BBC DOCUMENTARY EXPOSES ISI TRAINING, EQUIPPING OF TALIBAN MILITANTS

[youtube]http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wf3KgUoBJno[/youtube]

For just over a month, the US and Pakistan have been struggling to deal with tensions created by former Joint Chiefs Chairman Michael Mullen's testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee where he stated flatly that Pakistan's ISI intelligence agency directly aids militants who attack US interests in Afghanistan. Wednesday night, BBC Two aired part one of its "Secret Pakistan" documentary, providing detailed evidence that supports Mullen's accusations.

From BBC News, we get some details on the disclosures in the documentary:

> Pakistan has repeatedly denied the claims. But the BBC documentary series Secret Pakistan has spoken to a number of middle-ranking – and still active – Taliban commanders who provide detailed evidence of how the Pakistan ISI has rebuilt, trained and supported the Taliban throughout its war on the US in Afghanistan.
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> "For a fighter there are two important things – supplies and a place to hide," said one Taliban commander, who fights under the name Mullah Qaseem. "Pakistan plays a significant role. First they support us by providing a place to hide which is really important. Secondly, they provide us with weapons."
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> Another commander, Najib, says: "Because Obama put more troops into Afghanistan and increased operations here, so Pakistan's support for us increased as

> well."
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> He says his militia received a supply truck with "500 landmines with remote controls, 20 rocket-propelled grenade launchers with 2000 to 3000 grenades… AK-47s, machine-guns and rockets".

Reuters also describes some of the revelations from the program:

> Other Taliban commanders described how they and their fighters were, and are, trained in a network of camps on Pakistani soil.
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> According to a commander using the name Mullah Azizullah, the experts running the training are either members of the ISI or have close links to it.
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> "They are all the ISI's men. They are the ones who run the training. First they train us about bombs; then they give us practical guidance," he said.

The BBC News article also quotes CIA officer Bruce Riedel, who prepared a review of US intelligence on ISI involvement with militants. Riedel told BBC that the ISI actively supports Taliban militants that carry out actions in Afghanistan. Riedel also claimed that US drone attacks are now more successful because Pakistan is not given advance warning:

> And the recent drone attacks in Pakistan have become increasingly effective as intelligence has been withheld from the Pakistanis, claims Mr Riedel.
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> "At the beginning of the drone operations, we gave Pakistan an advance tip-off of where we were going, and every single time the target wasn't there anymore. You didn't have to be Sherlock Holmes to put the dots together."

Riedel's claim that Pakistani intelligence is excluded from information on US drone strikes is at odds with some of the reporting on today's drone strike in South Waziristan. This strike is said to have killed five commanders of the Maulvi Nazir faction of Pakistan's Taliban. But Reuters' article on the strike has this passage:

> Pakistani leaders say drone strikes inflame widespread anti-American sentiment in Pakistan and play into the hands of militants.
>
> But analysts say high-profile militants can't be spotted without help from Pakistani intelligence.

It is hard to reconcile the view that excluding Pakistani intelligence is necessary to prevent tipping off Taliban figures that they are about to be targeted with the claim that Pakistani intelligence is vital to locating Taliban figures for targeting.

At the very least, it appears that either the operator in today's attack was having difficulty aiming or the driver of the vehicle in which the targets were traveling was good at evasive maneuvers. From Dawn:

> According to initial details, five missiles were fired on a vehicle carrying several passengers.

I guess for drone operators, the fifth time's the charm.