

HAQQANI'S REVENGE?

As Jim laid out this morning, yesterday Nawaz Sharif visited the White House, where he scolded the President for the use of drones.

Pakistan and the United States have a strong ongoing counterterrorism cooperation. We have agreed to further strengthen this cooperation. I also brought up the issue of drones in our meeting, emphasizing the need for an end to such strikes.

The statement comes in the wake of an Amnesty International report finding some of the US drone strikes in Pakistan it examined were illegal.

Even before Sharif made his comments, Michael Hirsh pointed to a protocol between the US and Pakistan authorizing some of the strikes.

But what is obscured by the public dispute is that there has been, since the administrations of George W. Bush and Pervez Musharraf, a secret agreement in place by which Pakistani military and intelligence authorities have approved many of the strikes, U.S. and Pakistani officials say.

“The exact terms were never shared with civilians but there was a protocol between the Musharraf government and the Americans,” says a former senior Pakistani official who would discuss the classified matter only on condition of anonymity. “When the civilian government came in [in 2008], it was informed about it but there was no renegotiation.”

Elsewhere, Hirsh quotes from Husain Haqqani's upcoming book, *Magnificent Delusions*, which is available but technically does not get published until November 5.

Then, later in the day, Woodward et al published a story reporting on the drone agreements between the US and Pakistan (note, Jonathan Landay reported this story back in April, though relying on different documents covering a slightly different span of time and US sources). The WaPo story covers strikes from late 2007 to late 2011, though the 2007 strikes were reported in a 2008 document.

Despite repeatedly denouncing the CIA's drone campaign, top officials in Pakistan's government have for years secretly endorsed the program and routinely received classified briefings on strikes and casualty counts, according to top-secret CIA documents and Pakistani diplomatic memos obtained by The Washington Post.

The files describe dozens of drone attacks in Pakistan's tribal region and include maps as well as before-and-after aerial photos of targeted compounds over a four-year stretch from late 2007 to late 2011 in which the campaign intensified dramatically.

Husain Haqqani was ~~Foreign Minister~~ Ambassador to the US from April 2008 until November 2011.

The story relies on a document from Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs that almost certainly wouldn't have been shared willingly.

In a measure of the antagonism between the two sides, a 2010 memo sent by Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to its embassy in Washington outlined a plan to undermine the CIA.

"Kindly find enclosed a list of 36 U.S. citizens who are [believed] to be CIA special agents and would be visiting Pakistan for some special task," said the memo, signed by an official listed as the country's director general for the Americas. "Kindly do not repeat not

issue visas to the same.”

And WaPo describes some of the documents may have been used in briefings Mike Morell gave to Husain Haqqani.

Several of the files are labeled as “talking points” prepared for the DDCIA, which stands for deputy director of the CIA. Michael J. Morell, who held that position before retiring this year, delivered regular briefings on the drone program to Husain Haqqani, who was the Pakistani ambassador to the United States at the time.

But Haqqani refused to comment for the WaPo.

When contacted Wednesday, Haqqani declined to comment and said he would not discuss classified materials.

Perhaps the most interesting file portrayed by the WaPo describes Hillary Clinton complaining to her Pakistani “counterparts” (again, suggesting these documents were Haqqani’s) about Pakistan’s support for terrorism.

Some files describe tense meetings in which senior U.S. officials, including then-Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, confront their Pakistani counterparts with U.S. intelligence purporting to show Pakistan’s ties to militant groups involved in attacks on American forces, a charge that Islamabad has consistently denied.

In one case, Clinton cited “cell phones and written material from dead bodies that point all fingers” at a militant group based in Pakistan, according to a Pakistani diplomatic cable dated Sept. 20, 2011. “The U.S. had intelligence proving ISI was involved with these groups,” she is cited as saying,

referring to Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency.

A Jeffrey Goldberg review of Haqqani's book reveals it criticizes Pakistan for supporting terrorism.

Whether Haqqani talked to Woodward, the documents sure seem to come from his collection and may have been used to write his book. Maybe they got liberated in the process of publication?

Now, Landay's story described how we originally got permission for drone strikes from the Pakistani government (though often had to fight to get it). But we stopped when it became clear Pakistan was protecting the Haqqani network to sustain its influence in Afghanistan (a topic Sharif and Obama also discussed yesterday).

The main reason for ending the ISI's ability to veto targets, said two former U.S. defense officials and a senior U.S. official, was that after several years of arguing, U.S. military and intelligence officials finally persuaded the White House that ISI officers were protecting the Haqqani network to ensure that it could participate in peace talks and bring a pro-Pakistan government to power in Kabul. The three requested anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue.

"Basically, they (the CIA and ISI) started out together but then they diverged because the two sides had different objectives. It was as simple as that," explained the individual with knowledge of the North Waziristan strike.

As you'll recall, Haqqani was ousted in 2011 for having passed on a memo in May 2011 to Admiral Mike Mullen expressing Asif Zardari's concern that Pakistani military and intelligence

would launch a coup in response to the Osama bin Laden raid. The entire point of the Mansoor Ijaz column that first revealed the memo was to call on the US to treat ISI's Section S as a terrorist organization. But in ousting Haqqani, his column led to a stronger hand for ISI and the military.

Sharif has always been perceived as much more approving of terrorists than Zardari (and has very close ties to Saudi Arabia). And it may be that his call to end drone strikes is intended to protect Pakistan's own sponsored terrorist organizations.

The leak doesn't target Sharif directly – the materials all precede him. But it does make it clear that those aiming to halt strikes that target Pakistan's terrorists have also used drones for their own uses.

Update: Thanks to Glenn Kessler who pointed out my error on Haqqani's title.