

PAKISTAN DEPLOYS TROOPS TO BEEF UP SECURITY AT JAIL HOUSING SHAKEEL AFRIDI, KEY TALIBAN FIGURES

As we await word on why the airlines' SABRE reservation system would go down at exactly the time the US is warning that Undie 3.0 could be underway and the US is evacuating our personnel from Yemen, there are interesting developments on the related world trend of prison breaks.

Recall that one of the large prison breaks of al Qaeda figures took place in Dera Ismail Khan, Pakistan on July 29, with about 250 prisoners escaping. It would appear that Pakistan had very specific advance warning on this attack, but the security personnel who were present did not do their jobs once the attack started. Today, we learn from Dawn that Pakistani Army troops have been dispatched to at least two more jails to beef up security as there appears to be a new intelligence warning addressing all jails in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa:

Amid security threats of militant attacks, Army troops were deployed on Tuesday at Central Jail Peshawar, which holds Dr Shakil Afridi and other high profile Taliban inmates, and Haripur jail.

The military sources confirmed that the troops took over the jail security on the request of the civil administration

The source added that the deployment would not be for a long period and that the troops would be present at the prisons only to strengthen the security

cordon.

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Other sources said that though security warning was issued for all the jails in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) province but Central Jail Peshawar could be the prime target as Dr Shakil Afridi who was convicted of assisting the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in obtaining DNA samples of Osama Bin Laden through a fake vaccination campaign was also held in the said prison.

Moreover the founder chief of the outlawed Tehrik Nifaz Sharia-i-Muhammadi (TNSM), Mualana Sufi Mohammad, the former Taliban spokesman Muslim Khan, and a number of other key commanders belonging [sic] to the Swat and Bajaur chapter of the Taliban are also jailed in the Peshawar Central Prison.

Recall that it was pointed out over a year ago that Afridi is under considerable risk being housed in a jail with such high-profile Taliban figures. Despite that risk, though, Afridi managed to be interviewed by Fox News from inside the jail, with the interview published just one day before Benghazi Day. Both Afridi and a number of guards were then retaliated against for allowing the interview to happen.

If an attack occurs on Peshawar Central Jail, it seems likely that Afridi would have a very low prospect of surviving, as both militants inside the jail and those who launch the attack from outside would be highly motivated to see him killed. It would seem to me that Pakistan could stabilize the situation somewhat by moving Afridi to an undisclosed more secure location and then making it known that he has been moved.