

Zawahiri Recalls Siege, Escape from Tora Bora, Advises Jihadi Media to Stop Promoting Discord Between Fighters

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Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri recalled the siege on Tora Bora and his escape from it with fellow fighters and Usama bin Laden in the seventh episode of the “Days with the Imam” series, and advised members of the jihadi media to stop promoting discord between fighters and their supporters.

The 35-minute video, which shows Zawahiri sitting in a room and delivering his speech, was produced by al-Qaeda’s as-Sahab Media Foundation, and was posted on the Deep Web jihadi forums Shumukh al-Islam and al-Fida’ on August 15, 2015. In this episode, Zawahiri discussed three individuals in particular who fought Bin Laden and the Arab fighters in Tora Bora – Hadhrat Ali, Haji Deen Muhammad, and Muhammad Zaman – and the hesitation by commanders to besiege the fighters. As it relates to Bin Laden, Zawahiri noted his “shrewdness” in dealing with negotiators from the besieging forces, and his care for his fighters, refusing to leave Tora Bora until they fled and were taken care of.

Tangential to his talk, the al-Qaeda leader raised concern about the infighting prevalent in the jihadi media between fighters and supporters aligned with the Islamic State (IS) and those aligned with al-Qaeda and its affiliates and ideologues. He stated:

“Now the jihadi media has turned to be a tool of destruction to the jihadi entity! In this time, the jihadi media has become full of curses, insults, and slander against all the people, including leaders of the mujahideen, and their sheikhs, and to the youngest one among them! It became a hotbed for whoever came from a different direction. I appeal to my brothers in the jihadi media to bear responsibility for the word. The word is a trusteeship, and the media is a trusteeship. Do not publish what breaks apart the rank of the mujahideen. Do not publish what stirs disputes among the mujahideen. Do not publish what assists the enemies against the mujahideen. Do not publish what raises sedition between the mujahideen”.

The video is available here:

http://sitemultimedia.org/video/SITE_AS_Zawahiri_Days_Imam7.mp4

Following is a translation of the video:

As-Sahab Presents Sheikh Ayman al-Zawahiri in the seventh episode of the series “Days with the Imam”

In the name of Allah, and praise be to Allah. Peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah, and upon his family, his Companions, and those who followed him.

O Muslim brothers everywhere: Peace be upon you, and Allah's mercy and blessings. And thereafter:

This is the seventh episode in the series "Days with the Imam," in which I recount the good memories with the reviver imam, the martyr, as we consider him, Sheikh Usama bin Laden, may Allah have mercy on him. In the previous episode, I talked about my memories with him in Tora Bora, and I talked about the friends and enemies, and I talked about the friends and martyrs, those who - I mean, may Allah the Great and Almighty accept them, were in Tora Bora. Here, I would like to rectify an error that I made. When I mentioned the martyr Muhammad Mahmoud, in fact, when I reviewed the matter, his known name in Tora Bora was Ali Mahmoud, may Allah have mercy on him and on the martyrs of the Muslims. Today, I want to complete some of these memories.

After I talked about the friends, I now want to talk about the enemies who confronted us in Tora Bora. I will give examples of some of them.

One of those enemies is from among the top traitors who were besieging us in Tora Bora. He was called Hadhrat Ali. This Hadhrat Ali was in the organization of Sheikh Muhammad Yunis Khalis, may Allah have mercy on him, in the Islamic Party of Yunis Khalis. However, after the sedition happened in Afghanistan in the infighting among the mujahideen, and the arrival of the blessed Taliban Movement to promote virtue and prohibit vice, he joined the Northern Alliance, which opposed the Taliban, and which we had mentioned before was connected to America. Its chief Ahmed Shah Massoud was closely linked to the American intelligence, and that was stated through the official American Congressional report on the events of September 11th, and in the publications of as-Sahab, and we also stated that he was an accomplice of the Americans in the attempt to kill Sheikh Usama bin Laden and those who were with him.

Regardless, Hadhrat Ali joined this malicious group when the war started in Afghanistan against the Islamic Emirate. Prior to this war, Ahmed Shah Massoud had been killed. He had gone to the European parliament and promised the Europeans to fight Islam fundamentalism in Afghanistan and to fight al-Qaeda and Usama bin Laden, because that would maintain America and its interests, as he said. Regardless, we already stated this in the report of "Reading the Events" and the "Truths of Jihad and the Falsehoods of Hypocrisy," both of which were issued by as-Sahab Foundation.

When the American forces came to Afghanistan, he entered with them into Jalalabad, and there he took over the security affairs and he was in charge of the security command. When the fight erupted against the mujahideen in Tora Bora, he was in charge of a section of siege around the mujahideen. He was inciting the commanders of the siege not to cooperate with the mujahideen. Once, the brothers heard him say to one of his commanders, warning him - and he was afraid - I had mentioned before the extent of the hesitation by those besieging us, and the extent of the hesitation of the many around us - an Arab brother heard him say to one of the commanders: "If the Arabs pass through you, I will kill you". His colleague replied to him that "the Arabs do not

pass through me, and you look to see from where they go”. This was the nature of the relationship between them. I mean, it is a nature that is based on obtaining benefits and on hypocrisy. Each one of them does not respect his colleague. The suspicion by one towards another was very intense, by the grace from Allah the Great and Almighty.

The other traitor I would like to point out is a man named Muhammad Zaman. Regarding this Muhammad Zaman... the Sheikh, may Allah have mercy on him, told that during his stay in Jalalabad, this Muhammad Zaman tried to collude in killing him and those who were with him. After that, when the war started on Afghanistan, this Muhammad Zaman was in charge of a section of the siege around the mujahideen in Tora Bora. Between him and Hadhrat Ali was a fierce competition in serving the Americans.

Regardless, this Muhammad Zaman tried to deceive Sheikh Usama bin Laden. He sent a messenger bearing a letter to Sheikh Usama bin Laden. I read this message. The brothers who were on the sides of the mountain stopped this messenger and asked him, “What do you want?” He said: “This letter is from Muhammad Zaman to Sheikh Usama bin Laden”. They told him that they do not know Usama bin Laden and he is not here, but give us this letter. So this letter reached the Sheikh. It had writing in it, and in brief, it was two-sided and said: O Sheikh Usama, in you is the trusteeship of Islam, you are the honor of Islam, and so on. He praised and gave him appreciation, and said that maintaining him is a great service for the Islamic Ummah. I mean, he swore strong oaths that he will protect him, and that he is at his service, and that he should come with him and he will take him with his car, and he can stay in his home with his family, and that he will defend him the same as he defends his family, and that there is no need to put himself in danger, and he is afraid that the Americans will kill him. He continued talking like this at length. Of course, sheikh Usama, a man toughened by the experience of wars and tribulations, said to the middle brother between us and this messenger, to him to tell him that Usama is not present and that we do not know where he is. So the messenger went back to Muhammad Zaman and Muhammad Zaman jailed this messenger, because he suspected that he was lying to him. This is the relationship between them.

After that, this Muhammad Zaman was killed in Peshawar, The Americans were suspicious of him, and it was possible that Hadhrat Ali reported him. The Americans did not find evidence against him, but they did not trust him, so they got him out and expelled him to Peshawar. There, we heard that he was killed. Allah knows best about his condition.

The third character from among the traitors I would like to point out, is a man named Haji Deen Muhammad, who was well-known in Jalalabad.

This man was an assistant to sheikh Yunis Khalis, may Allah have mercy on him, in his organization. When Sheikh Usama came to Jalalabad and he stayed at the guesthouse of Sheikh Yunis Khalis, [Haji Deen Muhammad] pretended to be one of those who love the Sheikh and is one of his assistants and such. When the Crusader war started against Afghanistan, this Deen Muhammad was putting pressure on the supporters who were helping us, telling them to leave us and not to help us. He was speaking to them about those in Tora Bora, saying that they surrendered to the United Nations and that the United Nations will return them to their countries.

Of course, and praise be to Allah, we did not surrender, by the grace of Allah the Great and Almighty.

Sheikh Usama, may Allah have mercy on him, he had a prior relationship with him, but it was not that strong of a relationship, just a normal one. He [Usama] wrote a letter to him, advising him and guiding him, because he [Haji Deen Muhammad] was almost the second man in Jalalabad. I will speak about him and his brother who was a ruler in Jalalabad after the Taliban left.

He [Usama] sent him a letter telling him: O Haji Deen Muhammad, both of us are getting older and the hair turned grey. We do not know when we will meet Allah; it could be possible that one of us meet Allah tomorrow. If you help the Americans against us, you will depart and meet Allah with this sin. As for us, there is no problem between us and you. We are not competing with you to get the presidency, or a ministry, or government, or emirate, or anything. We are your brothers in the previous jihad, and we are Muslims, immigrants, travelers, and fasters. And you are... there is neither a war nor a problem between us and you. Rather, the problem is between us and the Americans, so just leave us with the Americans. Do not assist the Americans against us. Regarding this letter, he [Haji Deen Muhammad] disregarded it. It was later reported to us that he said: "Usama bin Laden has written to me and said that we are both getting older and that we are your brothers. What does Usama bin Laden want from me? The Taliban has left and the Americans assigned me to rule and govern. So should I leave ruling and governing?!"

Like this, his history polluted his past jihad.

As for this Haji Deen Muhammad, he has two brothers, one of them is named Abdul Haq, and the other is Abdul Qadeer. Abdul Haq is one of the top agents of the Americans. The Americans depended on him more than Karzai. He entered Afghanistan at the beginning of this Crusader war, and he had lots of money with him, and he had a satellite device. Colin Powell had mentioned him and said that he is their man in Afghanistan and such and such, and they are waiting from him good results. Praise be to Allah, it was a grace from Allah the Great and Almighty that the Taliban captured him and these things with him. They executed him at the beginning of this war.

The second brother, Abdul Qadeer, was a ruler of Jalalabad before the entrance of Taliban at the beginning of their movement. Later, when the Taliban left Jalalabad, he became a ruler, and then he became a minister in Kabul in the Karzai government. Of course, he was in the Northern Alliance led by Ahmed Shah Massoud. However, there was animosity between them. Of course that was the case, for they are people of this worldly life, and they have severe enmity for each other. An ambush was planned for him in Kabul and he was killed. It was said that the Northern Alliance is one that killed him, and Allah knows better of his condition.

So this is... I mean, this is the condition of this family that cooperated with the Americans. Praise be to Allah, who rescued us from these seditions and this fate. We seek refuge with Allah from the bad end.

Of course, as I mentioned before the story of the man who was besieged with us, and he was an administrative official in Taliban, and then an official in the government post-Taliban... and he asserted to us that there will be no one coming to us.

Also, one of our supporters with us said a wonderful joke. He had some friends in the force that was besieging us, and they were in the armored force. He was contacting them via a wireless device. He said to one of them: How are you doing such and such? Pay attention, otherwise we will strike you with anti-tank rockets and kill you! They were laughing at this. But this is what happened! Things were mixed.

I forgot another important story regarding Haji Deen Muhammad. Haji Deen Muhammad was putting pressure on the supporters who were helping us. One of those supporters, may Allah reward him, helped us very much. He knew Haji Deen Muhammad. He [Haji Deen Muhammad] had told him to leave those Arabs or he will send the Americans to get him with 50 aircraft and his village will be completely wiped out. He replied to him, saying: How can I leave the Arabs, for they are our brothers in jihad, and they are travelers and strangers, and they are fasting and immigrating? How can I leave them? Indeed, the Americans sent airstrikes on his village, killing 50 individuals and killing from his house 18 individuals. I had mentioned this before.

And among the funny and sad stories about the hesitation of those who were besieging us, one night we found an observation point facing us. Some of those hypocrites ascended this observation point. On top of it was a room. They sat on this point and lit a fire. The brothers asked, how come we leave these alone? We must not leave them alone. If we leave them from the first day, they will assault this... so we must clash with them with the machine guns so that they will leave this point. One of our Afghan supporter brothers said: No, no, do not kill them, I will call their commander. So he called their commander. It was a strange relationship. He called their commander and said, how come your brothers went up this hill in front of us? He [the commander] said: "No, no. Allah willing, I will bring them down in the morning. Those who came are from another group and not from our people or from this land. They wanted to go up to the top of this point. They were driven by nationalist fervor, saying this is our land and those are not from our people, so we will occupy this point. In the morning, I will let them come down. Do not be scared, do not be scared".

The brothers were surprised! Glory be to Allah, they were lighting fire at night on the top of the point. This was a wondrous thing, because we were saying that this could be a signal between them and the Americans.

Then, American aircraft returned at night and bombarded them. They ran away from the point in fear and "Allah sufficed for the believers in the fighting (*by sending against the disbelievers a severe wind and troops of angels*)". [From Al-Ahzab: 25] When one of the brothers said that we must clash with them and shoot them, one of the supporter brothers said: No, No, do not shoot them, they are our colleagues. The brothers were surprised at this word, "colleagues". This became like a joke, to be said like this: our colleagues... our colleagues. Even I was joking with the brothers. Allah willing, whenever this crisis is over I will write a book about the doctrine and I will write a chapter entitled, "Responding to Those who Said: 'Our Colleagues... Our Colleagues'".

Among those who were besieging us, some withdrew from the battle and said that the Arabs do not want to harm us and they do not mean to bombard us to kill us. So that one withdrew with his group. Such was the condition of the siege, and the extent of the hesitation, by the grace of Allah the Great and Almighty, held by those who were besieging us.

As I mentioned before, I want to focus on the shrewdness of Sheikh Usama, may Allah have mercy on him, in managing the battle. The shrewdness of Sheikh Usama bin Laden, may Allah have mercy on him, manifested in several aspects:

The first aspect was that Sheikh Usama bin Laden was very interested in communication. In this interest, he was watching and following up with the brothers in Afghanistan, and even monitoring all news of all the brothers in Afghanistan.

I remember we were following up with the news of the brothers in Shahi Kot, where a well-known battle had later taken place. We were following up with the news of the brothers in Mazar-e-Sharif, and later there was the battle of Qala Zingy. We were following up with the news of the brothers in Khost. The Sheikh was following up with the news of all of these areas. He was not contacting them, but he was following up continuously what was happening in Afghanistan.

The Sheikh was also watching the communication of the enemy, and this watch was very useful, by the grace of Allah the Great and Almighty. One of the brothers from among leaders of the groups had warned us that the enemy tries to go around us.

There was the brother Rub'ie al-Yamani, may Allah have mercy on him, who was one of the best brothers. He was on top of the Qahtan observation point. The brothers asked him to explore the area behind Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi, because this observation point was behind Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi, may Allah have His vast mercy on him. Rub'ie was on top of the mountain and Ibn al-Sheikh was at bottom of the mountain. When he explored the area, he saw the hypocrites infiltrating from behind Ibn al-Sheikh and his group. Here, he called some brothers so that they will help him in shooting the hypocrites. Indeed, they threw bombs at them and clashed with them with PKC. This was at the beginning of the negotiations, which had opened the door to leave the besieged area. This was another aspect of the shrewdness of the Sheikh, may Allah have mercy on him.

Regardless, the Americans said that the Arabs were the ones who requested to negotiate and that they requested to leave. All of this is lies and false. Those who requested to negotiate were the hypocrites. They requested to negotiate when this group fell into the ambush of the brothers. Of course, the truce was obtained on the 27th of Ramadan, 1422H, corresponding to the 12th of December, 2001.

As a result of the hopelessness of the hypocrites due to their repeated failed campaigns, and as a result of the cowardice of the Americans, they were afraid to raid the mountainous hills of Tora Bora, after the many losses inflicted among the hypocrites. There would not be an attack wave unless it return with slain and wounded. Moreover, the aerial bombardment in removing the

mujahideen from their positions had failed, so they resorted to a trick in an attempt to deceive the brothers and kill them. It is the same thing that the Americans did in Kunduz, Mazar-e-Sharif, and Qala Zingy.

The truce began at approximately 1:00pm. The reason behind the truce, as I said, is a failed attempt by the hypocrites to ascend the mountain and turn around. Here, the mujahideen afflicted them with hand grenades and PKC machine guns. Also, there was a group of nearly 100 hypocrites that tried to enter the valley, the valley of Tora Bora, and they were advancing to confront the mujahideen. However, they fell into a trap in the positions of the mujahideen. Here, the hypocrites called us and said that we mean you no harm, and that you are our brothers. They changed their tone of speech... why should there be a war between us and you, and why don't we solve the issue between ourselves, and like this... we want to negotiate with you, and to make a ceasefire. The Sheikh initially accepted to a ceasefire. There were nearly 100 hypocrites within the firing range of our brothers. The brothers asked permission from the Sheikh to clash with them, but the Sheikh said no and that this is it, we gave them the word to cease fire. This is an example of the nobleness of the Sheikh in his morals.

The hypocrites agreed to pull back their force and to cease fire, and for the negotiations to start between us and them. Then the hypocrites requested to meet after pulling back their forces. The Sheikh, may Allah reward him, said to the envoy to tell them that the Arab brothers are many, and their commanders are many, so it is not possible for them to make a decision in a mere moment, for they have to meet and consult one another, and this will take some time, and we will not come to you until tomorrow morning, because they cannot make a decision now. They said fine, tomorrow morning we will meet in such and such village and in such and such position, to finish this issue between us and you. Of course, they wanted to betray the brothers, as I will mention.

That night, the brothers left Tora Bora. I will speak about that with details. Why did mujahideen accept the truce? The mujahideen accepted the truce because the logistics were nearly cut off. The cold was severe. The ice [over the mountains] was about to fall... I mean, within a week or a bit more it would start to fall. The siege was tight around us from every side. The water was frozen and we were at peak of the hills. The water beneath us was within 500 feet. There was a spring near me when I was with the Sheikh, but the surface of this spring was frozen over. It is true that water comes out, but it was all frozen. That, in addition to the continuous bombardment on the brothers day and night. Also, the hypocrites seized Jalalabad and the entire province of Nangarhar. So the Sheikh made the decision to evacuate from Tora Bora, to start with a new stage of the guerrilla warfare.

That night, the night of the 27th of Ramadan, the brothers left Tora Bora. In the morning of the next day, the 28th of Ramadan - the brothers left on the 27th at night from Tora Bora - in the morning of the next day, the 28th of Ramadan, the hypocrites discovered that that there is no one responding to them. They doubted that the brothers had left, and when they contacted the brothers, the envoy said: what do you want? Then they changed their tone of speech after the talk was about to solve a problem. He said that we want to shed your blood. This was his answer when they sensed that they failed to lure out the brothers.

Of course, here, the Americans were saying that we were in Tora Bora. The Americans were very cowardly and scared. They were scared to raid Tora Bora. They did not enter the positions of the brothers but only after the brothers withdrew from them. The hypocrites entered first and two days later, the Americans entered. We heard once on a wireless device from the hypocrites, he was talking to another hypocrite, saying: "Send the mules, the guests got tired, and the cold is severe on them". He meant the Americans!

This was the story of the American Special Forces and the Mountainous 82nd Airborne Division. All of these stories are hollow. If the mujahideen stand firm and seek help from Allah the Almighty, and decide to fight to the death, then Allah the Great and Almighty – Allah willing – will conquer through their hands, with permission from Allah the Great and Almighty. Of course, after we left Tora Bora, I heard this Muhammad Zaman on the BBC. The BBC correspondent asked him: "O Haji Seeb, where are the Arabs? You were saying that there were 500 Arabs or 1000 Arabs. Where are they?" He said that all the Arabs died. He [the correspondent] asked how? [Haji Seeb] said yes, there are nearly 200 corpses in Tora Bora. I – and I will say, I preceded the Sheikh in leaving - I said: Glory be to Allah! 200 corpses?! How did this happen? Of course, all of this appeared to be lies upon lies, and fabrications. It was only to justify the money they got, and for the Americans to say to their people that they are doing something.

The same lie they practiced in Shahi Kot. If you remember the story of Shahi Kot, they said that Shahi Kot has a number of the Arabs - a thousand Arabs or two thousand - and that they will enter upon them and eliminate them and do such and such. At the end, they said that the American forces withdrew and decided to bombard Shahi Kot.

This shows the value of the jihadi media. In this war, the jihadi media, O brothers, revealed the falsehood of the Americans, and it revealed the falsehood of the Crusader-NATO coalition and their assistants from among the hypocrites.

Just draw a comparison between the first and second wars in Iraq against Saddam Hussein, which were managed by CNN, and the Crusader war extending from the 11th of September through today, and how the jihadi media, with these simple efforts, exposed the Western media and made appear an image that was not possible to appear in the Western media.

Here, I would like to speak a bit about the jihadi media. I say:

O brothers, O knights of the jihadi media, you were terrifying America, and you were horrifying America, and you have defeated America through the media. The mujahideen, by the grace of Allah the Great and Almighty, were able to move the battlefield through the blessed invasions of the 11th of September, London, Madrid, and Bali. They were able to move the battle to inside the lands of the Crusader coalition. We became victorious over them through our publications, our statements, our films, and our productions, which invaded them. Now, O brothers, after we were confusing and horrifying the American media and the American enemy, the American media replied to us that it moved the battle to our midst!

Now the jihadi media has turned to be a tool of destruction to the jihadi entity! In this time, the jihadi media has become full of curses, insults, and slander against all the people, including leaders of the mujahideen, and their sheikhs, and to the youngest one among them! It became a hotbed for whoever came from a different direction.

I appeal to my brothers in the jihadi media to bear responsibility for the word. The word is a trusteeship, and the media is a trusteeship. Do not publish what breaks apart the rank of the mujahideen. Do not publish what stirs disputes among the mujahideen. Do not publish what assists the enemies against the mujahideen. Do not publish what raises sedition between the mujahideen.

When we were one rank, under the banner of the Emir of the Believers Mullah Muhammad Omar, and under his banner, the command of Sheikh Usama bin Laden, may Allah have mercy on him, we were united in going through the battle, and so blessings descended on us.

In this time, this one started to see something, and this one started to head this way, and the war started among us. Through this we will be deprived from victory, and the blessing will be lifted away from us. So I appeal to my brothers in the jihadi media, to bear responsibility for the word, and not to slander... or allow one group to slander another, and say that those are disbelievers and those are traitors and others are from the Awakenings, and those deserve a bullet in the head, and this and that... All of this must stop. The one who participates in this will bear his responsibility in front of Allah the Great and Almighty. My brothers and I forgive anything personal, but anything that breaks apart the rank of the mujahideen we cannot forgive. I hope that this message is delivered.

[Zawahiri speaks to someone off-camera: "Fine, we will finish soon, Allah willing".]

We go back to the story of the shrewdness of the Sheikh in managing the battle. On that night, the 27th of Ramadan through the night of 28th of Ramadan, the Sheikh got the brothers out from Tora Bora. Sheikh Usama bin Laden arranged the leave of the brothers from Tora Bora. As I had mentioned before, the one who got him out from Tora Bora is the commander Maulvi Noor Muhammad, may Allah have mercy on him, and his men, may Allah recompense them with the best reward. Sheikh Usama bin Laden went to the commander Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi in his location, and sat with him to make the arrangements to get the brothers out materially and on the ground. Maulvi Noor Muhammad was rushing him and saying that ahead of us is a long trip, we must get out now, we must get out now. The Sheikh did not leave until 11 o'clock at night from Tora Bora, and this was very risky for him. This demonstrates the concern of the Sheikh for the safety of the brothers.

I am content with this extent. We will continue in the next episode, Allah willing. Peace be upon you, and Allah's mercy and blessings.

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. May Allah's peace and blessings be upon our Master Muhammad, and upon his family and his Companions.

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