

CORRESPONDENT: MARTHA RADDATZ
DATELINE: WASHINGTON, D.C.
AIR DATE: JUNE 8, 2006
SHOW: WORLD NEWS -- 6:30P

WITH HER IMPECCABLE MILITARY SOURCES, WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT MARTHA RADDATZ BROKE THE STORY ON THE DEATH OF AL-QAEDA LEADER, ABU MUSAB AL-ZARQAWI IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT. SHE IMMEDIATELY BEGAN CONTINUOUS FILING FOR ALL ABC PLATFORMS WHILE ALSO WORKING ON A 3-MINUTE REPORT FOR OUR EVENING NEWSCAST. HER DETAILED REPORTING ALLOWED ABC TO CREATE STATE-OF-THE-ART GRAPHICS TO HELP TELL A VERY DIFFICULT STORY IN A COMPELLING AND VISUAL WAY.

6/8/2006



CHARLIE GIBSON: WE REPORT ON MANY ASPECTS OF THE STORY TONIGHT, BUT WE START WITH ABC'S WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT MARTHA RADDATZ. SHE BROKE THIS STORY AT 2:30 THIS MORNING AND BEGINS WITH DETAILS OF THE MILITARY STRIKE.

--taped piece--

(AL-MALIKI)

NAT MALIKI IN ARABIC

"Zarqawi," he said, "was eliminated." (applause)

A special operations team--Task Force 145--had been zeroing in on Zarqawi for months, tracking his lieutenants and bombmakers...getting ever closer to Zarqawi himself.

GEN. GEORGE CASEY
COMMANDING GENERAL, MULTINATIONAL
FORCE, IRAQ

SOT: "TIPS IN INTELLIGENCE FROM IRAQI SENIOR LEADERS FROM HIS NETWORK LED OUR FORCES TO ZARQAWI AND SOME OF HIS ASSOCIATES WHO WERE CONDUCTING A MEETING APPROXIMATELY 8 KILOMETERS NORTH OF BA'QUBAH WHEN THE AIR STRIKE WAS LAUNCHED."

(GRAPHICS)

Officials tell ABC News the operation began three days ago when Task Force 145 learned that Zarqawi's so-called spiritual advisor, Sheik Rahman would be attending a meeting with Zarqawi. The task force had been monitoring communications and for two hours yesterday afternoon, predator spy planes were following Rahman's every move as he made his way to a small house. As soon as he went inside the air strikes were launched.

MAJ. GEN. WILLIAM CALDWELL
SPOKESMAN, MULTINATIONAL FORCE, IRAQ

SOT: "WE HAD ABSOLUTELY NO DOUBT WHATSOEVER THAT ZARQAWI WAS IN THE HOUSE. IT WAS 100 PERCENT CONFIRMATION."

(GRAPHICS)

Two F-16's struck the house at 6:15 last night..Iraq time.

(CALDWELL OVER BOMB CAMERA)

SOT: "THE LEAD AIRCRAFT IS GOING TO ENGAGE IT HERE MOMENTARILY WITH A 500-POUND BOMB ON THE TARGET."

The pilots did not know they were targeting Zarqawi. They were told only it was a high value target.

(GRAPHICS)

Both 500-pound precision-guided weapons were launched from the lead aircraft. As soon as the smoke cleared, Iraqi forces, followed by US soldiers from the 4th Infantry Division went inside. They found six bodies including Zarqawi's.

But Major General Caldwell said that the US knew with certainty they were targeting Zargawi even before the bombs were dropped.

(CALDWELL)

SOT: "BY VISUAL IDENTIFICATION, IT WAS ESTABLISHED THAT THAT PROBABLY WAS HIM. BUT THEY WENT AHEAD AND BROUGHT HIM BACK, DID FURTHER EXAMINATION OF HIS BODY, FOUND MORE SCARS AND TATOOS CONSISTENT WITH WHAT HAD BEEN REPORTED ONCE WE KNEW ABOUT HIM."

This still photograph was provided as proof.

At 3:30 this morning Baghdad time...just over nine hours after the bombs were dropped, fingerprints confirmed that the dead man was indeed Zargawi.

JOHN MILLER
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, FEDERAL BUREAU OF
INVESTIGATION

SOT: "FINGERPRINTS WERE TAKEN. THEY WERE PUT INTO AN ELECTRONIC COMPUTER THAT CONNECTS WITH OUR DATABASES AT THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE INFORMATION SYSTEMS BRANCH HERE. THEY WERE CONFIRMED TO BE MATCHES."

(GRAPHICS)

The task force also found documents and electronics inside the house, but "nothing of significance."

But almost immediately after Zargawi was killed, US and Iraqi forces raided seventeen other locations where associates of his were thought to be hiding...those raids say officials resulted in a treasure trove of evidence.

(CALDWELL)

SOT: "A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF INFORMATION AND INTELLIGENCE WAS COLLECTED AND IS PRESENTLY BEING EXPLOITED AND UTILIZED FOR FURTHER USE."

(WHITE HOUSE PHOTO)

President Bush was informed of the developments throughout the day yesterday, getting confirmation last night and appearing in the Rose Garden this morning.

(BUSH)

SOT: "ZARQAWI'S DEATH IS A SEVERE BLOW TO AL QAEDA. IT'S A VICTORY IN THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR AND IT IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR IRAQ'S NEW GOVERNMENT TO TURN THE TIDE OF THIS STRUGGLE."

--live on camera close--

THE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS WERE VERY

MEASURED, CHARLIE. WHAT HE DOES NOT WANT
TO DO IS RAISE PEOPLE'S EXPECTATIONS THAT
THE VIOLENCE IN IRAQ WILL SOON DISAPPEAR.