



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on January 9, 2012

Pentagon to Probe Improprieties in Making of bin Laden Movie

The Obama administration may have revealed classified information related to the killing of Osama bin Laden to a group in Hollywood planning to make a film about the event. On Thursday, Representative Peter King (R-N.Y., left) stated that the Department of Defense was initiating an investigation into whether Mark Boal and Kathryn Bigelow (the team behind the 2008 war film *The Hurt Locker*) were provided “improper access” to unreleased intelligence about the hunt for and assassination of the former head of al-Qaeda by members of the American special operations forces that took place in Pakistan in May of 2011.



The [New York Times](#) reports:

Mr. King also said that the Central Intelligence Agency had informed him that it was reviewing its guidelines on interaction with the entertainment industry.

Mr. King has cited security concerns in pressing for an inquiry into the release of information about the May 1 Bin Laden raid in Pakistan. But for months he and others have also voiced suspicions that the film, an independent production to be released by Sony Pictures Entertainment, might exploit classified details of Bin Ladens killing to boost President Obamas political fortunes.

Additionally, in a letter to the Inspector General of the Pentagon, King said that leaks of classified information related to the bin Laden raid had already resulted in the arrests of Pakistanis believed by Pakistan authorities to have assisted the CIA. Participation by the Pentagon and the CIA in making a film about the raid “is bound to increase such leaks, and undermine these organizations’ hard-won reputations as ‘quiet professionals.’”

Producers originally planned for the movie to open before the upcoming presidential election in November, but cries of opportunism and the potential for partisan impact convinced them to postpone the debut until December 19, 2012.

There is some credible basis for the claims of a conflict of interest on the part of the backers of the project. As the *New York Times* story indicates:

In addition, Michael Lynton, the Sony Pictures chief executive, has been a major backer of President Obama and last April organized a high-priced political fund-raising dinner on the Sony studio lot in Culver City, Calif., for the president and for the Democratic National Committee.

The production of the film is likely to carry on undaunted by the threat of a government investigation. In a statement released Thursday a spokeswoman for the Central Intelligence Agency said,



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CIA has been open that as part of our public outreach, the agency has over the years engaged with writers, documentary filmmakers, movie and TV producers, and others in the entertainment industry.

Our goal is an accurate portrayal of the men and women of the CIA, their vital mission and the commitment to public service that defines them. And it is an absolute that the protection of national security equities is an integral part of our mission.

The Obama administration has remained silent on the issue except to refer to a statement made last August when Congressman King first raised awareness of the situation. At that time, White House Press Secretary Jay Carney called Kings assertions “ridiculous.”

Sony Pictures Entertainment, the company which will release the film, declined to discuss its knowledge of the Pentagon investigation.

In August, [director Bigelow and screenwriter Mark Boal claimed](#) that the film “has been in the works for many years and integrates the collective efforts of three administrations, including those of Presidents Clinton, Bush and Obama, as well as the cooperative strategies and implementation by the Department of Defense and the CIA.”

As for Boal, he must enjoy controversy. He is currently crafting a movie chronicling the story of Julian Assange and the Wikileaks scandal.

The story in the *New York Times* reveals a few scant details of the genesis of the project:

Mr. Boal was researching a real-life account of the hunt for Bin Laden before Navy Seals killed him in Pakistan last year. With backing from Annapurna Pictures, an independent film company owned by Megan Ellison, the daughter of Oracles chief executive, Larry Ellison, he had already begun working with government agencies when Sony agreed to become the films distributor.

As yet it is unclear whether Representative King, the chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, will call for hearings into the alleged improprieties surrounding the bin Laden project.



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