Who Killed Benazir Bhutto? Why Not Ask Charlie Wilson... or George Bush?

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By Peter Erlinder

The mystery regarding the death of former Pakistani Prime Minister Bhutto has only deepened since the videotape surfaced showing her being shot from the crowd and an explosion that did not destroy the car in which she was riding. Unfortunately, the General Musharaff had already embarrassingly announced that she did not die from a bullet, but from hitting her head while ducking back into the car.

Despite Pakistani law requiring police to conduct an autopsy in deaths related to crimes, which might have cleared up the confusion, no autopsy was performed. Doctors reportedly were prevented from completing the usual procedure and the crime scene was hosed down shortly after the bodies were carted away...not exactly what viewers of TV's hit series "C.S.I." would expect from a crack squad of crime scene investigators. Now it has been reported that Scotland Yard has been called in to see what can be learned from what remains of the crime scene, witnesses, etc.

But, there is a much simpler way to solve the mystery...just ask Charlie Wilson.

Movie-goers will recognize "Charlie" as the Tom Hanks character in Charlie Wilson's War, a supposedly true-to-real-life movie, rumored to be in line for several Oscar nominations. Wilson was a Democratic member of Congress who, apparently single-handedly, duped the Congress, the CIA, the Saudi royal family and other U.S. allies, into delivering more than a $billion in weapons and training to the "radical-Islamic-mujahadin" in Afghanistan. According to the movie, the idea was to use the Afghans to give the Soviets a dose of the anti-imperialist medicine that Vietnam provided to the U.S. to hasten the demise of the Soviet Union.

And, from what history and the movie tells us, it worked! ... sort of.

Within a few years, the fighters Charlie Wilson & Co. funded were in charge in Kabul and were negotiating with UNOCAL, with the approval of the Clinton Administration, to build a pipeline across Afghanistan to bring oil and gas to ports in Pakistan. The Taliban, and their fellow Jihadis, Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda also enjoyed a cozy relationship with the ISI, Pakistan's security service, that funneled U.S. military aid to the Taliban during the anti-Soviet war. They were more than happy to maintain Taliban-led Afghanistan as a relatively weak neighbor, as a buffer with their regional rival, Iran, and as a kind of "colonial safety-valve" to take Muslim-inspired opposition pressure off Pakistan's unpopular, corrupt, revolving civilian/military rule.

Of course, ever since the British were forced out of their South Asian colonies the military has actually been calling the shots in Pakistan. Pakistani civilian politicians have habit of being ousted by the army, whenever the dominance of the military is threatened. Some have merely been driven from office and others either assassinated or executed, as was Ms. Bhutto's father. This scenario that was repeated in a bloodless coup, when General Musharaff seized power from a democratically elected government in 1998.

The U.S. did not originally support the General or his dictatorial regime, and considered Pakistan a nuclear pariah because its scientists were busily engaged in proliferating nuclear weapons capability around the world, including the countries Mr. Bush later characterized as the "axis of evil" -- Iraq, North Korea and Iran. If Iraq really had nuclear weapons of mass destruction when the U.S. invaded in 2003, they would have gotten much of their know-how from the General's Pakistani scientists.
Then, as they say....9-11 changed everything!

The international nuclear-armed pariah, who was General Musharaff before 9-11, became a U.S. ally in the "War on Terrorism" when Mr. Bush's Undersecretary of State, Richard Armitage made the General an offer he couldn't refuse... "either cooperate with us militarily, against the will of your own military, security service and people...and accept more than $10 billion over the next five years...or we will bomb you back to the stone age." According to Musharaff's memoirs, he wisely accepted his U.S. "Godfather's" offer.

For the past 5 years, the Bush Administration and Musharaff have taken turns publicly congratulating each other on their new found common interests, as the General has become increasingly unpopular in his own land, as well as an international embarrassment to the U.S. as he has clung to power by: dissolving the Supreme Court; attacking civil liberties only slightly more brutally than Cheney and Bush; and making peace with Taliban supporters on his borders and in his own military. But, the Musharaff dictatorship is still on the ropes...enter Ms. Bhutto to put a democratic "face" on the Musharaff regime, at the urging of the U.S. and the UK.

But, now she is dead and the finger pointing has begun.

The General blames "Terrorists," the Charlie Wilson/CIA-created anti-Soviet "Jihadis" like the Taliban and al Qaeda. Bhutto's family blames Musharaff, the Bush administration supported dictator-ally in the "War on Terror." And both have deep ties with elements of Pakistan's secret service and military, that have received billions in U.S. aid over the past 5 years. Certainly one of these suspects must be the guilty party...

But, since both the UK and the U.S. created or supported all of the "suspects" at one time or another, and also engineered Ms. Bhutto's return to Pakistan to "save face" in the first place, a Scotland Yard or F.B.I. investigation is not exactly a confidence-building suggestion, even if Musharaff's police and military have left some evidence to be found after the clean-up. And, no matter who the local villains might be, there can be no disputing that the death of Ms. Bhutto resulted from a long string of consequences, both intended and unintended, that began with "Cold War" attacks against the "Evil Empire" and continuing during the "War on Terrorism," and which lead back to their source in Washington, D.C.

So, since Charlie Wilson and George Bush must know all of the suspects, because they created and supported them....why not just ask them who killed Benazir Bhutto?

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