

SHINING OVER CALIFORNIA'S GREAT CENTRAL VALLEY SINCE 1869

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HUNTING DOWN BIN LADEN PAKISTAN RAID WAS YEARS IN THE MAKING

FIRST PERSON

Not where you'd expect to find a terrorist

Reporter reflects on visits to city of Abbottabad.

By AMEERA BUTT

When I heard the news that Osama bin Laden had been killed in Abbottabad, Pakistan, on Sunday night, my immediate reaction was to turn to my brother-in-law, who is originally from there, in disbelief at where the leader of al-Qaida was found.

(My brother-in-law asked that his name and that of my sister not be used for their safety.)

President Barack Obama made a formal statement Sunday that announced bin Laden was killed after being located in a compound about 35 miles north of the capital, Islamabad. People across the United States celebrated the death of the man who, according to U.S.

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REACTION

Local Muslims relieved to hear of U.S. action

By AMEERA BUTT

A sense of relief.

That's the sentiment some local Muslims feel about the news of Osama bin Laden's death in Abbottabad, Pakistan, on Sunday.

"It's a feeling of relief that we have been trying to overcome the Taliban for 10 years, and it's finally happened," said Monir Ahmed, who has lived in Merced for a decade.

If the al-Qaida leader's death "doesn't totally eliminate it, it weakens the organization drastically," Ahmed said.

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>>EDITORIAL: It's not the time for U.S. to go alone. See page A9

>>FALLOUT: Ordeal likely to alter relations with Pakistan. See page A6

>>INVESTIGATION: Years of following clues. See page A5

SEALs drop into compound, emerge 40 minutes later with terrorist's body.

By JONATHAN S. LANDAY

WASHINGTON — Even as the Navy SEALs slid down ropes from their hovering helicopters, there still was some uncertainty that the man they were after was inside the massive, night-shrouded compound on the edge of the sleeping city in northeastern Pakistan.

After all, Osama bin Laden was long thought to be hiding in a cave or other refuge in Pakistan's rugged tribal area bordering Afghanistan.

But one of the raiders thought he recognized the leader of al-Qaida, and dropped him with a shot to his left eye as the SEALs stormed into a third-floor room of the main house during a nearly 40-minute firefight.

The raider compared the dead man's face to bin Laden's picture. They seemed to match. So did measurements of his nose, eyes, height and other features. Then one of the dead man's wives positively identified him. Yet it wasn't until later that DNA tests of "99.99 percent confidence" dispelled any lingering uncertainty.

Bin Laden was dead. "Justice has been done," President Barack Obama declared on national television after he and close aides, who had monitored the operation as it unfolded on the other side of the world, were sure the leader of al-Qaida was killed before dawn Monday, Pakistan time.

"It was probably one of the most anxiety-filled periods of time, I think, in the lives of the people who were assembled here," said John Brennan, Obama's chief counterterrorism adviser, at a White House news conference. "The confidence was building, yet at what point do you feel confident that you have the person you were after?"

No Americans were killed or injured. Four people other than bin Laden died: a trusted courier thought by U.S. officials to have harbored bin Laden and his family for several years; the courier's brother; bin Laden's son, Khaleed; and one of the terrorist leader's wives, shot as

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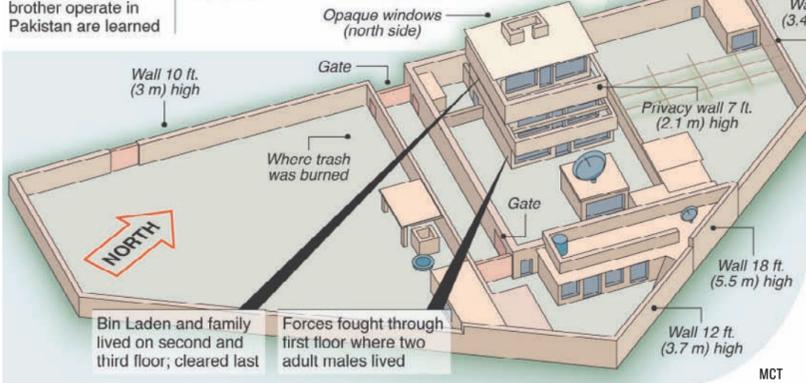


President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden, along with members of the national security team, receive an update Sunday on the mission against Osama bin Laden in the Situation Room of the White House.

The details of the Navy SEALs operation

The raid that killed al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden took shape after detainees identified a bin Laden courier.

Timeline of events: First information, Narrowing in, The operation, Inside the compound in Abbottabad.



Outcome and aftermath

- One U.S. helicopter lost because of mechanical failure; destroyed for security purposes
• Along with bin Laden, three adult males killed: bin Laden's son and two al-Qaida facilitators
• Woman identified as bin Laden's wife used as human shield, killed; two others injured
• 3:32 p.m. Obama returns for update
• 3:50 p.m. Obama told bin Laden appears to be one of those killed during raid
• 11:35 p.m. After confirmation, Obama announces in televised address that U.S. forces killed bin Laden and are in custody of his body
• Bin Laden's body put aboard the USS Carl Vinson, then placed in the North Arabian Sea

California vigilant even without threat

LOS ANGELES — Concerned about a potential backlash for the killing of Osama bin Laden, authorities on Monday activated extra police patrols at hundreds of potential terrorist targets and urged Californians to report anything suspicious. However, officials said there had been no specific threats reported and that the region has robust security measures in place that were prompted by the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. "There's no reason for us to be afraid,"

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QuickTake

News outside Merced County
PLENTY OF WATER: The Sierra Nevada snowpack is way above normal in the final measurement of the season. See page A3
TOO MUCH WATER: The Army Corps of Engineers blows a hole in a Mississippi River levee, relieving flood pressure on a small Illinois town. See page A4
FUNERAL: Moammar Gadhafi's son and grandchildren, killed in a NATO bombing of the Libyan leader's compound, are mourned. See page A4

ONLINE ONLY

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VIDEO: Justin Duckham, a 2009 UC Merced graduate now working for The Talk Radio News Service in Washington, D.C., talks about his front-row seat at President Barack Obama's announcement of the death of al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden.
VIDEO: Mercedians react to the death of bin Laden.

COURTS No contest plea in DUI fatality case

Accused looking at 15 years to life in prison for 3 deaths.
By VICTOR A. PATTON
A 44-year-old man accused of causing 2009's deadliest DUI crash in Merced County could spend the rest of his life in prison after pleading no contest to second-degree murder in Merced County Superior Court on Monday.
Martin Magallanes Deleon will serve 15 years to life in prison for causing the July 18, 2009, collision that killed three Orsi residents: Christopher Mata, 12, Gabino Romero-Robles, 26, and Ricardo Romero-Robles, 21.
An illegal immigrant who also went by the name Jose Manuel Ramirez Figueroa,

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WEATHER CONTACT US INDEX COMING TOMORROW
Sunny and seasonable today; clear, cool tonight. High of 83, low of 51.
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Continuing coverage of the killing of Osama bin Laden in Pakistan by U.S. forces.

