

Mullah Omar sheltered by ISI: Hillary Clinton email

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Washington: Top Taliban leader Mullah Omar was sheltered by Pakistan's powerful spy agency ISI after the outfit's leadership fled from Afghanistan in 2001, according to an email received by former secretary of state Hillary Clinton during her tenure.

Mullah Omar is reported to have died at a hospital in Karachi two years ago. However, till date the Pakistani authorities have strongly refuted reports of direct links between ISI and Mullah Omar.

The US too has insisted that it has no such evidence in this regard. However, an email written to Clinton on August 25, 2010 indicates otherwise.

"I'm sure you know the facts in this well-informed piece, how Mullah Omar was saved by ISI, for example, but the idea of Afghanistan as an aspect of Indo-Pak war is the best and overarching strategic concept," wrote one Sid to Clinton.

The full name and email of the author has been redacted. The mail is among the tranche of emails from Clinton's private server which were released by the State Department.

The comment in email is on top of an article "The military and the mullah" written by William Dalrymple in New Statesman, which said that the Pakistani state has a long history of nurturing jihadis as a means of dominating Afghanistan and undermining India.

"It is proving a fatal alliance," the article said. According to the article, ISI gave refuge to the leadership of the Taliban after it fled from Afghanistan in 2001.

"Mullah Mohammed Omar was kept in an ISI safehouse in Quetta; his militia was lodged in the sprawling suburb of Pashtunabad," it said.

"There, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar presided over the Taliban military committee and war chest. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the leader of Hizb-e-Islami, was lured back from exile in Iran and allowed to operate freely outside Peshawar, while Jalaluddin Haqqani, one of the most violent Taliban commanders, was given sanctuary in North Waziristan. Other groups were dispatched to safehouses in Balochistan," the article said.

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