

## Bomber at CIA base was a double agent

WASHINGTON (AP) — The suicide bomber who killed eight people inside a CIA base in Afghanistan claimed to have information about Osama bin Laden's second-in-command, and was being recruited as a double agent to infiltrate al-Qaida, a former senior U.S. intelligence official and a foreign government official confirmed Monday.

The bombing killed seven CIA employees — four officers and three contracted security guards — and a Jordanian intelligence officer, Ali bin Zaid, according to a second former U.S. intelligence official. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the incident.

The former senior intelligence official and the foreign official said the bomber was Humam Khalil Abu-Mulal al-Balawi, a 36-year old doctor from Zarqa, Jordan, who had been recruited by Jordanian intelligence. Zarqa is the hometown of slain Al-Qaeda in Iraq leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. NBC News first reported the bomber's identity.

He was arrested more than a year ago by Jordanian intelligence and was thought to have been persuaded to support U.S. and Jordanian efforts against al-Qaeda, according to the NBC report. He was invited to Camp Chapman, a tightly secured CIA forward base in Khost province on the fractious Afghan-Pakistan frontier, because he was offering urgent information to track down Ayman al-Zawahri, Osama bin Laden's right-hand man.

The CIA declined to comment on the report.

Haji Yacoub, a self-proclaimed spokesman for the Taliban in Pakistan, identified the bomber as Muslim militant Web sites as Hammam Khalil Mohammed, also known as Abu-Dujana al-Khurasani. There was no independent confirmation of Yacoub's statement.

Al-Balawi was not searched for bombs when he got onto Camp Chapman, according to both former officials and a current intelligence official.

He detonated the explosive shortly after his debriefing began, according to one of the former intelligence officials. In addition to the eight dead, there were at least six wounded, according to the CIA.

The bodies of seven CIA employees arrived Monday at Dover Air Force Base in a small private ceremony attended by CIA Director Leon Panetta, other agency and national security officials, and friends and family.

The former senior intelligence official said one of the big unanswered questions is why so many people were present for the debriefing — the interview of the source — when the explosive was detonated.

A half-dozen former CIA officers told The Associated Press that in most cases, only one or two agency officers would typically meet with a possible informant along with an interpreter. Such small meetings would normally be used to limit the danger and the possible exposure of the identities of both officers and informants.

An online jihadist magazine in September 2009 posted an interview with al-Balawi, according to SITE Monitoring Service, a terrorist watch group that reads and translates messages on extremist forums.

# The threats to democracy

By I.A. Rehman

President Zardari's observation on the threats to the country's democratic system is shared by almost all conscious citizens though they may not accept his list of sources of these threats as exhaustive or wholly correct. The divergence of views is likely to increase if ways to save democracy are discussed.

At the very outset one should like to be convinced that by equating the present government with democracy Mr. Zardari is not committing the Pakistani rulers' favorite mistake in holding government synonymous with the state.

No elaborate research is required for identifying the forces that have flourished at the cost of democracy. Over the decades the denigration of representative governance has become these interest groups' second nature. But equally well-known is the fact that more often than not the anti-democratic elements' success in their designs is guaranteed by the democratic authorities' own acts of commission and omission.

There are many ways in which a democratic government can undermine its own existence. Quite a few regimes have come to grief by forcing the pace of democratization, by prescribing a value system their society is not ready to accept. However, in Pakistan no political authority has fallen for being over-democratic in practice

nor have the challengers always possessed democratic credentials. Even if the present government's charges against the actors out to extinguish the democratic experiment are correct its need of introspection is manifest.

A cursory look at Pakistan's history is enough to realize that lack of unity among political parties that profess to be democratic has been one of the most effective weapons in the hands of anti-democratic forces. These parties have concentrated more on fighting one another than on confronting the common enemy.

The way political parties have sought the help of extra-democratic forces to gain advantage over their rivals is one of the darkest chapters in Pakistan's history. The importance of the Charter of Democracy signed by the heads of the country's largest political parties lay in its spirit much more than in its contents, and in the hopes it aroused that the two parties would face all attacks on democracy in a united fashion.

Ordinary citizens understood the significance of the Charter of Democracy perhaps better than the parties to the accord. That is why the post-election understanding between the PPP and PML-N was spontaneously hailed by the entire population. The end of this understanding was a grievous blow to the cause of democracy.

Whatever complaints the PPP leaders may have against the PML-N they had a greater re-



The PPP and PML-N must look to the future and work together.

(Photo from APP/File)

sponsibility to sustain their accord with their ally. That democracy can never be firmly established in Pakistan in the absence of an all-party consensus on its essentials is a fact only the purblind will deny. The government may not be entirely responsible for the rift with the PML-N; it is apparently paying for not trying hard enough to keep the promise of the Charter of Democracy alive particularly the resolve to jointly resist all attempts to derail the democratic system.

The government has also increased its difficulties by ignoring the fact that a non-performing regime is its own worst enemy. When a government fails to deliver, especially on public expectations awakened by its leaders during their campaign to acquire power it not only loses the people's support, it also alienates them from democracy.

Nobody can deny the enormous problems created by the Musharraf regime. The people also know that recovery from the ravages of authoritarian regimes will be slow and painful but the government cannot retain their goodwill without offering proof of unremitting efforts in the right direction.

Unfortunately, the government's performance does not inspire public confidence. It can be criticized for muddle-headedness in fixing its priorities, but far more damaging has been its failure to carry out its tasks expeditiously.

Even after making allowances for adverse factors the regime's parliamentary performance has been dismal. It has delayed the delivery of constitutional reforms to the point of destroying public interest in them, and has failed to convince the people of its continued commitment to their welfare.

Democracy does not mean that the ordinary citizen should go on suffering deprivation for the sake of an abstract idea; from his point of view democracy is a system that must address his problems — problems caused by poverty, hunger, disease, homelessness and joblessness. One of the greatest threats to the democratic system is the growing feeling among the people that their concerns do not figure on the government's agenda.

No less important than the substance of governance is the style of governance and the regime is liable to criticism on this count too. This problem has been noticed in Pakistan throughout its history. During the early years of independence the rulers gave the impression that they found little fault with the colonial administration. Wittingly or unwittingly they consolidated the viceregal system of governance, a system that deserved the earliest possible burial.

Over the past 50 years, the system of governance has been authoritarian even during democratic interludes. Elected governments have tended to follow the

style of arbitrary and arrogant governance developed by dictatorial regimes that they have replaced. The present government does not strike one as an exception.

Besides, no civilian government in Pakistan has realized that a democratic dispensation is not possible without functional and democratic political parties. Governments that complain of subversion of democracy from outside often fail to realize that they themselves are not democratic enough to deserve public support.

In a country where feudal, colonial and praetorian norms determine social thinking and behavior, democracy will always remain vulnerable in the face of anti-democratic challenges. Anyone who wishes to play the role of a knight in the service of democracy in Pakistan should know that the task demands much more than soapbox rhetoric or the borrowed robes of a martyr.

Finally, the people have become as suspicious of the call of democracy being in danger as they are wary of slogans such as 'Islam in danger' or 'stability at any cost' or 'Pakistan first'. The holes in the case of those gunning for the government or for Mr. Zardari are clearly visible but the defenders of democracy need to see in the government's brief more positive and weightier arguments than it has at the moment.

(Source: Dawn)

## Japan warms relations with India but future accord remains hazy

TOKYO (Xinhua) — Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama's three-day visit to India is to a certain degree, being heralded as a success, as official talks with his counterpart Manmohan Singh, as well as closed-door meetings with top Indian industrialists and bankers, have deepened diplomatic understanding and cohesion and boosted economic bilateral relations.

However, while discussions on trade and commerce were particularly fruitful, the two countries didn't have a meeting of minds on all issues and some local media reports described Hatoyama's visit as "somewhat superficial."

Political analysts have described diplomatic ties between Japan and India as "frosty" in recent years, as Japan's former administration didn't fully register India's emerging possibilities on its economic radar and the two countries became embroiled in nuclear debates, which further strained bilateral ties.

Prior to meeting with his equivalent, Hatoyama held talks with top Indian industrialists, including Tata group Chairman Ratan Tata and Reliance Industries head Mukesh Ambani, at hotel in Mumbai, as both countries seek to perpetuate and augment a diverse economic relationship that will ensure strong growth and development in the fields of trade, business and infrastructure, reciprocally beneficial for both nations.

Although analysts have commented that bilateral economic relations have yet to reach their full potential, Hatoyama was assured by India's business leaders that the growth of the Indian economy offers prodigious opportunities to substantially increase trade and economic cooperation between both countries.

This sentiment was reflected by India's premier in talks aimed at expediting negotiations on formalizing an official, economic partnership pact between the two nations.

Describing the economic partnership as the "bedrock"



Indian and Japanese prime ministers shake hands in New Delhi. (File photo)

of India-Japan relations, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Tuesday said that the two countries have decided to expedite negotiations on the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), according to local media reports.

Japan is already India's sixth largest investor and annual trade between the two countries amounts to some 12 billion U.S. dollars, according to recent statistics.

This figure is set to leap to as much as 20 billion U.S. dollars in 2010, as the two nations look to amplify their economic ties, on the back of a series of successful tie ups.

The Tata-DoCoMo tie-up and the Daiichi Sankyo venture with Ranbaxy Laboratories, perceptibly contributed to annual trade figures between the two countries and the success of the collaborations has seen the number of Japanese companies investing in India more than doubling in the past three years, from 267 in 2006, to 627 in 2009.

"We are hopeful that this (CEPA) can be completed in time for the next annual summit meeting," said Singh in his opening remarks at a press conference with Hatoyama.

Highlighting the scope of potential for an enhanced cooperative economic approach by the two countries, Singh made it clear that further Japanese investments in India were "welcome".

"In particular, there is a great scope for the expansion of cooperation in the areas of urban infrastructure, high technology and renewable and energy-efficient technologies," Singh said.

At the summit-level meeting, the two sides also agreed on the early implementation of the Dedicated Freight Corridor project between Mumbai and Delhi.

Hatoyama also trumpeted the decision to establish a Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) Chennai office, which would accelerate further investment by small and medium-sized Japanese enterprises in India.



## Philippine massacre suspect pleads not guilty

MANILA (AFP) — The prime suspect in the massacre of 57 people in the volatile southern Philippines last year pleaded not guilty on Tuesday to multiple counts of murder.

The case against Andal Ampatuan Jnr, a local mayor and a leader of a powerful clan, has thrown the spotlight on the nation's corruption-plagued political and justice systems.

More than 30 heavily-armed police escorts took Ampatuan to a special court inside the national police headquarters for his arraignment and a bail hearing, the first steps in judicial proceedings that many fear could drag on for years.

"Not guilty," Ampatuan Jnr's lawyer Sigfrid Fortun told the court when asked to enter a plea as his client stood beside him.

Those killed in the worst political murders in the Philippines included pregnant women and about 300 when final death certificates are processed.

His father, Andal Ampatuan Sr and several other clan members were arrested after martial law was imposed in Manguindanao and charged with rebellion. No date for their court appearance has been set.

Ramon Casiple, an analyst with the Institute for Political and Economic Reform, said the public must monitor the trial "every step of the way."

"What we are facing here is a very strong clan with very strong political connections and the capability to intimidate or even kill witnesses," he told AFP.

"This puts the justice system to a test, because past cases with heavy political overtones have never been satisfactorily concluded."

Casiple cited the trial of former president Joseph Estrada, who was deposed in a military-backed popular revolt in 2001, for massive corruption.