Zawahiri Calls for Revenge for Slain Libyan Officials, Remembers Tora Bora
Ayman al-Zawahiri
July 16, 2014

[Please note: Images may have been removed from this document. Page numbers may have been added.]

Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri continued to recall his experiences with fellow officials and fighters in Tora Bora in the sixth episode of the “Days with the Imam” series, and called for revenge for slain Libyan officials Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi, Abu Yahya al-Libi, and Attiya Allah. The 31 minute, 28 second video was produced by al-Qaeda’s media arm, as-Sahab, and was posted on jihadi forums on July 16, 2014. While the fourth episode in the series was released in May 2014, and the sixth in July, the fifth episode remains unreleased. Also, although the “Days with the Imam” series is Zawahiri’s vehicle to reflect on Usama bin Laden, he did not give any stories of the former al-Qaeda leader in this episode. Rather, Zawahiri focused almost entirely on Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi and his role in the battle in Tora Bora, and Libi’s later arrest in Pakistan and transfer to prisons in Egypt and Libya.

Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi (AKA Muhammad Abdul Aziz al-Fakhiri), who led training at the Khalden camp in Afghanistan, was found dead in his cell at Abu Salim prison in Tripoli, Libya, in May 2009. Zawahiri claimed that he was killed and that the major contributing factor to his death was his refusal to disavow jihad. He said about Libi and his slain countrymen in jihad, Abu Yahya and Attiya Allah: “The blood of Sheikh Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi is a trust hanging on the necks of the Libyans in particular and the Muslims in general. I hold the Libyan brothers responsible to take revenge for the killing of Sheikh Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi, Sheikh Abu Yahya al-Libi, Sheikh Attiya al-Libi and the rest of the Muslims. This is a responsibility hanging on your necks first, and on the neck of every Muslim and mujahid. You must to take revenge for those heroes.”

As-Sahab Presents:

Sheikh Ayman al-Zawahiri in the Sixth 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, 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 sixth episode the series “Days with the Imam,” in which I recall some of the good memories I have of the imam, the reviver, the mujahid, the hero of this era, Sheikh Usama bin Laden, may Allah have vast mercy on him. In the past two episodes, I spoke about Tora Bora and about our memories in Tora Bora, and I spoke about the friends and the enemies, and I
started with the protectors and the friends. Then I spoke about his eminence, the Mujahid Sheikh Muhammad Yunus Khalis, may Allah have vast mercy on him, and I spoke about Qari Abdul Ahad, may Allah have vast mercy on him, and I spoke about the mujahid hero Moalim Awal Gul, may Allah have vast mercy on him, and spoke about Maulvi Noor Muhammad, may Allah have vast mercy on him.

As I said in the previous episode, and in others in which I talk about the martyrs, regarding those who are still alive and who offered us many favors and much help, I will postpone the talk about them for now. Allah willing, we will not forget their grace and their favor, and we will not forget the great services they presented to us and to jihad and the jihadi movement. May Allah recompense them with the best reward. I tell them, Allah willing, you are in front our eyes, you are on our heads, and your favor will not be forgotten. The time will come, Allah willing, when we will mention you, with permission from Allah the Almighty.

After speaking about the protectors and the friends, I would like to point out something simple, something brief about the martyrs in Tora Bora and those who were martyred after Tora Bora and had participated in Tora Bora. I would like to say, and all praise is due to Allah, that because of the planning of Sheikh Usama bin Laden, may Allah have mercy on him, his plan to dig trenches and his insistence on doing it, the injuries were few among the brothers, by the grace of Allah. It was about 10 to 12 to 13% of the total number of brothers. This percentage is considered low, relative to the intense bombing to which the brothers were exposed in Tora Bora, and the severe siege and the cruel circumstances they experienced it. Sheikh Usama was insistent upon the trenches, and the mujahideen everywhere must be keen to follow this policy, because the Zio-Crusader enemy became dominant and arrogant over us by controlling the air. Thus, taking cover o the land is the best means in resisting this air control. This is my advice for all the mujahideen brothers in all the fronts: make efforts to dig trenches and to be creative and innovate in this making of trenches. Allah willing, it will reduce the danger of the air control by the Zio-Crusader enemy by a great percentage.

The first among the martyrs I would like to commend by mentioning them - I will mention them quickly, I will mention some examples of them – the first among them is the sheikh, the hero, the commander, Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi, may Allah have vast mercy on him. This mountain, this honorable one, this lofty one in the history of the jihadi movement… Since joining the jihad against the Russians… he gave all his time to serve jihad and the jihadi movement and all the mujahideen brothers, and without fanaticism or prejudice. He was a man that strived in the cause of Allah. I had mentioned him before and spoke about the compliment Sheikh Usama paid to him, but I mention him here among the heroes of Tora Bora.

This man is a school unto himself. He and his partners in the Khalden camp, and the Khalden camp is a school unto itself. When the Russians retreated from Afghanistan, and the jihadi parties were preoccupied in infighting among one another and the sedition ignited and many among the mujahideen left Afghanistan, it was the diligence of Sheikh Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi and his brothers to remain in Afghanistan and to take advantage of the Afghan land for training and preparing the mujahideen in all the field - all the mujahideen and all the groups. This work of theirs was a blessed work that bore great fruits in all the jihadi fields. The Khalden camp was not only for military training, but they also built a preaching institution in it where the distinguished
Sheikh Abu Abdullah al-Muhajir taught, may Allah gather us with him with goodness, Allah willing.

The pioneer of this school was Sheikh Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi, who was generous in doing jihad in the cause of Allah. He was also an example in standing firm in the most difficult of times and amidst the plights. As I will mention, Allah granted him military experience. He was smart and he was the military commander in Tora Bora. He led this dangerous battle with little ammunition and facing the mightiest global power. Sheikh Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi… I will talk about his standing firm. I will mention two examples of his standing firm. I mentioned one of them before, which was when he was imprisoned in treachery and deceit, after he succeeded in escaping the siege with the majority of the brothers and reached Pakistan safely, and then as independent tribal area in Pakistan. He was then turned over to the Pakistani security forces through the betrayal of one of the tribes there. Despite the siege imposed by America on Tora Bora, and despite all the bombing, it could not get the brothers. However, through betrayal, the Pakistani government was enabled to besiege or surprise the brothers suddenly after this tribe gave them safety of protection, as the tribes usually do, and they trusted it. The Pakistani forces surprised them and besieged them and took them prisoner.

In the Kohat prison in Pakistan, as I mentioned before, the traitor Pakistani officers tried to make a deal with Sheikh Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi so they can take the money on him. Sheikh Usama bin Laden - as I will mention, Allah willing, in the story of escaping Tora Bora – he gave him a sum of money to administer and manage the affairs of the brothers who were with him. Those traitors wanted this money. They made a deal with him, as I mentioned it before, that they will get him out of this case and smuggle him and take this money and make it like he was not arrested. Sheikh Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi, may Allah have vast mercy on him, made a dignified, noble stand, saying to them: “I will give you this money, and doubles this money, but me and all of my brothers will leave. I do not leave alone.” He was such a great commander and great example. They told him that they cannot accept this offer and so he stayed with his brothers.

As for the second example of the noble examples of Sheikh Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi, may Allah have mercy on him, Sheikh Abu Yahya, may Allah have vast mercy on him, told me that Sheikh Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi met him in an Afghan prison after they were arrested. He told him that that the investigators, the American investigators, asked him, “are you in al-Qaeda?” Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi was not in al-Qaeda. He did not give a pledge of allegiance to Sheikh Usama bin Laden. As I said before, Sheikh Usama bin Laden was a wondrous man in investing all the jihadi and Islamic energies, and among those who did pledge and those who did not. I mentioned before about the virtues of the Sheikh and his great traits. He is a man far from fanaticism and he benefits from every Islamic energy regardless of its organizational or partisan affiliation. He, may Allah have mercy on him, was like a magnet, collecting energy and employing it in productive projects.

So Sheikh Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi was not part of al-Qaeda, meaning that he did not pledge to Sheikh Usama bin Laden. When the American investigators asked him “are you from al-Qaeda?” he said: “Yes, I am from al-Qaeda”. Sheikh Abu Yahya said to him: “Sheikh, why did you do this? You are involving yourself”. He said: “No. I do not disavow al-Qaeda at all in front of them. Al-Qaeda is an honor. I do not disavow it and appear to be afraid of them. I am proud of
al-Qaeda even if I was not in al-Qaeda”. So may recompense him with reward, Sheikh Ibn al-
Sheikh al-Libi, for this noble and honorable position.

While I talk about Sheikh Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi I would like to mention his participation in the
Battle of Tora Bora. Briefly, as I said, the Sheikh was the military commander for the Battle of
Tora Bora and he had little ammunition, which I also mentioned, in the face of this Crusader
alliance. We saw the French Mirage, the American B-52, and different types of aircraft pounding
Tora Bora. As I said to you before, the battle was almost over in Afghanistan and there was
nothing left but Tora Bora. The whole world set their sights on Tora Bora. The news agencies
were waiting outside Tora Bora. The Arabs were captured and killed and all the world waited
and thought that if this group in Tora Bora, in this narrow area, is eliminated, they would
eliminate Sheikh Usama bin Laden, may Allah have mercy on him, and the battle would be over.
They thought they would win the battle in Afghanistan and then shift to the battle in Iraq. The
whole world was waiting and heading towards that. The Crusader alliance devoted itself to Tora
Bora.

Sheikh Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi had very little ammunition, and the brothers had some light
machine guns. Among the secrets that I tell, they had one mortar cannon in Tora Bora, in front of
this… in front of this… what can I say, mountains of weapons and aircraft! A greater-sized force
wishing to crush Tora Bora. With this one mortar cannon, Sheikh Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi managed
to deter all the campaigns of the hypocrites from advancing on Tora Bora. As I said before, the
Americans were in a state of cowardice, in a state of fear, in a state of weakness, and they did not
dare to break into Tora Bora, because they realized that those in Tora Bora have decided to fight
to the death. So they did not dare to do this. They were pushing waves of hypocrites, and
whenever they pushed a wave, it would be returned dead and wounded. Allah plunged weakness
into their hearts – as I will mention – He plunged weakness into the hearts of the hypocrites who
besieged Tora Bora. I will mention wonderful stories regarding this matter, Allah willing.

Sheikh Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi was very skillful. First, he disguised his firing positions. He had
some machineguns and this mortar cannon, and the brothers had light machineguns. He
disguised his firing positions away from the aircraft that pounded hourly for nearly fourteen
days, the duration of the battle. Whenever a wave of the hypocrites would advance, it faced the
fire of the mujahideen, and so it returned dead and wounded. Then there would be another wave
of bombing, until it pounds, pounds, pounds and pounds - until it thought that the resistance of
the mujahideen has been eliminated. Another wave of the hypocrites would come back, then
Sheikh Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi and his brothers would deter it, and so on. The battle continued
until the story of escaping Tora Bora. May Allah reward Sheikh Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi. He was
enabled with patience, cleverness, and persistence to deter all campaigns of the hypocrites.

As I said before, I think I mentioned it once… I think in these episodes, I mentioned that because
of his loyalty to the covenant with Sheikh Usama bin Laden, that on one occasion, nearly 100
hypocrites were ambushed by the brothers in one of the valleys, and the hypocrites requested a
truce. The brothers were about to kill them, but the [Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi] prevented his brothers
to kill them, because he had given his word for the truce. This, of course, was because of the
cleverness of the Sheikh Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi, that he was enabled to do this maneuver in this
ambush, as I will mention later.
Among the funny stories in Tora Bora is that the brothers over the radio called the cannon a “mule”. One time, one of the brothers called Sheikh Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi and told him, “O Ibn al-Sheikh, Ibn al-Sheikh! We ran out of feed for the mule!” So he said: “Shut up! Do not speak!” Meaning that the ammunition has run out, and praise be to Allah. I imagine about this little ammunition and this little number that reached nearly three hundred mujahideen, with these little weapons in front of this mighty force... “And Allah has full power and control over His Affairs, but most of men know not.” [From Yusuf: 21]

There is a lesson in this steadfastness in front of this mighty force and achieving victory. In the end, this force is a materialistic force. They are human beings that get scared and care about their lives. If you leave your affair to Allah, and you decided to die in the cause of Allah, then what would this mighty force do to you? It will kill you.

I will mention a funny story about this when the blessed invasions happened against Washington, New York, and Pennsylvania. Of course, the Americans never mention the Department of Defense, the Pentagon, in Washington, and that is to portray it as a battle against civilians only, despite destroying the military command of the world in these blessed invasions, by the grave of Allah the Great and Almighty. I mention my brother, the martyr, the hero, Sheikh Tareq Anwar, may Allah have mercy on him, that after these campaigns, he asked me in Kabul: “O Sheikh, what will the Americans do to us?” I said: “What will they do? They will do what they do.” He said: “They might bomb us with atomic bombs. What shall we do then? I said: “What shall we do? We will die!” He said: “Yes, and (laughing), we will die.”

Life and death for the believer is one way. His sole objective is to attain the pleasure of Allah alone. When death comes or it does not come, this is not his concern. His concern is to please Allah the Great and Almighty. This lesson was very clear in Tora Bora.

We return to the story of the feed and the mule. This was the ammunition with which Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi, may Allah have vast mercy on him, managed to lead this mighty battle in front of those Crusaders and hypocrites.

Ibn al-Sheikh Libi was arrested and that was, as we said, in Pakistan, and he was imprisoned in many prisons in Afghanistan. Then they transferred him to torture him in Egypt - they transferred him in a coffin to Egypt. In Egypt, there was this dog Omar Suleiman, may he get from Allah what he deserves. He tortured him in the military intelligence prison, and he told the story of his torture to Sheikh Abu Yahya al-Libi in Egypt. The Egyptians tried to take a false story so they could please the Americans with it. They asked him about chemical weapons and other than chemical weapons. He is under torture and he said to them, “Yes, we do have chemical weapons”. Nothing would hurt him in that. He gave them what they wanted so they would stop torturing him. They spread this and the Americans rejoiced and disseminated this story in the world, that ‘al-Qaeda has chemical weapons and such and such’, and ‘we were right when we attacked them’. Afterwards, when the Egyptians released him, and he returned to the American prisons, they asked him [again] about chemical weapons. He said: “There are no chemical weapons or other than chemical ones. There were people torturing me and they wanted from me
to say that there are chemical weapons, so I gave them what they wanted.” It was a very big scandal for the Bush government, may Allah disgrace him in this world and the hereafter.

After that, the Americans transferred him to the Libyan prisons. They were claiming that they are enemies of Gaddafi and they want to liberate Libya from Gaddafi, but they were allies of Gaddafi. He was later visited by a human rights commission - I think it is called Human Rights Watch - and they asked him: “We want to know what is the story of your torture and were you mistreated in the Libyan and American prisons?” He refused to speak and said, “You just came name!? You just came now, after all of this torture?! Now you came asking me about the torture?! Go! I do not want from you anything.”

Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi was killed in the Libyan prisons. The largest contributing factor in his killing was his refusal to participate in the revisions, which Gaddafi was forcing the detainees to make. So may Allah have mercy on him, Sheikh Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi, this hero, a man as high as a mountain, a honorable man in the history of jihad in Libya and the Islamic world.

I wish to conclude this story of Sheikh Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi by saying that the blood of Sheikh Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi is a trust hanging on the necks of the Libyans in particular and the Muslims in general. I hold the Libyan brothers responsible to take revenge for the killing of Sheikh Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi, Sheikh Abu Yahya al-Libi, Sheikh Attiya al-Libi and the rest of the Muslims. This is a responsibility hanging on your necks first, and on the neck of every Muslim and mujahid. You must to take revenge for those heroes.

Of course, Sheikh Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi is not the only martyr. As I said, nearly 10-12 percent of the brothers were martyred in Tora Bora, and most of them were martyred while retreating from Tora Bora. During their march, they were ambushed by American aircraft and bombed in a narrow valley, and approximately 20-30 were killed. All the bombing in Tora Bora resulted in the killing of ten, so the total of all of them is nearly 30-40 killed, and they are martyrs, with permission from Allah the Almighty, and we ask Allah to gather us with them in the highest rank of Paradise. The percentage was a great percentage amidst this siege, where the losses were 10-12 percent. Of course, there are many names:

- The martyr Abu Mahjen, may Allah have mercy on him. He did jihad in Afghanistan and Bosnia, and he did jihad in time of the Taliban with the Islamic Emirate. He was martyred in Tora Bora

- The martyr Muhammad Mahmoud al-Makki. He did jihad in Bosnia before, then he did jihad in Afghanistan. He was killed in the first round of bombing. I remember I saw him when I ascended the mountain in Tora Bora. He was emir of one of the locations.

I will mention to you the circumstances experienced by the brothers in Tora Bora. When we ascended the mountain in Tora Bora - of course, we do not know the conditions in which the brothers live - one of the brothers wanted to perform ablution. He came to the bottom of water, then he started pouring water, performing the full ablution. Sheikh Muhammad Mahmoud al-Makki said to him: “O brother, may Allah guide you, a drop of water here equals gold. You know the conditions in which the brothers are living. A drop of water is more expensive than
gold.” He said that to him. So these conditions… I remember also that our brother Taluut, may Allah have mercy on him, and I remember our brother Abu Yahya al-Hawin, who participated in the first phase in Tora Bora and then left. Of course, Sheikh Abu Yahya al-Hawin, as his name indicates, he was specialized in mortars.

[Zawahiri asks the cameraman about the time remaining]

Sheikh Abu Yahya al-Hawin… people know him among those who participated in the jihad against the Russians and against… with the Islamic Emirate and against the Americans. He was one of the pillars of the blessed Khalden School. Sheikh Abu Yahya al-Libi… Oh… Abu Yahya al-Hawin is among the hidden, pious people who worked in silence and don’t want thanks or praise, for they work for the pleasure of Allah the Great and Almighty. He was the one who accompanied Sheikh Abdullah Azzam, may Allah have mercy on him. Sheikh Abdullah Azzam was joking with him and called him the “enemy of Italy,” because originally he was working in Italy, then he abandoned Italy and became busy with jihad in Afghanistan.

His unique characteristic was that he was very keen to make use of every hour of his time. You would see him taking in useful knowledge or doing a good deed. For example, he was a trainer in the Khalden camp in Afghanistan and at the same time, he was a student in the preaching institution that was run by his eminence Sheikh Abu Abdullah al-Muhajir, may Allah gather us with him in goodness sooner than later, secured, victorious, and safe, Allah willing. When the Crusader attack happened on Afghanistan, after the blessed invasions, Sheikh Abu Yahya al-Hawin retreated back to the tribal areas and there his activity started once again with the mujahideen. Of course, he was specialized in mortars. This was the specialty he taught.

Sheikh Abu Yahya al-Hawin, may Allah have vast mercy on him, was very devout and very pious. He was afraid that one of the trainees would learn this art from him and then he would use it in the world. You know the tribal areas, the tribal disputes, and the tribal conflicts and wars. He would take a promise from every trainee to give an oath on the Mushaf [Qur’an] that he will not use this knowledge but for jihad in cause of Allah against the disbelieving enemies of the Muslims. Some of the local supporters from the tribes were joking with him… One of them came and pretended that he is spying on him or looking into his notebooks. Then Sheikh Abu Yahya al-Libi… Abu Yahya al-Hawin closed the notebook. Sheikh Abu Yahya, the pious, the hidden, remained working in silence until Allah the Great and Almighty made him pass away from cancer of the cheek bone. He passed away [and went to] the mercy of Allah the Great and Almighty with this disease. We ask Allah the Great and Almighty to accept him among the righteous ones.

Also, among the prominent names that I mention from among martyrs of Tora Bora is Sheikh Hamza al-Dandeni who was martyred in the al-Jawf [area] of the Land of the Two Holy Mosques [Saudi Arabia] at the hands of the Al Saud family during the battles between the mujahideen and the agent, traitor Saudi forces in the Arabian Peninsula. Sheikh Hamza al-Shaheed [the Martyr], or Hamza al-Dandeni, was the emir of a group of the mujahideen from among the new brothers in Tora Bora, and this group was among the best groups in discipline and methodology in the battle.
I would like to talk about the martyrs, [Zawahiri asks the cameraman about time and notes there are two minutes remaining and will be brief]. Tora Bora was a scene among scenes of Islamic unity. Participation in it was not from one country, but from multiple countries. Arabs participated in it, brothers from the Arabian Peninsula participated in it, and brothers from Yemen, the support of Islam in every era, and brothers from Kuwait, brothers from Bahrain, and brothers from [Saudi Arabia]. Also, brothers from the Islamic Maghreb participated in it, from Algeria. I remember Sheikh Abu Ja’far al-Jaza’iri, may Allah have mercy on him, and his brothers from Morocco, Tunisia, and Libya. Also, Pakistanis participated, and Afghans, and brothers from Sham, and brothers from Turkistan. They all participated in Tora Bora. I ask Allah the Great and Almighty to accept from them all, to have mercy on their martyrs, to release their captives, and to gather us with them with goodness in this world and the hereafter.

Until the next episode, Allah willing. I say this, and I seek forgiveness from Allah for me and you.

Our last supplication is that all praise be to Allah. May Allah’s peace and blessings be upon our master Muhammad, and upon his family and his Companions.

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