

Story Changes: Osama Unarmed, Didn't Use Wife as Shield

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The White House backed away Monday evening from key details in its narrative about the raid that killed Osama bin Laden, including claims by senior U.S. officials that the Al Qaeda leader had a weapon and may have fired it during a gun battle with U.S. forces.

Officials also retreated from claims that one of bin Laden's wives was killed in the raid and that bin Laden was using her as a human shield before she was shot by U.S. forces.

At a televised White House briefing Monday afternoon, Deputy National Security Adviser John Brennan said bin Laden joined in the fight that several residents of the Abbottabad, Pakistan, compound put up against the Navy SEALs during the 40-minute operation.

"He [bin Laden] was engaged in a firefight with those that entered the area of the house he was in. And whether or not he got off any rounds, I quite frankly don't know," Brennan said.

At a Pentagon briefing earlier in the day, a senior defense official said bin Laden used a woman as a human shield so he could fire shots. "He was firing behind her," the official said.

In another background briefing early Monday morning, a senior administration official also said bin Laden put up a fight. "He did resist the assault force. And he was killed in a firefight," the official said.

However, during a background, off-camera briefing for television reporters later Monday, a senior White House official said bin Laden was not armed when he was killed, apparently by the U.S. raid team.

Another White House official familiar with the TV briefing confirmed the change to media, adding, "I'm not aware of him having a weapon."

"The bottom line is the team that entered that room was met with resistance and took appropriate action," said a third American official...