

JGL Eye Column

By JOSEPH G. LARIOS

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CHICAGO (*JGLi*) – In the heat of the 2008 presidential primary election campaign, Hillary Clinton fielded a campaign ad, which featured a telephone ringing at 3 a.m.

It promoted the idea that Barack Obama was not prepared to pick up the call at a critical hour. It was telling American primary voters that in case a crisis would develop, she wanted them to know that the inexperienced Illinois senator was not ready to respond to the call.

Last Thursday, April 28, President Obama got the call when his advisers asked him to make a decision whether to conduct a strike or defer action until there was greater certainty on whether al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden was indeed holed up in the fortress-like compound outside Islamabad in Pakistan.

Barack Obama Answers "3 A.M." Call - MabuhayRadio

Written by

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Mr. Obama was given a night to think over his decision.

On Friday morning, just before leaving to visit tornado-hit Alabama, President Obama revealed to a small group of aides that he had made up his mind in favor of an immediate raid possibly convinced that a prolonged decision might alert bin Laden to change location.

"It's a go," Mr. Obama told his advisers, as he ordered the operation that led to killing of the mastermind of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States.

On Sunday afternoon, Mr. Obama convened a meeting at the White House where the mood was "tense" and "anxiety-ridden" as the group monitored the unfolding operation dubbed "Neptune Spear" on a screen.

Those present included then his presidential rival and now on his side as US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, Defense Secretary Robert Gates, White House National Security Adviser Tom Donilon and White House counterterrorism adviser John Brennan.

OUT OF A JAMES BOND MOVIE

When President Obama decided to take action on a surreal plot out of a James Bond movie, he knew that he would live to regret it had it failed or he would add a feather in his cap had it succeeded.

And, of course, the rest is history. A history that now installs him as an odds-on favorite to win the 2012 presidential elections.

If Mr. Obama is able to improve the economy and lower the jobless rate at the run-up of the election, they will just be icing in his cake.

Only a blunder by him or his family or close friends tied to him could boot him out of the White House.

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For now, he can coast along while avoiding indiscretions.

Indeed, his decision to raid the compound of bin Laden was a lucky break for him.

But it is not really that all hard luck for bin Laden either, as bin Laden died without any prolonged suffering similar to those hundreds of innocent civilians who were forced to jump to their death from the Twin Towers.

In fact if it were to be believed, for Osama's Muslim extremist fanatics, Osama died a martyr, who would be heading to heaven where 70 (72) of his virgin wives are awaiting him.

I believe "Operation Neptune's Spear" could mark the turning point of Mr. Obama's re-election bid.

OPERATION JUST CAUSE

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In the case of the first President George G. H. Bush, when he ordered the United States Invasion of Panama, codenamed Operation Just Cause, in 1989, to arrest Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega, the operation was denounced for widespread human-rights violation that resulted in the death of 3,000 people.

It drew condemnation from the General Assembly of the United Nations as a flagrant violation of international law. One of the charges against Mr. Noriega was for possession of drugs, which turned out to be tamales, a traditional Latin American dish made of *masa* (a starchy dough, usually corn-based), which is steamed or boiled in a leaf wrapper.

President Bush never recovered and was never re-elected.

“Operation Just Cause” was similar to “Operation Eagle Claw (or Operation Evening Light or Operation Rice Bowl),” a military operation ordered by President Jimmy Carter to attempt to put an end to the Iran hostage crisis by rescuing 52 Americans held captive at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, Iran on 24 April 1980. The public, humiliating debacle that resulted in the death of eight Americans and one Iranian civilian damaged American prestige worldwide and is believed by many, including Mr. Carter himself, to have played a major role in his defeat in the 1980 presidential election.

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Prior to his order of Operation Neptune Spear, President Obama rolled out his detailed Hawaiian birth certificate to quiet his detractors, questioning his legitimacy to hold office.

RECOGNIZING, NOT DENYING A PROBLEM

By going on national TV from the White House, Mr. Obama portrayed himself as a voice of reason amid a loud, lingering national debate on his birth status. Though it was the first time that President Obama paid personal attention on the issue, he never backed away from the debate, telling Republican detractors and the media, it is time to move on to bigger issues.

It was the same tack taken by President Ronald Reagan, whose low-level aides embroiled him in the Iran-Contra Scandal. Instead of going into a state of denial, Mr. Reagan regained the trust of the American people by owning up his mistake and by telling the American people: "First, let me say I take full responsibility for my own actions and for those of my administration. As angry as I may be about activities undertaken without my knowledge, I am still accountable for those activities. As disappointed as I may be in some who served me, I'm still the one who must answer to the American people for this behavior."

If Mr. Obama is able to end the Iraq and Afghanistan wars now that the latter's mission of getting bin Laden is accomplished before his first term ends and the Republicans are not able to present a better alternative to Barack Obama, there is no doubt that President Obama's re-election hopes are now within his grasps. # # #

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