

Bin Ladin Sees US Terrorism Listing as Good for Taliban

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[Unattributed report: "Bin Ladin : Afghanistan's Inclusion on US 'Terrorism List' Is 'Certificate of Good Conduct' for Taliban"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, Al-Quds al-'Arabi -- The Saudi oppositionist Usama Bin Ladin has deemed the U.S. decision to include Afghanistan on the list of states sponsoring terrorism in the world a "certificate of good conduct for the Taliban government and proof that it is not subservient to the United States as it had previously been accused of." He pointed out that the United States has forgotten that "some of these decisions could do more good than harm to those against whom they are issued."

In a statement of which Al-Quds al-'Arabi received a copy the day before yesterday [16 May], Bin Ladin said that "the announcement of the US decision and the background on which the decision is based -- namely the Taliban government's sheltering of Shaykh Usama Bin Ladin -- are all matters capable of refuting all the accusations against the Taliban government of working for the United States."

Bin Ladin, who has for the past two years been resident in the Kandahar heights, one of the Taliban movement's fortified locations, noted that the US decision was taken after numerous visits by US envoys at various levels, the most recent being the visit by [US representative to the United Nations Bill] Richardson to Afghanistan. He pointed out that US efforts failed to persuade the Taliban to abandon its "Islamic orientation" in government, accept the US solution to the Afghan dispute, and refrain from sheltering and protecting Arab mujahidin. He emphasized that the US "motives" [bawa'ith] prove "the extent of the Taliban government's independence, adherence to its principles, and decision not to bargain over these principles."

Bin Ladin, whom the United States accuses of supporting "terrorist" Islamic movements, sees the US decision as "an amusing political contradiction," since it represents "tacit recognition by the United States of the Taliban government, now that the United States has included it on the list of states, not the list of terrorist organizations."

He said that "US accusations of terrorism against states, groups, or individuals are no longer of any value or credibility, since everyone now knows that the United States brands as terrorist anyone -- state, group, or individual -- who is opposed to its imperialist policy and hegemony, while it continues to practice the ugliest forms of world terrorism and support the evil of the forces of terror in the world."

Bin Ladin wondered: "Is there any terrorism uglier or more brutal than the killing by the United States of hundreds of thousands of children, women, and elderly people by sentencing them to death by starvation in Iraq? Is there any clearer sponsorship of Zionist terrorism in Palestine, Lebanon, and elsewhere than the US sponsorship?"

He pointed out that the US decision to include the Taliban government on the list of states sponsoring terrorism will not harm that government at all, "because it lacks credibility at the world level; it also lacks the foundations for implementation inside the United States." He added that the Taliban government has no diplomats that it [the United States] could expel from Washington or reduce their numbers and limit their activities, nor does it have financial assets that the United States could freeze in its banks."

Concluding, he said: "Actually the Taliban government had for a long time been in pressing need of such a US decision, which clears it of the accusation that it is working for the United States and proves its adherence to its principles, its own decisionmaking, and its nonsubmission to external pressures, including US pressure."

The Taliban government controls two-thirds of Afghan territory and is engaged in a conflict with the opposition forces in the north. So far, world states -- with the exception of three Islamic states: Saudi Arabia, the [United Arab] Emirates, and Pakista -- have not recognized the Taliban government.