

MAJID KHAN CHARGED WITH MUSHARRAF ASSASSINATION AS MUSHARRAF ACCUSED OF SHELTERING BIN LADEN

As Carol Rosenberg first reported, the government charged former US resident Majid Khan in Gitmo's military commission on Monday. One of those charges—attempted murder in violation of the laws of war—pertains to his alleged attempt to assassinate Pervez Musharraf on March 8, 2002.

In that Majid Shoukat KHAN, a person subject to trial by military commission as an alien unprivileged enemy belligerent, did, on or about March 8, 2002, at or near Karachi, Pakistan, in the context of and associated with hostilities, intentionally and unlawfully attempt to kill Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf in violation of the law of war, by wearing a vest containing an improvised explosive device and traveling to a mosque where he expected President Musharraf to be with the intention of detonating the vest and killing President Musharraf, which actions amounted to more than mere preparation and apparently tended to effect the commission of the offense of Murder in Violation of the Law of war.

That's pretty ironic given that the same day Rosenberg reported the Khan charges, the Daily Beast reported an accusation, made by the former head of Pakistan's ISI, Ziauddin Khawaja, that Musharraf knew one of his close allies was sheltering Osama bin Laden.

Ziauddin says that the safe house in Abbottabad was made to order for bin Laden by another Pakistani intelligence officer, Brig. Gen. Ijaz Shah, who was the ISI bureau head in Lahore when Musharraf staged his coup. Musharraf later made him head of the intelligence bureau, the ISI's rival in Pakistan's spy-versus-spy wars. Ziauddin says Ijaz Shah was responsible for setting up bin Laden in Abbottabad, ensuring his safety and keeping him hidden from the outside. And Ziauddin says Musharraf knew all about it.

Ziauddin first made the accusation last October.

I'm sure time will sort out both these accusations. But it sure doesn't make (much) sense that Khan was trying to kill Musharraf at the same time as Musharraf was watching a close ally construct a compound for OBL.

Although maybe it explains how Musharraf knew not to show up on the day Khan allegedly waited for him wearing a suicide belt.

Update: Alternately, if KSM sent Khan with a "suicide vest" containing no explosives to a location where Musharraf was not scheduled to appear, would it really amount to an assassination attempt? This is from Khan's Gitmo file, and appears to be based on his interrogation in CIA custody from 2004.

Detainee said he checked the vest and did not see any explosives inside, and also noticed there was no increase in security at the mosque as would be expected during a presidential visit.