

ABC NEWS Interview of Usama Bin Laden

Tape date: May 28, 1998

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QUESTION: Mr. Bin Laden, to Americans you are an interesting figure. A man who comes from a background of wealth and comfort who ended up fighting on the front lines. Many Americans would think that's unusual.

BIN LADEN: Thanks be to Allah. It is hard for one to understand if the person does not understand Islam. In our religion we believe that Allah created us to worship Him. Allah is the one who created us and blessed us with this religion, orders us to carry out the holy struggle "jihad" to raise the word of Allah above the words of the unbelievers. We believe this a form of worship we must follow despite our financial ability. This is a response to Westerner and secularists in the Arab world that claim the reason for the awakening and the return to Islam is economic difficulties. This is untrue, in fact the return of the people to Islam is a blessing from Allah, and their return is a need for Allah.

This is not a strange issue, during the days of "Jihad" thousands of young men who were well off financially left the Arabian Peninsula and other areas and joined the fighting, hundreds of them were killed in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Chechnya. We pray Allah grant them martyr's status.

QUESTION: You have been described as the "world's most wanted man." There is word that the American government intends to put a price on your head in the millions for your capture. Do you think that they will do that? Does it worry you?

BIN LADEN: Praise be to Allah. It does not worry us what the Americans think. What worries us is pleasing Allah. The Americans impose themselves on he who believes in his religion, and his rights, or his wealth. They accuse our children in Palestine of being terrorists. Those children that have no weapon and have not even reached maturity. At the same time they defend a country with its airplanes and tanks, the state of the Jews, that has a policy to destroy the future of these children. Clinton stands after Qana and defends the horrible massacre that severed the heads of children and killed about 100 persons. Clinton stands and claims Israel has a justification which is to defend itself. We do not worry about America's opinion, and we are not scared of them or the fact that they place prices on our heads. We as Muslims, believe in that our fate is set, if the whole world decided to get together and kill us before our time has come we will not die, also livelihood is set, no matter how much pressure America places on the regime in Riyadh to freeze our assets and to prevent people from contributing to this great cause we rely on Allah and He will be the one to judge us.

QUESTION: You have said if the Americans are so brave they will come and arrest me. Do you think that is something my country will try?

BIN LADEN: Despite if they try or not, we have seen particularly during the last decade the decline of the American government and the weakness of the American soldier who is ready to wage cold wars and unprepared to fight long wars. This was proven in Beirut when the Marines

ABC NEWS Interview of Usama Bin Laden

May 28, 1998

Page 2

fled after two explosions, and also after the two explosions in Aden they ran in less than 24 hours, this was also repeated in Somalia. So in any given situation we are prepared and we rely on Allah and He will be the one to judge us.

QUESTION: Mr. Bin Laden, you have issued a fatwah calling on Muslims to kill Americans where they can when they can. Is that directed at all Americans, just American military, just Americans in Saudi Arabia?

BIN LADEN: Praise be to Allah. As we mentioned before, Allah ordered us in this religion to uphold the truth to purify Muslim land of all non-believers, and especially the Arabian Peninsula where the Ka'ba is. After World War II the Americans became more aggressive and oppressive, forcing itself on others, especially in the Muslim world.

We are surprised this question is coming from Americans. Each action will solicit a similar reaction. Reciprocal punishment is required to keep your evil away from Muslims, Muslim children and women. American history does not distinguish between civilians and military, and not even women and children. They are the ones who used the bombs against Nagasaki and Hiroshima. Can these bombs distinguish between infants, children, women and military? American does not have a religion that will prevent it from destroying all people.

Your situation with Muslims in Palestine is shameful and disgraceful. If there is any shame left in America. Sabra and Shatilla massacre, was a symbol of cooperation between Zionist and Christian forces against Muslims. Houses were demolished over the heads of children also by testimony of relief workers in Iraq, the Americans led sanctions that resulted in the death of over one million Iraqi children for no reason. All of this is done in the name of American interests. The only reason is your intransigence and your desire to take other people's money and to steal Muslims' oil under misguided terms, saying that it is part of America's vital interests. We believe that the biggest thieves in the world today is America, and the biggest terrorists are the Americans. The only way for us to fend off these assaults is use similar means.

We do not differentiate between those dressed in military uniforms and civilians; they are all targets in this fatwah. Especially since American officials have stated after the Khobar bombing that there was a lack of information and all American civilians were asked to gather information on Muslims and observant Muslim youth and to convey to the security section in the embassy. The fatwah is general and includes all that share or take part in killing of Muslims, assaulting holy places, or those who help the Jews occupy Muslim land.

ABC NEWS Interview of Usama Bin Laden

May 28, 1998

Page 3

QUESTION: Ramzi Yousef was a follower, a follower of yours. Do you remember him? Did you know him?

Ramzi Yousef, after the World Trade Center bombing became a well known Muslim personality, and all Muslims know him. Unfortunately, I did not know him before the incident.

I remember him as a Muslim who defended Islam from American aggression on Muslim lands. He took this effort to let the Americans know that their government assaults Muslims to insure Israeli interests, to insure Jews.

America will see many youths that will follow Ramzi Yousef.

QUESTION: Is it true that when Ramzi Yousef was captured he was in a guesthouse that you were paying for?

BIN LADEN: What was broadcasted in the news and what we learned is that he was captured through American intervention in Pakistan, a big misfortune, from one of the hotels.

QUESTION: Wali Khan Amin Shah, he was captured in Manila. American authorities believed he was working for you, funded by you, setting up training camps there and that part of his plan was to plan out the assassination or attempted assassination of President Clinton during his trip to Manila.

BIN LADEN: Praise be to Allah. Wali Khan is a Muslim youth, in Afghanistan he is nicknamed the Lion. Azmarai in Afghani. He was one of our best Muslim youths in Afghanistan. We were good friends. We fought together in the same trench against the Russians until Allah sent them away in humiliating defeat. You mentioned that he works for me, we do not have what it is called working for someone. We all work for Allah and await his reward. And regarding your mention of his attempt to assassinate President Clinton, it is not surprising. I did not know about it, but it is not surprising.

As I said, every action solicits a similar reaction. What do you expect from those whom Clinton killed and assaulted and attacked their children and mothers to do? What does he expect but equal treatment which is killing? This is not a surprising matter.

QUESTION: Federal authorities in the United States are still investigating their suspicion that you ordered and funded the attacks on the United States military in el Khobar and Riyadh.

BIN LADEN: We roused the people, the Muslims, and carried fatwabs from our Ulama after the Saudi government imprisoned them to placate the American government, and the most prominent are Sheikh Salman ben Fahd al-Odeh, Safad ben Abdel Rahman el Hawali, Sheikh

ABC NEWS Interview of Usama Bin Laden

May 28, 1998

Page 4

Ibrahim al-Dubayyan, Sheikh Yehya Yehya and Sheikh Said ben Sair. They are all our brothers and we pray for them.

So we carried out these fatwahs and incited the people to eject this enemy from the Holy Land, some of the people listened, from among them, Khaled el-Sa'eed, Abdel Azziz el Me'them, Hamood al Hajery and Misleh el Samray. We pray Allah grant them martyr's status. They have raised the head of the Muslim nation high, and washed away some of the dishonor we had to bear by the Saudi government's collaboration with the American government in the land of Allah and in the land of the two holy mosques.

We look at these young men as great heroes and Mujahedeen who followed the steps of the prophet peace be upon Him. We called and they answered, we pray to Allah to accept them and bless their parents with patience.

QUESTION: You have been painted in America as a terrorist leader, to your followers you are a hero, how do you see yourself?

BIN LADEN: As I said before, we do not worry about what America says. We look at ourselves and our brethren as worshipers of Allah who created us to worship Him and follow His books and prophets, peace be upon Him, I am one of Allah's worshipers, I worship Allah, as he ordered which includes carrying out the Jihad to raise Allah's word and evict the Americans from all Muslim lands all over.

QUESTION: No one expected the Mujahedeen to beat the Russians in Afghanistan. That came as a surprise to everyone. What do you see as the future for American involvement in the Mid-East and taking on groups like yours?

BIN LADEN: NATO that America created, we know it spent \$455 billion American dollars in improving weaponry to protect Europe and America from Russia. And they did not fire a single shot. Allah stood with the Muslims, the Afghani Mujahedeen and those who fought with them from other Muslim countries. We fought against the Russians and the Soviet Union, until, not to say we defeated them, but Allah defeated them and then became non existent. There is a lesson to learn from this for he who wishes to learn. The Soviet Union entered in the last week of 1979, in December, and with Allah's help their flag was folded December 25 a few years later and thrown in the trash, and there was nothing left to call Soviet Union. We are sure of Allah's victory and our victory against the Americans and the Jews as promised by the prophet peace be upon Him "Judgement day shall not come until the Muslims fight the Jews, where the Jew will hide behind trees and stones, and the tree and the stone will speak and say 'Muslim, Allah's worshiper, behind me a Jew come and kill him,' except for al-Gharaad tree, which is a Jewish plant."

ABC NEWS Interview of Usama Bin Laden

May 28, 1998

Page 5

We are sure of our victory. Our battle with the Americans is larger than our battle with the Russians. The Americans made a very stupid mistake that no one has made before. They attacked the greatest Muslim symbol the Kibla of 1,200 Million people. The reaction was very encouraging by all classes especially the Muslim scholars and the youth.

We predict a black day for America and the end of the United States as united states, and will be separate states, and they will retreat from our land and collect the bodies of its sons back to America. Allah willing.

QUESTION: What do you see as the future of the Saudi Royal family and their involvement with America and the U.S. military?

BIN LADEN: History has an answer to your question. Any government that sells its people's interests and betrays its people and takes actions that remove it from the Muslim nation will not succeed.

We predict that the Riyadh leader and those with him that stood with the Jews and Christians and violated Al-Haramain (the holy shrines), by Jews and Christians with American identities or otherwise. This is a grave contradiction to Islam which eventually removes from the Islamic nation.

We predict that like the Iranian Royal family, the Shah, they will disperse and disappear. After Allah gave them property on the most sacred land and gave them wealth that is unheard of before from oil, and still they sinned and did not value Allah's gift. We predict destruction and dispersal. They will not find shelter on earth after being oppressive and despotic and taking part in the disasters brought against the Muslim nation, especially what happens to the Muslim people of Iraq.

The prophet, peace be upon Him, in his Hadith said, "A woman entered hell because of a cat. She did not feed it and trapped it from finding food on its own." She is going to hell for trapping a cat to death, what to say to those who agreed and gave reason for the hundreds of thousands of troops to blockade millions of Muslims in Iraq.

QUESTION: Do you think the Saudi government wants the American military to stay?

BIN LADEN: This does not make a difference, since American repression, boastfulness and greed still exist. They came by the approval of government. It does not make a difference if the government wants you to stay or leave because you will not leave by their words. You will leave when the youth send you the wooden boxes and the coffins and you will carry in it the corpses of American troops and the American civilians. This is when you will leave. The decision makers beyond taking you out are the Muslim masses in the Muslim world who defending the Muslim

ABC NEWS Interview of Usama Bin Laden

May 28, 1998

Page 6

lands. Allah willing we will win.

QUESTION: Describe the situation when your men took on the American forces in Somalia? Were you there?

BIN LADEN: After Allah honored us with victory in Afghanistan and justice prevailed and the killings of those who slaughtered millions of Muslims in the Muslim republics. It cleared from Muslim minds the myth of superpowers. The youth ceased from seeing America as a superpower. After leaving Afghanistan they headed for Somalia and prepared for a long battle, thinking that the Americans are like the Russians, but they were surprised when the Americans entered with thirty thousand troops and collected more troops from the world, five thousand from Pakistan, five thousand from India, five thousand from Bangladesh, and also from Egypt, Senegal and others like Saudi.

The youth were surprised at the low morale of the American soldiers and realized more than before that the American soldier is a paper tiger. And after a few blows he ran in defeat, and America forgot about all the hoopla and media propaganda after leaving the gulf war and destroying infrastructure and destroying baby formula factories, all civilian factories, bridges and dams that help planting food. America presented itself as the world leader, and the leader of the new world order, and after a few blows they forgot about this title and left dragging their corpses and their shameful defeat and stopped using such titles. And the politicians in America learned that this name is larger than them and that they are not fit for it.

When this took place I was in Sudan, and this great defeat against America pleased me very much, the way it pleased all Muslims. Allah willing, the next victory will be in Hijaz and Najd, Saudi Arabia will make the Americans forget the horrors of Vietnam and Beirut.

QUESTION: Many Americans believe that fighting army to army like what happened in Afghanistan is heroic for either army, but setting off bombs killing civilians and incidents like the World Trade Center is terrorism.

BIN LADEN: They don't act accordingly to the standards he is making. After our victory in Afghanistan and defeating the Russians, the world media, lead by the American media, started a campaign against us that is still going on until today despite the fact that the Russians left in 1989, almost ten years ago, they have been carrying out this campaign accusing us of being terrorist without any action being taken by the mujahedeen against the real terrorists, the Americans. This is on one hand.

On the other hand, American policy does not admit to differentiate between civilians, military, and child, human or animal. Examples I mentioned before in Nagasaki and Hiroshima where they eliminated entire populations.

ABC NEWS Interview of Usama Bin Laden

May 28, 1998

Page 7

As for Muslims, the testimony of Westerners and Crusaders who have testified to the death of hundreds of thousands of our children in Iraq. And there are Qana, Sabra and Shatila, Dir Yasin and Bosnia.

The crusaders continued their slaughter of our mothers, siblings and children and America every time takes a decision to support them and prevent weapons from reaching the Muslims, leaving the Serbian butcher to slaughter Muslims.

You do not have a religion that prevents you from carrying out these actions and therefore you do not have the right to object to like treatment. Every action solicits a reaction. It is a punishment that is equally inflicted. At the same time our primary target are military and those in its employment.

Our religion forbids us to kill innocent children, women who are not combatants. However, women soldiers who place themselves in the battle trenches receive the same treatment as fighting men.

QUESTION: Is there a high council of the leaders of the different groups like yours that decide on ways and means to attack America?

BIN LADEN: After the Americans entered the Holy Land sympathy and emotions were roused in the Muslim world, more than we have seen before. A great meeting took place a few days ago in Pakistan, it was attended by 150 scholars in Pakistan the goal of the meeting is to work towards liberating the land of Al-Haramain and to coordinate efforts between Muslim masses in the area.

Also, with Allah's blessings, scholars from Afghanistan, India, and other Muslim nations, individual fatwahs were passed, but here great joint fatwahs were passed. The coordination has been expanding between general supported of this religion. From this effort, the International Islamic Front for the Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders was formed which we are members of with other groups. It has a higher council to coordinate rousing the Nation to carry Jihad against the Jews and the crusaders and in this, matters are promising due to God's grace.

QUESTION: The American people by in large do not know the name Bin Laden, but they soon likely will. Do you have a message for the American people?

BIN LADEN: I say that the American people gave leadership to a traitorous leadership. This became very clear and especially in Clinton's government. The American government is called the American government, but we think it is an agent that represents the Israel inside America. If we look at sensitive departments in the present government like the Defense Department or the State Department, or sensitive security departments like the CIA and others we find that Jews have the first word in the American government, which is how they exploit America to carry out

ABC NEWS Interview of Usama Bin Laden

May 28, 1998

Page 8

their plans in the world and especially the Muslim world.

The presence of Americans in the land of Al-Haramain (Saudi Arabia) supports the Jews in the prophet's Holy Land, peace be upon Him, and gives them a safe back. The American government at the time there are millions of Americans living on the street and those living below the standard of living, and in stricken poverty, we find the American government turning towards helping Israel in occupying our land and building settlements in the prophet's Holy Land peace be upon Him.

The American government is throwing away the lives of Americans in the land of Al-Haramain (Saudi Arabia) and other places for the interests of the Jews. The Jews are a people that Allah cited in his holy book the Qura'an as those who attacked their prophets with lies and killings and attacked Mary, may peace be upon her, and accusing her of being a whore. They are a people who didn't abstain from killing God's prophets. How would they refrain from killing, raping and stealing from humans.

They believe that all humans are animals to be exploited by them, and found that the Americans are the best created beings for that use. The American government is driving America to destruction and rational people have no doubt that America will not be a superpower at the turn of the next century.

So, we tell the American people, and we tell the mothers of soldiers, and American mothers in general, if they value their lives and those of their children to find a nationalistic government that would look after their interests and not the interests of Jews.

The continuation of the repression will bring the fighting to America, like Ramzi Yousef and others. This is my message to the American people to look for a serious government that looks out for their interests and does not attack others, their lands or their money.

QUESTION: Mr. Bin Laden these are most of the questions we came with. Is there anything that I did not ask that you would like to add?

BIN LADEN: I would like to stress that we are at a close contact with Muslim masses, praise be to Allah, and the issue of liberating Holy Lands is not my personal cause, but I am just a worshiper of Allah and one of Allah's soldiers in the Muslim nation.

The reaction is increasing fast. And I am sure of our victory with Allah's help against Americans and the Jews. We see this then in the strength of the reaction, that every day the Americans delay their departure for every day they delay they will receive a new corpse from Muslim countries to America.

ABC NEWS Interview of Usama Bin Laden

May 28, 1998

Page 9

The Saudi Arabian government captured a few months ago in Ramadan a number of missiles, which they didn't report. The missiles included anti-aircraft missiles, SAM and Stinger missiles.

Can the Saudi government explain to its people when a SAM missile is launched against a passenger airplane with 250 soldiers aboard? Can they justify to the American public about the death of these soldiers? What the Saudi Arabian government had captured was definitely much less than what was not captured. The American government if it has anything left to hold on to it has no choice but to pull its sons from the land of Al-Haramain in particular, especially the Muslims land in general, and to refrain from supporting in any way the Israeli government and Jews who occupy our land.

We place total responsibility on the American government for any attack against Muslims and its support of regimes in our countries against the best interest of the people. We also hold them responsible for its attack on Islamic symbols, Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, who is considered one of the most prominent Islamic scholars who Allah gave the courage to speak the truth.

We hear that he is in a bad health condition, and he is a man beyond 60 years of age and is blind, and America treats him badly. The imprisonment of Sheikh Omar is an attack on the Islamic religion in general and the Muslim countries. We hold it completely responsible for the imprisonment of Sheikh Omar and the imprisonment of other Muslims in America.

My words are to the American journalists not to ask why we did that, but ask what had their government done that forced us to defend ourselves. They should ask why are we defending ourselves.

This is all I have to say.

QUESTION: What are you going to do - just picking up a word or two - did he mention by any chance the new fatwah that Rahman issued from jail like last week? No. Okay. I heard the name come up so it just reminded me. I was wondering if you could tell me the story of the gun behind you and how you got it. It is a kind of legend in many ways, that during the Afghan war you got it in hand to hand combat with Russians who were on a three day assault of a camp.

BIN LADEN: Praise be to Allah. We went through vicious battles with the Russians. It is enough to just say with Russians, they are known in the West for their brutality and viciousness. They used poisonous gas against us. I was personally injured by this. They used airplanes against our position, we lost many fighters, and we consider them martyrs but we were able to deter many commando attacks, unlike anything before.

ABC NEWS Interview of Usama Bin Laden

May 28, 1998

Page 10

QUESTION: From history: 1897, a man named Teddy Roosevelt who was a wealthy man who grew up in a privileged situation who fought on the front lines put together his own team not from the army, hand picked his own men and went into battles. You are like, the Middle East version of Teddy Roosevelt.

BIN LADEN: We are worshipers of Allah and we carry out our duties. Our duty is to call on all nations to join the light of Islam. Our first duty is not only to preach for this religion, but also to defend those who embraced this religion.

Since we grew up, American weapons were on our heads and the heads of our children and mothers, like in Qana and others.

The Westerners have been under the impression that Muslims are butchers. They just only need to look at your brothers in Eastern Europe, Turkey and Albania to see those who embraced Islam and lived happily with it for centuries. The Western masses have fallen under the effect of Jewish media who do not broadcast on Muslims except that we are butchers, and without showing that the number of those of us who were butchered are many times. . .

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We are surprised this question is coming from Americans. Each action will solicit a similar reaction. Reciprocal punishment is required to keep your evil away from Muslims, Muslim children and women. American history does not distinguish between civilians and military, and not even women and children. They are the ones who used the bombs against Nagasaki and Hiroshima. Can these bombs distinguish between infants, children, women and military? American does not have a religion that will prevent it from destroying all people.

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ABC NEWS Interview of Usama Bin Laden

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Page 2

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ABC NEWS Interview of Usama Bin Laden

May 28, 1998

Page 3

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ABC NEWS Interview of Usama Bin Laden

May 28, 1998

Page 4

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The presence of Americans in the land of Al-Haramain (Saudi Arabia) supports the Jews in the prophet's Holy Land, peace be upon Him, and gives them a safe back. The American government at the time there are millions of Americans living on the street and those living below the standard of living, and in stricken poverty, we find the American government turning towards helping Israel in occupying our land and building settlements in the prophet's Holy Land peace be upon Him.

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