



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on November 24, 2013

Doctor Who Helped Hunt Bin Laden Charged with Murder

The Pakistani doctor credited with playing a crucial role in the United States' ultimately successful operation to locate Osama bin Laden [has been charged with murder](#).

These charges, however, are unrelated to the hunt for the former head of al-Qaeda. The crime Dr. Shakil Afridi (shown) is accused of committing is connected to the death of a patient eight years ago at a hospital in the Khyber Agency region.



[A Reuters article](#) reports that Shakil Afridi's lawyer, Samiullah Afridi, said Pakistani government attorneys informed him Friday morning of the new charges filed against his client.

Two months ago, another court reversed a sentenced imposed against Afridi.

Quoting an unnamed official, Reuters reports that the murder charges stem from an accusation made by a woman who claims that Afridi caused the death of her son in 2005.

"She stated that he operated on her son at a hospital in Khyber Agency even though he was not a surgeon, and that caused [her son's] death," the official said, as reported by Reuters.

As was depicted in the movie *Zero Dark Thirty*, Dr. Afridi ran a vaccination program in that city that was allegedly just a front for a CIA operation to obtain a DNA sample that would verify bin Laden's presence in the city. A senior CIA official told the *New York Times* that the effort ultimately was unsuccessful.

Although he was arrested for his alleged participation in the Osama bin Laden search operation, at his trial the government failed to prove his violation of the statute he was charged under, but on May 23, 2012, he was convicted nonetheless.

While the Obama administration has ignored Dr. Afridi's case and refused to speak out against the evidence of extremely harsh treatment of its ersatz ally in the killing of bin Laden, others in Washington are aware of the disgrace and have tried to right the wrong.

Last year, Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.) sought to stall the confirmation of President Obama's nominee to fill the post of U.S. ambassador to Pakistan. Paul wanted to stall the confirmation of the U.S. ambassador to Pakistan until that nation — which is deemed a U.S. ally in the War on Terror — released Dr. Afridi.

Paul's efforts to help Afridi were unsuccessful — again.

This was not Senator Paul's first foray into the fight for the doctor's freedom. In a conference call with reporters in July 2012, Paul reiterated his call to withhold aid to Pakistan pending Afridi's release.

All of Senator Paul's attempts to assist Dr. Afridi were futile and now the doctor is in poor health with little hope of relief — judicial or otherwise.

In the past, Dr. Afridi has counted on the support of friends in the House of Representatives, as well.

During a session of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs earlier this year, Congressman Dana



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Rohrabacher (R-Calif.) renewed the call for aid to Pakistan to be denied “until Dr. Afridi, the man who helped us bring to justice Osama bin Laden, is freed from a Pakistani dungeon.” Rohrabacher doesn’t hold out much hope for a happy ending, however:

I would advise not to get your hopes up too high, because until the moment that Dr. Afridi is released and is outside the jurisdiction along with his family, we do not know whether or not some radical Islamic fanatic will pound on the table and force a reversal of this strategy, if this is indeed the strategy of Pakistan right now.

This report is certainly better than a report that would indicate that they’re hardening their stand, and they’re going to make him an example. But these brutal men who run Pakistan would not in any way consider compromising on the decision they made to go get him.

There are good people in the Muslim world, and if they think we are just going to abandon them, we don’t have a chance. It’s only through them that we have a chance to stand up and defeat Islamic terrorism.

In fairness to Dr. Afridi and the opinion of Rohrabacher, the reluctance of locals to provide intelligence to the United States likely has less to do with persecution and prosecution of Afridi and more to do with blowback from missiles fired from drones that have killed hundreds if not thousands of innocent Pakistanis over the past decade.

Counterterrorism expert and retired Marine Lieutenant Colonel Bill Cowan agrees with Rohrabacher, however, telling Breitbart News last May that human intelligence will be hard to come by if the stink of betrayal sticks to the United States:

From a pure intelligence perspective, anybody who is providing clandestine intelligence support to us, any assets who are agents, have to be nervous when they see how we threw Dr. Afridi under the bus for political purposes. We would look as though we were mean and tough in our pursuit of Osama Bin Laden, but in fact, we used the doctor — which is normal for intelligence operations — but then we exposed him, and we’re not working hard to get him out of jail. It’s like he didn’t exist. It’s totally disgraceful.

Cowan added, “People who work for us around the world take note of things like this.”

In the Breitbart article, former Navy SEAL and chairman of Special Operations for America Ryan Zinke described Afridi’s incarceration as another in a long list of examples of “America’s failed foreign policy.” Zinke believes that President Obama’s failure to interpose in the case puts “our future critical intelligence capability at risk by not acting in the case of Dr. Shakil Afridi. Who in their right mind would risk so much with no insurance that we will be there when needed?”

For now, Dr. Afridi remains in Peshawar Central Jail, awaiting news of these latest charges and facing yet another trial.

Sadly, although a spokesman for former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton released a statement last May saying, “Dr. Afridi should never have been locked up in the first place,” there has been little or no official action by the Obama administration to convince Islamabad to intervene in the high-profile case.

In fairness, it is unlikely that the president or any other representative of the U.S. government would take any position on charges unrelated to Afridi’s complicity with U.S. military/intelligence operations in Pakistan.

Those activities, of course, are considered by the government of Pakistan to be a violation of that



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nation's sovereignty.

As of press time, neither Representative Rohrabacher nor Senator Paul has commented on the murder charges laid against Afridi.

Last year, Rohrabacher promised to keep the pressure on until the doctor is released: "We must not abandon the hero who helped bring to justice, Osama bin Laden, the murderer of 3000 innocent Americans on 9/11."

Rohrabacher promised at that time that "efforts will be made behind the scenes and in public view to pressure decision makers in the Executive and Legislative branches to do what's right in order [to] save Dr. Afridi."

In this case, however, it is unlikely that Rohrabacher would be willing to spend political capital in pursuing any pressure on the government of Pakistan to release Afridi, particularly in light of the fact that the murder charges are unrelated to the bin Laden matter.

Ironically, the government of the United States may refuse to intervene so as not to violate the sovereignty of Pakistan.

Photo of Dr. Shakil Afridi: AP Images

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