

# JSOC DECIDES IT'S READY TO RETURN TO SHADOWS ... SOON

Vice Admiral William McRaven, the Commander of the Joint Special Operations Command—which has been celebrated for the last two weeks for its role in getting Osama bin Laden—told Marc Ambinder (who has long been one of the most informative writers on JSOC and wrote a detailed profile of them last week)—that he'd like JSOC to return to the shadows ... soon.

Vice Adm. William McRaven, JSOC's commanding general, expected a degree of exposure before the raid but hopes that his command's 15 minutes of fame are over soon, two military officials said.

Though some other JSOC officers are not so sure they want to return to complete obscurity.

Some senior JSOC officers are prepared to deal with a future that includes more openness about their operations.

But it does seem rather remarkable that, after almost two weeks of barely anonymized national security sources leaking like justifiably proud sieves, someone has decided there has been enough.

Ambinder describes several details that national security types now worry may have revealed too much. Obama revealing—indirectly—that the special features on the Blackhawk we lost cost \$10 million. The revelation that OBL relied on thumb drives to give couriers to transport his emails to a remote location to be sent. Or this list of CIA-related issues: “the existence of a CIA safe house in Abbottabad, the use of a sophisticated drone to surveil the compound, and the extent to which the CIA was able to monitor what was happening inside.”

But I wonder whether this newfound sensitivity—and the blame placed by “some” on the “dozens of [members of Congress] who have been given extensive briefings on the intelligence and the raid,” rather than the White House personnel who have obviously been behind most of the leaking, doesn’t have to do with stories like this coming out, with CBS’s animated simulation of the raid complete with details taken from the operatives’ head cameras:

- The only firefight took place in the guesthouse, where one of bin Laden’s couriers open-fired
- No one in the main building got off a shot or was even armed (although there were weapons nearby)
- When the second SEAL entered bin Laden’s bedroom, bin Laden’s wife rushed at him, or perhaps was pushed forward by bin Laden

In other words, we’re beginning to learn solid details that undercut the narrative the government has been trying to tell for the last two weeks.

I also wonder whether the leak of several month old intelligence showing OBL doesn’t trust or care for Anwar al-Awlaki, who we keep trying to kill because of a purported relationship between the two, has renewed national security types’ concern about leaking.

Most of the leaking so far has fit under the Bob Woodward rule that says no secret is too sensitive if it makes the high level person who authorized the leak look good. Or if it makes the country’s nemesis look like a dirty old man (though doesn’t our country already know that religious conservatives tend to be dirty old

men?)

But as is typical, as soon as the flood of leaks starts to solidly challenge the preferred narrative, all of sudden leaks get to be a problem again.

Which says the leaks are probably just starting to get interesting.