

**Bin-Ladin denies any links with CIA in Afghanistan - 98 Al-Jazeera TV interview - Part 1 of 2.**

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Saudi dissident Usamah Bin-Ladin has said that the Christian and Jewish world, led by the USA, Britain and Israel, is in conflict with the Islamic world, and it is his duty to rouse Muslims into fighting a holy war (jihad) to free their land from Western plunder, desecration and occupation. He said that the 1998 attacks on US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam had caused a wave of joy to sweep through the Islamic world. He also said that any suggestion that the USA and the CIA had supported him and his fighters in their holy war against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the 80s, was "distortion by the Americans". The following is the text of an interview with Usamah Bin-Ladin by Jamal Isma'il, recorded at an unspecified location in Afghanistan in December 1998, as broadcast by Qatari Al-Jazeera satellite TV on 20 September 2001; subheadings inserted editorially:

[Bin Ladin] Usamah Bin-Muhammad Bin-Awad Bin Ladin. Almighty God was gracious enough for me to be born to Muslim parents in the Arabian Peninsula, in Al-Malazz neighbourhood in Riyadh, in 1377 Hegira [1957 or 1958 depending on the month in which he was born]. Then God was gracious to us as we went to Holy Medina six months after I was born. For the rest of my life I stayed in Hejaz moving between Mecca, Jedda and Medina.

As it is well known, my father, Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Awad Bin Ladin, was born in Hadramaut. He went to work in Hejaz at a very early age, more than 70 years ago. Then God blessed him and bestowed on him an honour that no other contractor has known. He built the holy Mecca Mosque, where the holy Ka'bah is located and at the same time - because of God's blessings to him - he built the holy mosque in Medina for our prophet, God's prayers be upon him. Then when he found out that the Government of Jordan announced a tender for restoration work on the Dome of the Rock Mosque, he gathered engineers and asked them to estimate the cost price only, without profit. They said to him: With God's help, we will be awarded the project and make some profit as well. He said to them: Calculate only the cost price of the project. When they did, they were surprised that he, may God have mercy on his soul, reduced the cost price in order to guarantee that God's mosques,

and this mosque in particular, are well served. He was awarded the project. Because of God's graciousness to him, sometimes he prayed in all three mosques in one single day. May God have mercy on his soul. It is not a secret that he was one of the founders of the infrastructure of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Afterward, I studied in Hejaz. I studied economy at Jeddah University, or the so-called King Abd-al-Aziz University. I worked at an early age on roads in my father's company, may God have mercy on his soul. My father died when I was 10 years old. This is something brief about Usamah Bin Ladin.

"We want our land to be freed of Americans"

As to what he [Usamah Bin Ladin] wants, what we want and demand is the right of any living being. We want our land to be freed of the enemies; we want our land to be freed of the Americans. God equipped living creatures with an instinctive zeal and they refuse to be intruded upon. For instance, if an armed military man walks into a chicken's home wanting to attack it, the chicken will fight back and it is only a chicken. We are demanding a right given to all living creatures, not to mention the fact that it is a right for all human beings, including the Muslims.

There was an attack on the countries of Islam, especially on the holy shrines and on Al-Aqsa Mosque, the prophet's first Kiblah [direction to which Muslims turn in prayer]. And then the aggression continued with the Crusader-Jewish alliance being led by the United States and Israel. Now they have taken the country of the two holy mosques. The only source of strength is Allah.

We seek to instigate the nation to get up and liberate its land, embark on jihad for the sake of God, and to make the Islamic law the highest law, and the word of God the highest word of all.

Joint US-British attack on Iraq

[Isma'il] Recently there was a joint US-British attack on Iraq. First, how do you view this attack? Second, the popular and official Arab and Islamic reactions were reportedly below the required level of resistance, or below the Iraqi people's expectations. What is your position on this?

[Bin Ladin] The latest attack on Iraq a few days ago was led by the United States and Britain. The attack underscored many important and serious facts. We are not talking about the material or human losses inflicted on our Muslim brothers in Iraq, but about the implications of this attack. The United States accuses Iraq of using toxic gases against the Kurds and against its people. It also accuses it of using lethal weapons against Iran. What draws attention and what people should consider is the fact is that the United States did not talk about Iraq at that time; it supported it through its brokers and agents in the region. When Iraq turned into a power to be reckoned with in the region, and even became the biggest Arab power in the region that threatens Jewish security and the security of the Israeli occupation of

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the land from which our Prophet, God's peace and blessings be upon him, made his journey to heaven, the United States began to dig up these things and claim it wants to take it to task for them. It admits that Israel possesses lethal and mass destruction weapons, but says it does not use them. Iraq did. This argument is flimsy and rejected. The United States is the one which possesses these weapons and is the one which attacked nations in the farthest east, in Nagasaki and Hiroshima, after Japan had surrendered and the World War was drawing to a conclusion. Nevertheless, it insisted on striking at nations, including children, women and elderly people. In fact, we must consider Israel the real perpetrator of any attack today on any state in the Islamic world.

However, for fear that people might wake up and huge popular movements would emerge to topple the agent regimes, which failed to support Islam and Muslims or the sake of maintaining their seats - and the feelings of these nations were somehow anaesthetized towards the United States - the Jews managed to employ the Christians - the Americans and British - to carry out the duty of attacking Iraq. The United States claims to be taking Iraq to task.

What is true, however, is that the Israeli and Jewish authority is influential within the White House, as is clear to people. The defence secretary is a Jew, the secretary of state is a Jew, CIA and National Security officials are Jews, other senior officials are Jews. They led the Christians into breaking the wings of the Islamic world. The target is not really Saddam Husayn, but the emerging power in the Islamic and Arab world. They attacked the Iraqi people and earlier besieged Libya because it had a chemical factory. They also attacked the Al-Shifa pharmaceutical factory in Sudan. One should note these things.

Muslims should not resort to the UN

Another implication of these incidents is that they emphasized clearly and explicitly that Muslims and all sensible people should not go to the United Nations. According to Islamic law, Muslims should not appeal to these atheist temporal regimes. But we also urge the non-Muslim wise men not to do so. Take North Korea, for example. Will any wise man, even if he is an infidel, go to a court where the judge - [sentence incomplete as heard]. If a sentence is issued against us, we will be painfully beaten up under what is falsely called international legitimacy. If we are judged right, the United States will use the veto. Accordingly, no Muslim should go there because this conflicts with faith. Likewise, no wise person, even if he is an infidel, should go there. Those who keep talking about the United Nations and its resolutions are either ones who do not understand their religion or want to anaesthetize the nation by pinning hopes on what is sheer mirage and delusion.

[Isma'il] Do you think the US-UK attack on Iraq will increase the popularity of and support for the anti-US organizations or subjugate and terrorize them against any military or non-military action against the United States and its interests?

[Bin Ladin] In response to this question and what preceded it, I would like to say it is time for the Islamic nation to realize after these

attacks that the states of the region are non-sovereign states. Our enemies are moving freely in our seas, lands, and space. They strike without seeking anyone's permission. This time the United States and Britain were not able to rally support for this flagrant and exposed conspiracy. The present regimes are no longer capable of doing so. These regimes are either colluding or having lost the ability to do anything against this blatant occupation. The Muslims, particularly those in power and people of good judgment - true ulema, faithful merchants and tribal chiefs - should emigrate for the sake of God and seek a place where they can raise the banner of jihad and mobilize the nation into safeguarding their religion and worldly affairs. Otherwise, they will lose everything. They should learn a lesson from what was inflicted on our brothers in Palestine. The Palestinian people were well known for their activity and agricultural crops, citrus fruit, textiles and soap, which they used to export. The Palestinian people, who are our brothers, are now displaced and expelled everywhere. Finally, they became labourers employed by the colonialist Jews, who would allow them in or deny them entry whenever they wanted to, and at the cheapest of wages. The situation is serious.

If we do not move now that the old house, the Kiblah [direction to which Muslims turn in prayer - the Ka'bah in Mecca, Saudi Arabia] of 1.2 billion Muslims, was encroached upon, when will people do so? This is a significant matter that needs to be addressed. Deluded are those who think that the current circumstances frighten the Islamic movements. We the Muslims believe that the instant of death was fixed the moment we came to existence in our mothers' wombs; it moves neither forward nor backward. Our livelihood comes from the Almighty God. It is God who created these souls and gave these funds to people. God has purchased from the believers their persons and their goods. So, why should people fail to support their religion?

"Our duty... is to rouse the nation for jihad against the United States, Israel"

[Isma'il] Following the first US attack on Afghanistan last summer, the news agencies cited you or your representative as saying that you will reply to the attack, but we have not heard of any reply. Will there be a practical reply if there is a new US attack on Afghanistan? How will the reply be?

[Bin Ladin] Our duty - and we carried it out - is to rouse the nation for jihad against the United States, Israel, and their supporters for the sake of God. We continue to move in the direction of instigating people. The popular movement of the past few months gives hope. It is a step in the right direction to force the Americans out of the Islamic countries. Due to the circumstances surrounding us and due to our inability to move outside Afghanistan to closely pursue this, we did only what we could. By the grace of God, we, together with a large number of our brothers, formed the world front for jihad against Jews and crusaders [Arabic: al-salibiyin]. We believe matters are proceeding well with many of them [brothers]. They are largely active. We hope God will help them uphold religion and take revenge from the Jews and Americans.

[Isma'il] This world Islamic front was formed or announced seven or months ago. Thus far, we have not heard anything from it other than the

statement to which you referred or the news conference you held in the city of Khost last summer. Do you think the front is now practically frozen?

[Bin Ladin] It is not frozen. Its members are of diverse nationalities and have a large margin of movement. They should not necessarily announce their actions. These months cannot be considered much in the effort to rouse the nation and resist the biggest enemy in the world.

[Isma'il] The United States warned its nationals in the Gulf states and the region in general against operations you and your supporters may carry out, particularly during the current month of Ramadan. How serious are these warnings and do you target the US nationals in general or the US forces in the Gulf and some other Islamic areas?

[Bin Ladin] I heard this a few days ago on radio stations. It delighted me as it heralded the emergence of the nation, thanks to Almighty God. As for the seriousness of threats, I, regrettably, do not know who undertook this blessed effort. We pray to the Almighty God to grant them success and bestow on them (?victory over) the infidels - Americans and others.

The previous fatwa said that in our religion we have categories that are different from what the infidels claim, although they claim something and act differently. We differentiate between man, woman, child and elderly people. The man is a fighter, whether he carries arms or helps us in our struggle by paying taxes and by gathering information. He is thus a fighter. With regard to reports disseminated among Muslims that Usamah is threatening to kill civilians, I ask who are they killing in Palestine? They are killing children, not only civilians, but also children. The United States took exclusive possession of the media and managed to build huge media power. It uses different standards at different times according to its needs. With God's help, the target or enemy of Muslims is every American man who is directly fighting us or paying taxes.

You may have heard these days that almost three quarters of the US people support Clinton's strikes against Iraq. They are people whose president becomes more popular when he kills innocent people. They are people who increase their support for their president when he commits cardinal sins. They are a lowly people who do not at all understand the meaning of values.

"I enjoy very good health"

[Isma'il] The US Pentagon published reports on your health. It attributed them to Pakistani intelligence. They said you have developed an incurable disease and may not live long. They said you will live only five or six months at most. First, how true are these reports? Second, what is the purpose of publishing these reports now after issuing warnings to US nationals against possible operations by you and your supporters?

[Bin Ladin] I enjoy a very good health, praised be God, whom we always thank. As you can see, we are living in the mountains. We endure this

bitter cold; we also endure the summer heat. Praised be God, I continue to practice my favourite hobby, which is horse-riding. Thanks to God, I still can ride a horse for 70 km without stopping. These are tendentious rumours, possibly intended to affect the morale of Muslims sympathizing with us. They may also be intended to dispel the Americans' fears that Usamah might do something. What is true is that things do not hinge on Usamah. This is a nation of 1.2 billion Muslims, which absolutely cannot leave God's old house to the malicious Jews and Christians. The nation, God willing, will continue [along this path]. We are confident that they will continue jihad and continue to deal painful blows to the United States and its supporters, God willing.

Afghanistan, Pakistan

[Isma'il] When the United States bombed Afghanistan on 20 August it was reported that you were attending a meeting in the Khost area, which was the target of the US missiles. It was also reported that the missile attack was timed to coincide with your presence at that meeting. Was there a meeting and were you present there? It was also said that you received a message from a neighbouring country; namely, Pakistan, asking you to immediately leave that place because it could possibly be attacked. What is your relationship with Pakistan and what is its attitude towards you? Do you think Pakistan will cooperate with the United States in dealing a blow to you?

[Bin Ladin] Praised be God. The Americans apparently had wrong information. I was not in Khost. I was not anywhere in the Bektiya Province. I was a few hundred kilometres away from that place. As for what was said about information reaching us, we, with the help of God, found in Pakistan sympathetic and generous people. Their sympathy exceeded all our expectations. May God bless them. We get information from our beloved ones and supporters of jihad against the Americans for the sake of God. The people of Pakistan gave a clear indication of how much they hate the US arrogance against the Islamic world. There are groups in Pakistan that sympathize with Islam and jihad against Americans. There are also other groups, which are few but, regrettably, continue to cooperate with the Americans, the nation's enemies.

[Isma'il] Do you mean on the official level?

[Bin Ladin] I mean the government; groups within the government.

"Duty of Muslims" to possess nuclear weapons

[Isma'il] Some Arab and foreign newspapers published reports on your attempt to possess nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, particularly via some merchants from central Asian states or former Soviet republics. How true are these reports, especially since the US administration recorded these accusations in the list of 235 charges levelled at you. It says you are seriously seeking to possess such weapons.

[Bin Ladin] As I said, we are demanding our right to have them [the Americans] evicted from the Islamic world and to prevent them from dominating us. We believe that the right to self-defence is to be

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enjoyed by all people. Israel is stockpiling hundreds of nuclear warheads and bombs and the Christian West is largely in possession of such weapons. Hence, we do not regard this as a charge, but rather as a right. We refuse to see anybody level charges against us in this regard. It is as if you were accusing a man of being a brave knight and fighter. It is as if you were denying him this. Only a man who is not in his right mind would level such accusations. This is a right. We supported the Pakistani people and congratulated them when God was gracious enough to enable them to acquire the nuclear weapon. We regard this as one of our rights, of Muslim rights. We will not pay attention to these worn-out US charges.

[Isma'il] Is this a confirmation of the charges that you are seeking to possess such weapons?

[Bin Ladin] These are not charges. It is the duty of the Muslims to possess them. The United States knows that with the help of Almighty God the Muslims today possess these weapons.

[Isma'il] The US Administration levelled accusations at you on issues they said related to terrorism and the support extended to terrorist groups and others. Are you ready to counter these accusations and stand trial in a neutral court in another state?

USA, Britain, Israel in conflict with Islamic world

[Bin Ladin] There are two parties to the conflict: World Christianity, which is allied with Jews and Zionism, led by the United States, Britain and Israel. The second party is the Islamic world. In such a conflict, it is unacceptable to see the first party mount attacks, desecrate my land and holy shrines, and plunder the Muslims' oil. When Muslims put up resistance against this party, they are branded as terrorists. This is stupidity. It is an insult to people's intelligence. We believe that it is our religious duty to resist this occupation with all the power we have and to punish it using the same means it is pursuing against us.

[Isma'il] But the Taleban government said it will try you if hard evidence is presented by any state or quarter on the charges levelled at you. Will you agree to stand trial according to the Islamic law, which is being applied by Taleban?

[Bin Ladin] We left our country to undertake jihad for the sake of Almighty God. God has honoured us with this blessed emigration out of our desire to apply the shari'ah [Islamic law]. This is what we left for - a country where there is a religious court that applies the Islamic shari'ah away from pressures and personal whims. This is our aim and demand. We are ready at any time to appear before any religious court, in which both the plaintiff and defendant stand. If the plaintiff is the United States, we will also sue it for many things and cardinal sins it committed in the land of Islam. When the Americans, God fight them, asked Taleban to hand me over, they refused to apply the shari'ah. They said: We demand one thing, that is, to hand over Usamah Bin Ladin. They deal with people as if they were their slaves or servants. This is due to their arrogance. May God disgrace them.

Bombing of US embassies in East Africa

[Isma'il] Regarding the bombings against the US embassies in East Africa - in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam - charges were made against you, based on the confessions published in some Pakistani and world newspapers. They were attributed to Muhammad Sadiq Huwaydah, who was arrested in Pakistan and handed over to the United States and Kenyan authorities. He claimed that you ordered him to carry out the bombings. What is your opinion about these bombings and what is your relationship with Muhammad Sadiq Huwaydah?

[Bin Ladin] With the grace of Almighty God, they [bombings] delighted Muslims in the Islamic world. Those who followed world press and media reports saw the extent of the Islamic world's sympathy with the strikes against the Americans, although people regretted the death of some innocent people of that country. What was clear was the mammoth wave of joy that swept through the Islamic world. This is so because they believe that the Jews and the United States have gone too far in their tyranny and scorn of Muslims. Peoples failed to make the Islamic states move to defend them or their religion. Therefore, these were purely popular reactions by young men who willingly offered their lives, seeking the satisfaction of Almighty God. I hold in great esteem and respect these great men because they removed the brand of shame from the forehead of our [Islamic] nation when they carried out the bombings in Riyadh, Al-Khubar, East Africa and elsewhere.

I also view with great esteem our brother cubs in Palestine, who are teaching the Jews great lessons in faith and pride of the faithful. Regrettably, after these daring operations in Palestine, the world's infidelity gathered. It is a cause of sadness that they gathered on the soil of Egypt. They gathered their agents from the rulers of the region - the Arab rulers - who had been deceiving the Islamic nation for more than half a century. Whenever a president and a king met they said they discussed the Palestinian cause. Fifty years later, the clear picture emerged; namely, they met not only to betray the mujahidin in Palestine, but to denounce those cubs whose fathers and brothers were killed, imprisoned or tortured for trying to defend their religion or expel the infidels from their land. The proverb says: Clear things are impossible to explain. I do not know what people are waiting for after this clear agency and submission by the Arab rulers in favour of the Jews and the United States.

[Isma'il] Yes, but the United States says it is confident and has evidence on your involvement in these operations. It has not yet revealed this evidence. It was reported that investigations revealed that a person - one of your group or your supporters - confessed many things to the US intelligence about your organization and your connection with operations, including the bombing of the World Trade Centre.

[Bin Ladin] The US claims are numerous. If we presume that they are true, we are not concerned about them. These people are resisting the forces of world infidelity that occupied their land. Why should the United States get angry when the people resist its aggressions? Its claims are baseless. However, if it means that I have something to do with instigating them, I would like to say that this is obvious. I have

always admitted this. I admitted that I was one of those who co-signed the fatwa that urged the nation to engage in jihad. We did so a few years ago. Praised be God, many people responded favourably to our fatwa. Of these people were the brothers whom we regard as martyrs. They were brother Abd-al-Aziz al-Mi'thim, who was killed in Riyadh, brother Muslih al-Shamrani, brother Riyad al-Hajiri, and brother Khalid al-Sa'id. The only strength is that bestowed by God. We beseech Almighty God to accept them all. During interrogation, they admitted to being influenced by some of the statements and circulars we issued to the people. In these statements and circulars, we communicated the fatwas issued by clergymen regarding the need to engage in jihad against these US occupiers.

The Buddhists, North Koreans, and Vietnamese fought against the Americans. This is a legitimate right. What right do the Arab and Islamic media have to criticize the Mujahidin, who emulated and were inspired by Prophet Muhammad, God's peace and blessings be upon him. The prophet was quoted as saying: By Him in whose hand is my soul, I love to invade and get killed, then invade and get killed again, and then invade and get killed. It is our wish to embark on jihad for the sake of God. I had earlier told some Western media that we missed a great deal of honour for not participating in killing the Americans in Riyadh.

These accusations are baseless in part and parcel, unless they meant instigation. True, I, together with many of my brotherly Islamic scholars, instigated the nation to embark on jihad.

Huwaydah "must have made this confession under torture"

[Isma'il] Muhammad Sadiq Huwaydah claimed that he received training in your camps and that he personally knew you. How true are his claims and the statements attributed to him by some news media?

[Bin Ladin] What I know is that more than 15,000 young men, mostly Arabs, received training in the camps of jihad in Afghanistan. God has bestowed his grace on us and helped us open these camps during the jihad against the Soviet Union. Some trainees were brothers from the Islamic world. I firmly believe that the claim that I asked him to carry out the bombing is a falsehood fabricated by the US government. It has no evidence on this. Even if we suppose that brother Huwaydah said this, he must have said this or made this confession under torture. The torture methods in Pakistan or East Africa are well known.

[Isma'il] But Muhammad Sadiq Huwaydah also claimed that you ordered the assassination of Shaykh Abdallah Azzam in Peshawar in 1989 and that there was struggle over the leadership of the Arab Afghans or Arab mujahidin in Afghanistan between you and Shaykh Abdallah Azzam, who chaired the services bureau. How true are these claims and how do you describe your relationship with Shaykh Abdallah?

Assassination of Shaykh Abdallah Azzam

[Bin Ladin] Shaykh Abdallah Azzam, may God have mercy on his soul, was
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a man worth a nation. His assassination clearly showed how sterile the Muslim women are for not giving birth to a man like him. The people of jihad, who were in the field and lived that era, know that the Islamic jihad in Afghanistan did not benefit from anyone as much as it benefited from Shaykh Abdallah Azzam. He prodded the nation [for jihad] from the farthest east to the farthest west. During the blessed jihad, he worked with our brother mujahidin in Palestine, particularly Hamas. His books, particularly his book "The Verses of the Most Merciful" began to enter Palestine and urge the nation to undertake jihad against the Jews. He began to break out of the narrow regional circle observed by Islamists and Shaykhs and open up on the Islamic world to prod for jihad. We were all in one boat, as is known to you, along with our brother Wa'il (Jalidan). A plot was concocted to assassinate all. We were very careful not to be together all the time. I often asked Shaykh Abdallah Azzam to stay away from Peshawar due to the increasing plots, especially since a week or two ago a bomb was discovered in the mosque where the shaykh lives in Sab' al-Layl.

The Jews were mostly harmed by the movements of Shaykh Abdallah. It is believed that Israel, along with some of its Arab agents, were the ones who assassinated the shaykh. The Jews, Americans and some of their agents are spreading this accusation [that Bin Ladin ordered the killing of Azzam] these days. It is illogical for someone to behead himself. Those who were in the field knew how strong my relationship with Shaykh Abdallah Azzam was. These are falsehoods said by some and they are baseless. There was no competition between us. Shaykh Abdallah's specialization was in the field of call and instigation. We were in the Bektiya mountains. He sent us young men and we observed his directives and instructions. We pray to God to accept him as a martyr, together with his sons Muhammad and Ibrahim, and to make up for his loss by sending someone who can carry out the duty he used to carry out.

Drying up of financial resources

[Isma'il] Following the US missile attack on Afghanistan, the US president ordered an economic or financial war against you and the commercial institutions you are running or dealing with. It is said that the stage of drying up your financial resources has begun. Wouldn't this cause you financial problems and lead to the dispersal of your supporters in the coming stage?

[Bin Ladin] War has its ups and downs; we either win or lose. The United States exerted extremely strong pressures on our activities at an early stage. This affected us. Some of the states, in which we have funds and property, responded. They ordered us to stop antagonizing the United States. But we believe it is our duty to instigate the nation. We continued the instigation. With the help of the Almighty God, we continued and now we have been doing so for several years. The US pressures did not actually begin with the latest bombardment. Some Arab countries put economic pressures on us, denying us our rights and even preventing our people from paying us our money. They are thus following the footsteps of Abdallah Bin-Salul, the leader of the hypocrites, about whom God said: They are the ones who say spend nothing on those who are with God's apostle to the end that they may disperse, but to God belong the treasures of heavens and the earth; but the hypocrites understand not. [Koranic verse]

The Almighty God has punished them and they now live in a hardship worse than the restrictions they imposed on us. As our prophet, God's peace and blessing be upon him, said, the one who is secure among his people, sound in his health and capable of earning his livelihood will possess all the world. By God, we feel that the whole world is with us. Money is perishable. We call on Muslims to spend their money on jihad and be with the jihad movements, which have devoted themselves to fighting the Jews and crusaders.

Jihad against Christians and Jews

[Isma'il] You declared jihad against Christians and Jews, especially Americans, in the fatwa issued last February. But, that fatwa coincided with a decision by several Islamist groups, which once engaged in armed struggle, to suspend this struggle, as is the case now in Egypt and Algeria. And in some Arab countries, we have also seen these Islamist groups engaging in parliamentary life or what is termed the democratic game. Don't you think that by calling for jihad now that you are moving against the general trend taken by these Islamist groups?

[Bin Ladin] We believe that Jihad is a duty for the nation today. But, we have to distinguish between jihad as a duty and the ability to carry it out. Any country that has insured the necessary requirements for jihad - number and equipment - Muslims there should embark on jihad against the great infidel. Now in some countries, people may think that they have insured the requirements, but discover after a while they have not. In such a case, they are exempted of that duty. But, who defines the requirements? Is it those who went after worldly affairs or those who do not have enough juristic or military knowledge? So the correct thing here is that although jihad is a duty it could be ruled out due to lack of ability. But preparation to insure the number of equipment cannot be ruled out.

There is frequent talk among Muslims this is not the time for jihad. Now, this is incorrect if not properly documented. Some scholars also say this is not the time for jihad. This is really wrong if documented. But, if they say that jihad is a duty today and we are striving with all the means in our power to insure the number, equipment, and other necessary requirements, this is correct. Islamic scholar Ibn-Taymah, may God be pleased with him, says on this point: The one who issues the ruling on jihad must be one who is conversant with the Islamic shari'ah and with the conditions of jihad. In other words, he must have engaged in jihad himself.

But, when jihad stopped among the nation for a while, there emerged a generation of religious scholars who had no experience in jihad. They fell under the influence of the US media that invaded the Islamic countries, and were thus defeated psychologically even before engaging in military action. They say: we cannot go for jihad. True, Jihad is necessary, but we cannot do it.

But, the correct thing is that those on whom God bestowed the grace of jihad as Afghanistan, Bosnia and Chechnya - God has also bestowed this grace on us - can with God's help, fight against the enemies of Islam, especially the outside great enemy, the crusader-Jewish alliance. I

wish to point out here that some youths, may God preserve and bless them, are influenced by the hesitation of their elders. They think that these revered elders would not have hesitated had they not known the interests of the nation. But, facts have shown that this is not the case at all. It is not necessary for the hesitation of the revered ones stem from their awareness of the general interest.

When reading the Holy Koran we find that righteous ones, may God be pleased with them, were rebuked by God for their hesitation. So if the chaste, righteous leaders, may God be pleased with them, had suffered from this disease of hesitation over jihad, how could we claim that our present day righteous ones were hesitant over jihad for the sake of the general interest?

In the Holy Koran sura of Al-Anfal, God says, addressing his prophet, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him, and the Badr Battle fighters, who were among the most righteous, may God rest their souls in peace: "Just thy Lord ordered thee out of thy house in truth, even though a party among the believers disliked it. Disputing with thee concerning the truth after it was made manifest, as if they were being driven to death and they (actually) saw it." If this description had applied to the Badr Battle fighters, the most righteous ones, it is only natural to apply to us as well.

Ka'ab Ibn-Malik, may God be pleased with him, says in a long tradition in the book of the prophet traditions: "Bukhari wa Muslim": I hesitated to join the Tabuq conquest although I was in good health and had two camels. I tried to get ready, but the day passed without being able to prepare myself. The prophet, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him, also called for that jihad around harvest time when I wanted to harvest my crops.

The human being is always subject to worldly interests. Yet this man was among the vanguards. In fact, he was among those who signed the great, blessed Aqaba Allegiance Accord that launched the State of Islam in Medina. Still, he stayed behind without any reason.

In that long tradition, Ka'ab said that three men stayed behind. This was also mentioned in the Holy Koran. The story says that those who left for the Tabuq conquest were 33,000. What is three compared to 33,000? This number is insignificant today for any army commander. The absence of three out 33,000 is an insignificant number. But, due to the great sin committed God Almighty from the seven heavens mentioned this in the Holy Koran so as to be taken a point against these three men to Doomsday. Ka'ab, may God be pleased with him, said: I felt so grieved and went to my cousin, Abu-Qatadah, who was closest to me, and asked him: O Abu-Qatadah, By the name of God, don't I love God and his prophet?" What a strange question! But, Ka'ab wanted to make sure of his greatest possession in life, his love for God prophet. To him, there was no meaning to our life without the love for God and the prophet.

Ka'ab said: My cousin did not reply. I appealed to him the second and third time. But, Abu-Qatadah could not confirm his love for God and the prophet. How could he prove it when he stayed behind with others? For it was said that the Romans were getting ready to attack Islam in

Tabuq. The prophet left in the heat of the day to defend Islam while Ka'ab stayed behind. How could he confirm his love for God and the prophet. Abu-Qatadah could not confirm or deny his love for God and the prophet, but finally said: God and his prophet would know. Ka'ab shed a tear. His closest friend could not confirm this great thing.

The lesson here is that jihad is a duty for the nation. The unable may not have to go for jihad. But, we believe that those who waged jihad in Afghanistan performed a great duty. They managed with their limited resources of RPG's, anti-tank mines and kalashnikovs to defeat the biggest legend known to mankind, to destroy the biggest war machine, and to remove from our minds the so-called big powers.

USA "a great deal weaker than Russia"

We believe that the United States is a great deal weaker than Russia. We have learned that from our brothers who fought in Somalia. They saw wonders about the weakness, feebleness, and cowardliness of the US soldier. Hardly 80 of them were killed, when they fled in the dark of the night, despite the uproar that was created worldwide about the New World Order.

This is our belief. If people fear God and think that they can go to jihad, then they should do so. And if they think that their present circumstances call for further preparations, then they should do so. God is all-knowing.

[Isma'il] The US administration has allocated the sum of five million dollars for your capture or for information that could lead to your capture. Some people think that this sum could attract one of your followers and make him reveal information about you or betray you. Don't you fear betrayal by anyone?

[Bin Ladin] God be praised. You have come and seen what we have. These youths - and we pray to God to bless them and those who fell martyrs among them throughout this blessed jihad - have abandoned worldly life and come to these mountains and land. They left their families, fathers, mothers and universities and came here to face the shelling by US Cruise and other missiles. Some of them were killed, as you have learned from our brothers. Six Arab brothers and one brother Turk were killed. May God accept them all as martyrs. They included our brother Al-Siddiq from Egypt, our brother Hamdi from Egypt, and three of our brothers from Yemen, including our brother Bashir, who was known by the name "Suraqah", There was also our brother Abu-Jihad, and our brother Zayd Salah Mutabbaqani from Medina.

These men left worldly affairs and came for jihad. The United States, which worships money, thinks that people here are like it. I swear to God that we have not shifted anyone from his place despite this propaganda. We do not suspect our brothers. Still God is our judge.

Taleban

[Isma'il] On your relationship with the Afghan government or Taleban
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Movement, what is the nature of this movement? Are you part of this movement, or are you working independently in Afghanistan?

[Bin Ladin] God has blessed this movement. It is now 14 years since the beginning of the jihad that was waged by the former mujahidin. The Taleban had a role in that jihad and helped with the defeat of the Soviet Union. Those who raised the flag of jihad at that early stage were blessed by God and made them defeat the largest country in the world and the biggest military power.

Regrettably, however, the Taleban did not capitalize on that victory. There was also disagreement, in which the United States and some pro-US Arab states had a hand. They caused sedition between the mujahidin and this led to fighting, which everyone regretted. This increased the suffering of the Muslim people in Afghanistan.

What is regrettable now is that many of the benevolent have stopped their support for Afghanistan on the pretext of internal fighting. This is wrong because the widows and orphans, whose husbands and fathers were killed in the war, continue to suffer. The benevolent among Muslims should have come here to patronize these orphans and widows. But, Satan made them give up support for the Muslims, who defended Islam here and in the whole Islamic World, especially the Gulf states.

Whoever looks at the map will know that Afghanistan was not the real target but a passageway for the Soviet forces. Having achieved great gains in worldwide at the time, the Russians thought of dealing a final blow to the West, seize the Strait of Hormuz, occupy all Gulf states, and seize the largest oil reserves in the world. This explains why some Gulf states, in fact all of them, considered backing the Afghan jihad an act of self-defence. They were partners in that battle. But, when the Russians were defeated, they turned their back on the Afghans. In fact, Gulf news media began attacking jihad and mujahidin and some Gulf states actually colluded in creating sedition among the mujahidin.

God blessed Muslims with the arrival of Taleban rule. This was not the result of a push by outside forces, as portrayed by the western crusader news media, but by a pull from inside forces. People got sick and tired of bandits and the levying of duties and taxes. Any tribe that had religious scholars linked to Taleban asked the movement to come to its region. Thus, we find that Engineer Hikmatyar spent four years outside Kabul with open Pakistani support without being able to venture a single step in the direction of the city. Yet the Islamic party led by Hikmatyar was the best among the Afghan parties in terms of strength, order, organization, and deployment within Afghanistan. Still he could not advance.

On the other hand, the Taleban are young and many of them did not take part in the fighting [against the Russians]. But, due to the internal pull from the people, who got desperate with previous actions, God made them triumph. We advise Muslims inside and outside Afghanistan to back Taleban. We also advise Muslims abroad that any efforts that are exerted outside the State of Islam will not achieve the desired results. Our prophet spent 13 years preaching in Mecca. But, the outcome was only a few hundred followers. But, with the establishment

of the State of Medina - despite its small size amid the big the Persian and Roman empires and the warring Arab tribes of Abs and Tibyan that gnawed at this small state - right triumphed in the end.

We call upon Muslims to back Afghanistan with all their capabilities, thoughts, alms and funds. Afghanistan today carries the banner of Islam, God willing. Any attack by the United States against Afghanistan today would not be against Afghanistan itself, but against Afghanistan, the bearer of the flag of Islam, the true Islam that fights for the sake of God.

God be praised our relationship with them is very strong. It is an ideological relationship that is based on faith rather than political or commercial interests. Many states have tried to pressure the Taleban through temptation and intimidation, but God strengthened them.

[Isma'il] But, what is the truth about the reports that spoke about the readiness or the possibility of Taleban movement or government delivering you to any country in the case of official charges backed by evidence?

[Bin Ladin] As you have heard the Taleban have denied this talk. It is incorrect talk, as far as we know, but God is all-knowing.

Links with CIA

[Isma'il] You spoke about a while ago about your participation in the Afghan jihad. You said that some states, especially the Gulf states, encouraged the mujahidin, and in fact aided them. Among the countries that aided the mujahidin against the Soviet Union at the time was the United States. Western and world news media said that you were linked to the US Administration or intelligence during the jihad against the Soviet Union. How true was that relationship if it existed and what is your position on it. And is it true that the Americans had a role in developing your activities against the Soviet Union at that time?

[Bin Ladin] Let me go back to a point in your previous question on whether we work here independently. Actually, we are not working here independently. We are in a state with an Emir of the Faithful. We are legally bound to obey him in whatever that does not violate God's words. We are committed to this state and call on people to support it. We also warn, as we said, against the confusion created by the United States. It wants to strike at the state of Islam in Afghanistan by raising the flag of striking at Usamah Bin Ladin. But, this will not do.

As far as we are concerned, we have come out here while knowing our course right from the beginning. US missiles would not scare us, God willing. But, we warn them that any attack against this people, would be an aggression on the state of Islam. Due to certain circumstances in Afghanistan, the Taleban have expressed the view that we should not operate from within Afghanistan against any other state. This was the decision of the Emir of the Faithful, as everyone knows.

But, we continue to rouse the nation, God be praised. We feel confident that the nation is taking earnest steps towards jihad against the United States. This is the duty of all Muslims, as I said.

[Isma'il] World news media spoke about US support for Afghan jihad against the Soviet Union, and you took part in this jihad personally and with your funds. The media also said that you were in contact with the CIA and that the agency used to finance your activities and back you in the jihad against the Soviet Union. How true are these claims and your link with the United States at that time?

[Bin Ladin] It is an attempt at distortion by the Americans. Praised be God for turning their plots against them. Every grown up Muslim hates Americans, Jews and Christians. It is part of our belief and religion. Since I was a boy I have been at war with and harbouring hatred for the Americans. What they are saying did not occur at all. Regarding their support for the jihad or fighting, that support was actually from the Arab states, especially the Gulf states, for Pakistan in order to back the jihad. That support was not for the sake of God, but out of fear of their thrones from the Russian advance. Carter, who was US president at the time, did not utter a single word until 1399 [Hegira - 1978-1979], corresponding to 20 January, when he said that any Russian penetration into the Gulf region would be considered an aggression against the United States. Since he occupied that region and its oil sources, he said that he would use military force if this penetration took place.

The Americans are lying in their claim that they cooperated with us at any time. We challenge them to produce any evidence. In fact, they were a burden on the mujahidin and on us in Afghanistan. There was no agreement. We were just performing a duty to support Islam in Afghanistan, although this duty crossed with US interests without our consent. When the Muslims fought the Romans, it was known that Romans and Persians were always at war. But, no sensible person could say that the Muslims fought the Romans in Mu'tah Battle because they were agents for the Persians. Only the interests crossed one another. The Muslims fought the Romans as part of their duty. Still, this pleased the Persians. But, once they finished with the Romans, the Muslims turned against the Persians. The crossing of interests without an agreement does not mean any link or subservience. We have been against them since those days. God be praised, we delivered lectures in Hijaz and Najd on the need to boycott US goods and strike at US forces and the US economy 12 years ago.

Links to whole Islamic world, including Yemen and Pakistan

[Isma'il] Arab and world news media carried reports about activities by your followers or supporters in some Arab states, including Yemen for example. How true are these reports?

[Bin Ladin] We are linked to the whole Islamic World. This includes Yemen, Pakistan and others. We are part of a single nation. God be praised, those who are convinced of and enthusiastic about jihad are increasing in number every day. We have supporters in Yemen and elsewhere. We have old and strong ties with Yemen, God be praised. Besides, our roots go back to Yemen.

[Isma'il] How do you describe your relations with other Islamic organizations in the Arab World? And what is the true stand of the Islamic Jama'ah vis-a-vis the World Islamic Front and has it withdrawn from this front?

[Bin Ladin] God be praised, our relations with the Islamic Jama'ah in the Islamic World are good. We cooperate with them through piety and godliness for the sake of this religion.

We call upon Muslims, especially those who work for Islam, to rise above secondary issues. Unfortunately, the satans, especially the crusaders, have managed to preoccupy the states and the small groups in them with regional problems. Thus, you find that Egypt has problems with Libya and Saudi Arabia with Yemen. The groups also face problems, while the great infidelity, the US-crusader alliance mutilates the Islamic World and cancels the decisions of the Muslims in an unprecedented manner. What is the second part of the question?

Egypt

[Isma'il] The Islamic Jama'ah in Egypt and whether it has withdrawn from the World Islamic Front?

[Bin Ladin] We have strong ties with the Jama'ah since the days of the jihad. We used to fight in the same trenches against the Soviet Union. They maintained an honourable and supportive stand by signing the fatwa that calls for spilling the blood of the Americans and the Jews. They signed the fatwa, but there was confusion on an administrative matter pertaining to the issuance of the fatwa. The issuance of the fatwa coincided with the date of the establishment of the front. So people were confused that the Islamic Jama'ah was part of the Islamic Front. So the jama'ah was compelled to explain its position. It signed the fatwa, but it is not part of the World Islamic Front.

[Isma'ila] What are the final aims that you have set for yourselves, and what is the message you want to address to the Arab World and Islamic World in general?

"We do not want American women soldiers" defending Mecca

[Bin Ladin] God be praised. As I said, we firmly believe [sentence incomplete]. I am saying this due to the strong campaign by the regimes and the media against us. They want to deprive us of our manhood. We believe that we are men, Muslim men who must defend the greatest place in existence, the Holy Ka'aba. We want to have the honour of defending it. We do not want American women soldiers, including American, Jewish, and Christian women soldiers defending the grandchildren of [Muslim leaders] Sa'd, Al-Muthanna, Abubakr and Omar. Had God not honoured us with Islam, our grandfathers in the pre-Islamic [jahiliyah] period would have rejected the arrival of these women and red infidels under such claim. This claim no longer deceives even children.

The rulers in that region said that the Americans came only for a few

months. They lied at the beginning and at the end. Our prophet, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him, said that three men would not be seen by God on the Day of Judgment. One of them, he said, is a liar king. The months passed and then the first and second year. We are now in the ninth year while the Americans are telling lies to everyone, saying we have interests in this region and we will not move out until we are reassured about them. An enemy enters and steals your money. You tell him, you are stealing. But, he says, no this is my interest. They deceive us with words.

The rulers in that region have been deprived of their manhood. And they think that the people are women. By God, Muslim women refuse to be defended by these American and Jewish prostitutes.

Our aim is to work according to God's shari'ah and to defend the Holy Ka'aba, this great and ancient house. God has made the existence of mankind on this land based on the belief of the one God through worship, and the highest form of worship after faith is prayer. As the traditions of the prophet say, prayer is the backbone and jihad its apex.

God Almighty would not accept our prayer if we did not face in the direction of the Ka'aba. God chose for this holy place the noblest of people, the father of the prophets, Ibrahim, may peace be upon him, - after our prophet, may peace be upon him - and his son Isma'il. Our aim is to liberate the land of Islam from infidelity and to apply God's shari'ah until we meet with Him and gain his pleasure.

USA has "tried to bribe me into silence"

All those brothers are still waiting for an improvement in conditions before taking any serious action. The Americans have tried to bribe us into silence. The United States and some of its agents in the region have tried to bribe me into silence more than 10 times. They said, keep silent and we will give you back your passport, funds and identity card, but keep silent. They think that people live in this world for the sake of worldly things. They forgot that there is no meaning to our existence if we did not strive to gain God's pleasure.

This chart shows the density of population according to age. Children from birth to 11 years constitute the largest sector in Muslim societies. The nation would depend on them for the next 60 to 70 years. In this age, the sector that wants to make sacrifices for the sake of religion, especially, Jihad, is fed up. As we know, a person between birth and the age of 15 is not duty bound for jihad and not fully aware of its demands. And 25 years onward, a person will have been involved in family obligations. He will also have graduated and become committed to duties towards his job, wife and children. He becomes mentally mature, but his ability to make sacrifices becomes weak. He would say, where do I leave the family and who would support them?

Problems caused by ageing mujahidin

But, if we thoroughly examined the issue, we will find that the sector between 15 and 25 years is the one that has ability for jihad and

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sacrifice. This was what we observed in the jihad in Afghanistan. Most mujahidin were from this age. When the Americans came in the month of Muharram 1411 Hegira [July-August 1990], the young ones were not aware of the event. Unfortunately, fatwas were issued by the state. The Gulf states helped in pressuring the state into issuing these fatwas. They claimed that they would be temporary. Some ulema that we trusted, such as Muhammad Bin-Salih al-Uthaymi, told us in his council and residence: We did not issue any fatwa. But, when the state introduced the Americans, they gathered us and said we must issue a fatwa; otherwise the youths would fight the American forces.

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Bin-Ladin denies any links with CIA in Afghanistan - 98 Al-Jazeera TV interview - Part 2 of 2.

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I spoke with him at length on the need for the Council of Senior Ulema to issue a fatwa on the eviction of the Americans. He told me very clearly, and may God be my witness: Usamah, it is not our right in the Council of Senior Ulema to issue a fatwa out of own free will. But, if it is referred to us by the highest authority, as he said, we will issue it. This is our situation, very unfortunately.

When the people remained silent, no one knew about this sector from 15 to 25 years. Nine years have passed since the invasion. This entire sector, except those who are 16 years old, arrived here. Their age is now 34 years. They entered into the sector that matured mentally and could no longer make sacrifices. And with regard to the young sector that can make sacrifices now, nothing is done to prepare the situation for them. If we kept silent, our situation would be like that that existed in Andalusia. Some 10 years would pass and the mentality would then gradually become indolent.

This is serious. People must do all they can to rouse the nation with all the means in their power; with their tongues, pens, and persons. With the grace of God, we performed our duty and we continue in this duty until we meet God Almighty. Finally, I would like to advise all Muslims that they should read the Holy Book. It is the one that salvaged us from the rotten backwardness [jahiliyah] in those dark ages. Our remedy is in the Holy Book and the prophet's traditions. When one reads the Koran, he wonders why many people are reneging. Don't they read the Koran, or do they read it, but not ponder it?

God says: "Ye believers take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors. They are but friends and protectors to each other. And he amongst you that turns to them (for friendship) is of them. Verily God guideth not a people unjust" [Holy Koran]. He is of them, meaning that he becomes infidel like them. God says in the next verse: "Those in whose ears is a disease - thou seest how early they run about among them, saying: we do fear lest a change of fortune bring us disaster. Ah! perhaps God will give (thee) victory, or a decision to

His will. Then they will repent of the thoughts which they secretly harboured in their hearts."

Crusader world "unanimous on devouring us"

I hope that my brother Muslims would read the Koran and also read the interpretation of these verses. There are many verses in the Holy Book where God warns us against loyalty to infidels. They should read the "Interpretation" by Ibn-Kathir and "The Abridged Interpretation" by Shaykh Muhammad Muslim al-Rifa'i. I say that the world is unanimous on devouring the Islamic World. The crusader world is unanimous on devouring us. The nations have been called up against us. God Almighty taught us how to reply to those who make excuses in order to delay the jihad. God says: "When (at length) the order for fighting was issued to them, behold a section of them feared men as - or even more than - they should have feared God. They said: Our Lord! Why hast Thou ordered us to Fight? Wouldst Thou not grant us respite to our (natural) term, near (enough)? Say: Short is the enjoyment of this world: The hereafter is the best for those who do right. Never will ye be dealt unjustly in the very least!"

Whoever believes that the enjoyment of this world is short and the Hereafter is best and more lasting, then he is the one who will respond to God's order.

In the previous verse which says "ye believers take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors", Ibn-Kathir, May God rest his soul in peace, explains that the Muslims discovered the hypocrites the day they defended and supported the Baynuqa Jewish tribe. Today, the Arab rulers are openly loyal to Jews and Christians and people are praising the enemies of Islam and Muslims, God forbid! There must be a serious and sincere pause from which we seek God's mercy. "For the life of this world is but goods and chattels of deception." [Koranic verse]

Every Muslim who can volunteer, should do so and inquire about the places of jihad and preparation so he would meet God's pleasure.

I rouse the faithful and myself after all these great disasters by citing the poet who says: "Get ready for struggle for matters have gone beyond sweet words. I will dress up and defend the nation with the edges of spearheads and swords. Do you abandon us when the many infidel wolves gnaw at our flesh? The infidel wolves are turning evil men against us from all parts of the world. Where are the free men from among our co-religionists to defend women with weapons. Death is better than humiliated life, as shame cannot be erased."

I pray to God Almighty to help Muslims return to their religion and to grant victory to the youths who went out for jihad for his sake and pleasure. O God! Give us patience, strengthen our position, and give us victory over the infidels. O God, who runs clouds, reveals the Book, and vanquishes enemies, vanquish them and give us victory over them. O God give us grace in this world and in the Hereafter and save us from hell. O God give us victory over the Americans, Israel and their

supporters, for You are capable of everything. Finally, praise to God Almighty.

[Announcer then says: Al-Jazeera TV is not responsible for what was said in this interview. All that Usamah Bin Ladin said expressed his personal viewpoints]

[Editorial note: Some of this interview was broadcast in an Al-Jazeera TV programme entitled "Usamah Bin-Ladin, the destruction of the base" on 10 June 1999]

Source: Al-Jazeera TV, Doha, in Arabic 1805 gmt 20 Sep 01.

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