

Bin Laden's Death: Redress of a Wrong Suffered

Last night, nine years, seven months and twenty days after September 11, 2001, President Obama announced Osama bin *Mohammed* bin *Awad* bin Laden, leader of al-Qaida terrorist forces had been killed in a targeted military action in Pakistan. Counter-terrorism within Pakistan helped lead Special Forces to bin Laden's hideout. A gunfight ensued and Osama bin Laden was killed. His body is now in U.S. custody and one principle of just war theory has been fulfilled: To redress a wrong suffered.

Sadly, this is not the end of the threat. Osama bin Laden's death may send a message to extremist but it certainly will not stop their activities. With multiple al-Qaida cells around the world, military bases are now on high threat level and so too are airports across the country.

As a veteran of the United States Army, and one whose son served in the US Army during the first days of the war in Iraq, for the many nights I fell asleep looking at the news hoping not to hear the dreaded "knock on the door" with news of a soldier lost at war, I have mixed feelings about bin Laden's death. The event of 9/11 influenced my doctoral studies in just war theory. Somehow, then President Bush's turn from full attention to bin Laden to Saddam Hussein simply did not seem a rational reason for war to my theological perspective. Preemptive strikes to avoid that, which did not exist – war and weapons of mass destruction –, is not a principle of classical just war theory. It was bin Laden who took responsibility for the attacks on American soil that took so many lives, and so, it was he and his forces that I felt we ought be pursuing. I now wonder if he might have been found earlier if we had not redirected our attention to an unjustifiable war in search for weapons that did not exist.

Now, the country rejoices. Our President has proven his political spunk. It was he that gave the order to take a life and to do so on foreign soil. I'm sure he did so with an abundance of caution. His decision comes with the support of the Council on American-Islamic Relations who felt bin Laden neither represented Islam or Muslims.

As a Black American, I am especially pleased that this "accomplishment" has taken place under the leadership of President Obama. For many Black Americans, not only was the news about Osama bin Laden, but we also received this news as a win in the more recent battle in the historic struggle against racism. In the face of racist attacks that have questioned his citizenship, questioned his patriotism, questioned his intelligence, and relentlessly questioned his leadership, today was a good day for the president. Another campaign promise kept. The end of the bin Laden reign of terror, makes releasing a birth certificate seem really insignificant, in light of what President Obama as the country's Commander-in-Chief accomplished yesterday.

One last thing: Like many, I must admit a bit of joy upon reading the President's address preempted Trump's *Celebrity Apprentice*. And then he was late. What was that *really* about? Good move, Mr. President.