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Article Challenges U.S. Version of Bin Laden Hunt

By MATTHEW ROSENBERG

WASHINGTON — Four years after a Navy SEAL team killed Osama bin Laden in his compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan, lingering questions remain about the raid and what led up to it. Now, in a 10,000-word article in *The London Review of Books*, the journalist Seymour M. Hersh challenges nearly every facet of the semiofficial narrative that has emerged over the years, alleging a vast cover-up that involves hundreds, possibly thousands, of people and goes all the way to President Obama himself.

On Monday, the White House press secretary, Josh Earnest, said the article is "riddled with inaccuracies and outright falsehoods."

The gist of Mr. Hersh's report is that Pakistan harbored Bin Laden for years with money paid by Saudi Arabia. Once the United States found out the Pakistanis had Bin Laden, Mr. Hersh writes, it offered Pakistan's generals a choice: Help the United States kill him or watch billions of dollars in American aid disappear. The Americans and the Pakistanis then worked together to plot the raid, Mr. Hersh writes.

In its bold claims, Mr. Hersh's article, relying largely on anonymous sources, pairs plausible alternatives to the details about the raid presented by the administration with a number of much more questionable claims.

Were it not for the byline of Mr. Hersh, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist who first gained notice more than 45 years ago for exposing the My Lai massacre in

Vietnam, the story would likely have been readily dismissed and gained little attention.

In one conceivable episode, Mr. Hersh writes that American intelligence officials were alerted to Bin Laden's whereabouts by a Pakistani military officer who walked into the United States Embassy in Islamabad and was subsequently paid a reward and moved by the C.I.A. to the United States. The account told by the Obama administration after the

A journalist alleges a vast cover-up, but the White House accuses him of 'falsehoods.'

raid — that the C.I.A. tracked down Bin Laden through the work of dogged analysts — was a ruse intended to protect the real informant, according to Mr. Hersh.

It is a deception that the C.I.A. has employed before, claiming for years that it discovered that one of its own, Aldrich H. Ames, was passing intelligence to the Soviet Union through the work of a team of analysts. The truth that eventually emerged was that crucial evidence against Mr. Ames came from a Soviet spy working for the C.I.A.

Yet other claims by Mr. Hersh would have required a cover-up extending from top American, Pakistani and Saudi officials

down to midlevel bureaucrats.

One example is Mr. Hersh's claim, based on anonymous sources, that administration officials were lying when they said the SEAL team recovered a trove of intelligence from Bin Laden's compound.

If he is right, that means the United States knowingly allowed an F.B.I. agent to perjure himself at a federal trial of a member of Al Qaeda in New York in February. In his testimony, the agent described in detail how he received computers, hard drives, documents and other material from the SEAL team members immediately after they landed at a base in Afghanistan. He then spent 17 hours cataloging the material before it was put on a plane back to the United States.

The detail, if manufactured, is stunning: The agent, Alexander Otte, listed the types of materials he had received, including the size of some of the digital storage devices recovered (a two-gigabyte micro-SD card, a four-gigabyte thumb drive), and even the brands of the devices (Sony and Kingston).

Mr. Otte also testified that he saw the body of Bin Laden, which Mr. Hersh reported had been largely dismembered by gunfire during the raid. The SEAL team members then threw some body parts out of the helicopters on the way back to Afghanistan, Mr. Hersh writes, though he did report that Bin Laden's head was largely intact.

Mr. Otte, in his testimony, offered a very different account: Asked if the SEAL team mem-

bers had a body with them, he said, "It was the body of Osama bin Laden." At no point did he describe the body as being in pieces or having been decapitated.

Mr. Hersh is standing by his article. In a brief telephone interview on Monday, he said, "You can have your skepticism."

His manner was cheerful and breezy, and he seemed unfazed about the controversy his reporting has stirred up. It is not the first time that Mr. Hersh's work has been met with hostility from the authorities, and he laughed loudly at the mention of the denials from the White House and others.

"Those are classic nondenial denials," he said, before rushing off to take a call from another reporter.

Mr. Hersh is not the first person to present this version of events. A similar account was presented on Aug. 7, 2011, on the blog *The Spy Who Billed Me*, which is run by R. J. Hillhouse, who tracks national security issues.

Ms. Hillhouse lacks the pedigree of Mr. Hersh, who more recently detailed the abuse committed at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.

There are also the varying narratives spun out by the White House in the days and weeks after the raid. Mr. Hersh's story would probably have gained much less traction had it not been for the often contradictory details presented by the Obama administration after the raid, and the questions about it that remain unanswered.

Hon'ble Mr. Barak Obama
President, USA,
Washington, DC

May 12, 2015

P6/b(6)

Sir, One of the greatest achievements of the Obama administration has been the elimination of a man who was an enemy of communal harmony and who stood for hatred and fanaticism. There may be many more Bin Ladens in the world who should not be allowed to prosper. Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,
K.P. Pothan

Prof K.P. Pothan, MA, PhD (Socio)

P6/b(6)

May 12, 2015

Hon'ble
Mr Barack Obama
President,
USA
White House,
Washington, DC

P6/b(6)

Sir, It is requested that a national survey be undertaken on the subject and find out the ways and means to prevent and check this serious problem. The youth in schools, colleges and universities is the most precious property of the American nation. It is very necessary to strengthen our moral and spiritual values.

Dr K.P. Pothan

Prof K.P. Pothan, MA, PhD (Socio)

P6/b(6)

Cuomo, Taking Aim at Campus Sexual Assaults, Calls for a Stricter

By ELIZABETH A. HARRIS

Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo, appearing at a Manhattan college with Representative Nancy Pelosi, on Monday called for the passage of "the toughest law in the nation" on campus sexual assault, a message aimed at state lawmakers who have expressed some reservations about his proposals.

Mr. Cuomo's proposed policies, which are already in place at New York's public colleges, would require private colleges to adopt "affirmative consent" as the standard of behavior, putting the burden on an accused student to show that the other person had agreed to the sexual activity, rather than making accusers prove that they had said no; since or lack of resistance would not be considered consent.

Mr. Cuomo, a Democrat, has also proposed that students reporting sexual assaults must not be punished if they are violating a campus policy on drinking or drugs, with the goal of removing the fear that by coming forward, those reporting might be reprimanded, administration officials say. The proposed policies would also require strict penalties for anyone found guilty of sexual assault, with either suspension or expulsion the only available options.

In recent weeks Lt. Gov. Kathy Hochul has been traveling across the state to promote the changes, as has Christine C. Quinn, the former New York City Council speaker. On Monday, the Fashion Institute of Technology, a

Urging the state to require private colleges to adopt 'affirmative consent.'

state-run college in Chelsea, the governor himself spoke out, joined by Ms. Pelosi, Democrat of California. For additional star power, Mr. Cuomo's office had already released a video message from the comedian Whoopi Goldberg.

"This will be the toughest law in the nation, and I am proud of that," he said.

In the last few years, colleges across the country have come under fire for haphazard handling of sexual assault complaints, and some have changed their policies under pressure from the Obama administration. Last year, California became the first state to pass an "affirmative consent" law for college campuses.

"This is an epidemic in some ways," Ms. Pelosi said on Monday, "and that is why we are also grateful to Governor Cuomo for his strong leadership and the bold action to protect New York's college students."

Despite the enthusiastic campaign, and a widely held belief that many schools can do better, the proposal has encountered some resistance from legislators, as well as private colleges and universities, concerned about some of its wording. For example, some have taken issue with the accuser's being la-



RICHARD PERRY/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Representative Nancy Pelosi, Democrat of California, praised Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo's "bold action to protect New York's college students" on Monday.

beled in the legislation as "victim," rather than something more neutral. (The State University of New York and City University of New York have enacted new policies without needing legislative approval.)

"All universities have an obligation to be neutral in these circumstances," said Assemblywoman Deborah J. Glick, a Manhattan Democrat and chairwoman of the Assembly's committee on higher education. "You cannot prejudice the

circumstances by naming one 'the victim,' and the other 'the accused.'"

Ms. Glick said other concerns about the bill included definitions some considered vague and the lack of an explicit appeals process, which could mean the only available recourse for a student who felt the process was unfair would be to sue.

But Alphonso David, counsel to the governor, said the legislation did not address "the specifics of appeals or any

aspect of due process well-tilled through case law, private college other statutes."

She added that those educated from private universities that had earnings, but few had been their concerns publicly in a fight with the government, few have spoken of Cuomo's office circulating colleges that supported including Syracuse and small colleges and universities. An administration office planned to release more colleges that favor weeks leading up to the legislative session in June.

Ms. Quinn, an adviser to the administration who has promoted the sexual assault bill, said she was "very optimistic" it will pass this legislative session.

In a statement after the Cuomo said, "As a father of three young girls, with a third on the way, this isn't just an issue for the state, it's a personal one as it is for many parents who say goodbye to their children with the expectation that their schools will do everything they can to keep them safe."

Ms. Glick said the conversation was just beginning, but added: "It's politics could be like a month's body else's life. We have a lot of time between now and the end of the session."

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Prof K.P. Pothan, MA, PhD (Socio)

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Hon'ble Mr Barak Obama
President of the USA
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