

Bin Ladin Warns Clinton 'Battle Has Not Yet Started'

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[Report by 'Abd-al-Bari 'Atwan: Bin Ladin Tells al-Quds al-'Arabi: "The Battle Has Not Yet Started, We Will Reply to Clinton in Deeds;" all Afghani placenames as published]

[FBIS Translated Text] Saudi oppositionist Shaykh Usama Bin Ladin has threatened US President Bill Clinton that he will launch further attacks on US sites in retaliation against the raids that targeted his headquarters in the Khost region in Afghanistan. In an exclusive statement to al-Quds al-'Arabi, Shaykh Bin Ladin sent a warning message to the US President that "the battle has not yet started and that the answer is what you see, not what you hear".

This is the first telephone contact with Shaykh Usama Bin Ladin from his headquarters in Afghanistan since the US air raids. Shaykh Bin Ladin reassured—through his media spokesman—all Muslims that he is all right. He asserted that the attack had failed to achieve its objectives. The spokesman disclosed that six Arab Afghans were martyred in the US missile strike: Two from Egypt, three from Yemen, and a Saudi from holy Medina. He added that seven Pakistanis and 15 Afghans were among the victims of the raid. In addition, more than 15 Pakistanis were injured, some seriously. Also, five Arab Afghans were injured.

The spokesman told al-Quds al-'Arabi that 50 Cruise missiles targeted the main headquarters of Shaykh Bin Ladin in the Khost region. Ten other missiles fell on

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different other sites of the Arab Afghans. The spokesman added that Shaykh Bin Ladin and other Afghan leaders had expected a US attack after the US Government started evacuating its citizens from Pakistan; therefore, they took precautionary measures.

The spokesman said the human losses within the ranks of the Arab Afghans is a natural thing to which they have grown accustomed. They all seek martyrdom and want to meet God as soon as possible. He praised the position of the Taleban government, which supports the Arab Afghans and refuses to hand over Shaykh Bin Ladin to the United States, in spite of the heavy pressures.

He added that the leader of Taleban, Mulla Muhammad 'Umar, vowed that he will not extradite the Saudi oppositionist, whatever the pressures. The spokesman wished the Islamic nation would follow Taleban's example. He denied that Muhammad Huwaydi, a Palestinian who was handed over to Kenya by the Pakistani authorities, had any link to Shaykh Bin Ladin, although Huwaydi acknowledged that he was with those who waged jihad in Afghanistan against the Soviets 10 years ago.

Al-Quds al-'Arabi learned from informed sources that the US bombing covered five areas in Afghanistan: Qurbuz, which is close to the Pakistani border; the Jawar camp, which is used by the Islamic al-Ansar group; the Salman site, which belongs to Jalal-al-Din Haqqani and which includes deserted camps; the Tura Bura base, west of Jalalabad; and the Khost airport. The sources said that around 75 Cruise missiles were fired at these sites. The sources noted that the United States may have used military facilities in countries that neighbor Sudan and Saudi Arabia in the missile strike.

The sources said Bin Ladin had recently been on the move in Afghanistan and that the US strike did not surprise him. The sources asserted that Bin Ladin has gained popularity and become an "Islamic symbol" in the face of US arrogance in the wake of the latest attack.