding of reproductive health using the argument that all money is fungible. If they're going to argue that money reimbursed by the government (via a

health insurance subsidy) is equivalent to a direct payment by the government, then won't they argue that money reimbursed to Pakistan by the US is equivalent to a Sharia payment directly?

But I'm also fascinated about this given the government's success at getting the NYT and others to spike reporting on Davis' CIA ties. The argument then was that "authoritative" reporting on Davis' CIA ties would put him at risk. But as I pointed out repeatedly, the people who might put him at risk—Pakistani people—already knew this detail.

Well, if our government is so worried about these threats, then isn't the revelation that the Pakistanis paid the blood money going to endanger the already fragile Asif Zardari government? Or is this just confirmation that the government was worried about Americans finding out about Davis, not Pakistanis?

In news that is probably unrelated (but who knows!?!?!), Hillary has told Wolf Blitzer she's not coming back for a possible second Obama term (as also reported by Rogin).