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Al Jazeera

Pakistan army threatens to reconsider US ties

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The relationship between Pakistan and the US is under intense scrutiny, with the Pakistani army saying that it will review co-operation with the US if there is another violation of its sovereignty.

The warning follows the special operation by US commandos on Monday inside Pakistani territory that led to the death of Osama bin Laden, the leader of al-Qaeda.

The Pakistan army threatened on Thursday to reconsider its anti-terrorism co-operation with the US if the Americans carried out another unilateral attack like the killing of bin Laden.

"COAS made it clear that any similar action violating the sovereignty of Pakistan will warrant a review on the level of military/intelligence co-operation with the United States," the army said in a statement, referring to the chief of army staff, General Ashfaq Kayani.

It said Kayani told his colleagues that a decision had been made to reduce the number of US military personnel to the "minimum essential" levels.

Although both the US and Pakistani governments have also attempted to highlight co-operation between the two, comments coming from senior officials suggest the opposite.

Earlier on Thursday, the Pakistani foreign secretary, Salman Bashir, gave warning that regional neighbours should not think they can follow America's lead.

He cautioned the US and other countries on Thursday against future raids in the country on suspected fighters, saying that such actions would have "disastrous consequences". "We feel that that sort of misadventure or miscalculation would result in a terrible catastrophe," he said.

"There should be no doubt Pakistan has adequate capacity to ensure its own defence."

Under pressure

Pakistan has been under international pressure to explain why bin Laden was able to hide in a compound in Abbottabad, a hill town near its capital, Islamabad.

Americans are questioning how bin Laden could live for years in a Pakistani military town.

Pakistan has denied any knowledge of his whereabouts and the army said on Thursday it would conduct an investigation into failures by its intelligence to detect the world's most wanted man on its own soil.

Nevertheless, two politicians, Kay Granger and Howard Berman, wrote to Hillary Clinton, the US secretary of state, on Thursday complaining about US aid to Pakistan.

The US has given the Pakistani army more than \$10bn in aid over the past decade to help it fight al-Qaeda and its Afghan Taliban allies.

"As far as the majority of people are concerned, they don't want any support from the United States, they don't want the money," Al Jazeera's Kamal Hyder reported from Islamabad.

"They say the government has enslaved their national interests to the Americans for the money they have received."

However, "the [Pakistani] government of course needs the money, so is very careful in issuing contradictory statements," Hyder added.

Clinton said in Rome on Thursday that the US was still anxious to maintain its alliance with Pakistan.

The Pakistani army and the spy agency, ISI, have supplied intelligence to the US, arrested al-Qaeda figures and taken on fighters in areas bordering Afghanistan.

"It is not always an easy relationship," Clinton said.

"But, on the other hand, it is a productive one for both our countries and we are going to continue to co-operate between our governments, our militaries, our law-enforcement agencies."

Separately, a senior Pentagon official said that the US so far had no "definitive evidence" that Pakistan knew of bin Laden's hideout.

But Michele Flournoy, a senior police aide to Robert Gates, the US defence secretary, also said Pakistan must now demonstrate, visibly and convincingly, their commitment to defeating al-Qaeda.

'Wife's account'

The developments came as the BBC reported quoting a Pakistani military official that one of bin Laden's wives told intelligence officials he had been living in Pakistan for the past five years.

The woman, one of three of bin Laden's wives held after the raid, said she had lived in one room for that entire period, the BBC said on Thursday.

The official said 13 children had also been recovered from the compound.

The CIA said it kept Pakistan out of the loop because it feared bin Laden would be tipped off, highlighting the depth of mistrust between the two supposed allies.

US special forces launched the [raid with helicopter-borne soldiers](#) that left four other people dead besides bin Laden.

Bashir, the Pakistani foreign secretary, said the first that Pakistan knew of the raid was when the helicopters buzzed over Abbottabad after evading Pakistani radar. He said troops were sent to the scene "once it became clear they were not our helicopters" but that the Americans had already left by the time they arrived.

Pakistan then scrambled two F-16 fighter jets but the American helicopters had apparently already made it back to Afghanistan before they could be intercepted, he said.

He said that about 3am local time, Admiral Mike Mullen, the US joint chiefs chairman, called Kayani to inform him that the raid had taken place.