

'Bin Laden' tape

January 4, 2004

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This is a translated transcript of an audiotape said to be of Osama Bin Laden, aired by al-Jazeera satellite channel on 4 January, 2004:

From Osama Bin Laden to his brothers and sisters in the entire Islamic nation: May God's peace, mercy and blessings be upon you.

My message to you concerns inciting and continuing to urge for jihad to repulse the grand plots that have been hatched against our nation, especially since some of them have appeared clearly, such as the occupation of the crusaders, with the help of the apostates, of Baghdad and the house of the caliphate [the succession of rulers of the Islamic nation], under the trick of weapons of mass destruction.

There is also the fierce attempt to destroy the al-Aqsa Mosque and destroy the jihad and the mujahideen in beloved Palestine by employing the trick of the roadmap and the Geneva peace initiative.

The Americans' intentions have also become clear in statements about the need to change the beliefs, curricula and morals of the Muslims to become more tolerant, as they put it. In clearer terms, it is a religious-economic war.

The occupation of Iraq is a link in the Zionist-crusader chain of evil.

Gulf states 'next'

Then comes the full occupation of the rest of the Gulf states to set the stage for controlling and dominating the whole world.

For the big powers believe that the Gulf and the Gulf states are the key to controlling the world due to the presence of the largest oil reserves there.

O Muslims: The situation is serious and the misfortune is momentous. By God, I am keen on safeguarding your religion and your worldly life.

So, lend me your ears and open up your hearts to me so that we may examine these pitch-black misfortunes and so that we may consider how we can find a way out of these adversities and calamities.

The West's occupation of our countries is old, yet new. The struggle between us and them, the confrontation, and clashing began centuries ago, and will continue because the ground rules regarding the fight between right and falsehood will remain valid until Judgment Day.

Take note of this ground rule regarding this fight. There can be no dialogue with occupiers except through arms.

This is what we need today, and what we should seek. Islamic countries in the past century were not liberated from the crusaders' military occupation except through jihad in the cause of God.

Under the pretext of fighting terrorism, the West today is doing its utmost to tarnish jihad and kill anyone seeking jihad.

The West is supported in this endeavour by hypocrites.

This is because they all know that jihad is the effective power to foil all their conspiracies.

Jihad is the path, so seek it.

This is because if we seek to deter them with any means other than Islam, we would be like the one who goes round in circles.

We would also be like our forefathers, the al-Ghasasinah [Arab people who lived in a state historically located in the north-west of the Persian empire].

The concern of their seniors was to be appointed officers for the Romans and to be named kings in order to safeguard the interests of the Romans by killing their brothers of the peninsula's Arabs.

Such is the case of the new al-Ghasasinah; namely, Arab rulers.

Words of warning

Muslims: If you do not punish them for their sins in Jerusalem and Iraq, they shall defeat you because of your failure.

They will also rob you of land of al-Haramayn [Mecca and Medina].

Today [they robbed you] of Baghdad and tomorrow they will rob you of Riyadh and so forth unless God deems otherwise.

Sufficient unto us is God.

What then is the means to stop this tremendous onslaught?

In such hard times, some reformers maintain that all popular and official forces should unite and that all government forces should unite with all their peoples.

Everyone would do what is needed from him in order to ward off this crusader-Zionist onslaught.

The question strongly raised is: Are the governments in the Islamic world capable of pursuing this duty of defending the faith and nation and renouncing allegiance to the United States?

The calls by some reformers are strange.

They say that the path to righteousness and defending the country and people passes through the doors of those rulers.

I tell those reformers: If you have an excuse for not pursuing jihad, it does not give you the right to depend on the unjust ones, thus becoming responsible for your sins as well as the sins of those who you misguide.

Fear God for your sake and for your nation's sake.

God does not need your flattery of dictators for the sake of God's religion.

Arabs 'succumbed to US pressure'

The Gulf states proved their total inability to resist the Iraqi forces.

They sought help from the crusaders, led by the United States, as is well known.

How can these states stand up to the United States?

In short, these states came to America's help and backed it in its attack against an Arab state which is bound to them with covenants of joint defence agreements.

These covenants were reiterated at the Arab League just a few days before the US attack, only to violate them in full.

This shows their positions on the nation's basic causes.

These regimes wavered too much before taking a stand on using force and attacking Iraq.

At times they absolutely rejected participation and at other times they linked this with UN agreement.

Then they went back to their first option.

In fact, the lack of participation was in line with the domestic desire of these states.

However, they finally submitted and succumbed to US pressure and opened their air, land and sea bases to contribute toward the US campaign, despite the immense repercussions of this move.

Most important of these repercussions is that this is a sin against one of the Islamic tenets.

Saddam arrest Most important and dangerous in their view was that they feared that the door would be open for bringing down dictatorial regimes by armed forces from abroad, especially after they had seen the arrest of their former comrade in treason and agency to the United States when it ordered him to ignite the first Gulf war against Iran, which rebelled against it.

The war consumed everything and plunged the area in a maze from which they have not emerged to this day.

They are aware that their turn will come.

They do not have the will to make the difficult decision to confront the aggression, in addition to their belief that they do not possess the material resources for that.

Indeed, they were prevented from establishing a large military force when they were forced to sign secret pledges and documents long ago.

In short, the ruler who believes in some of the above-mentioned deeds cannot defend the country.

How can he do so if he believes in all of them and has done that time and again?

Those who believe in the principle of supporting the infidels over Muslims and leave the blood, honour and property of their brothers to be available to their enemy in order to remain safe, claiming that they love their brothers but are being forced to take such a path - of course this compulsion cannot be regarded as legitimate - are in fact qualified to take the same course against one another in the Gulf states.

Indeed, this principle is liable to be embraced within the same state itself.

Those who read and understood the history of kings throughout history know that they are capable of committing more than these concessions, except those who enjoyed the mercy of God.

Indeed, the rulers have practically started to sell out the sons of the land by pursuing and imprisoning them and by unjustly and wrongly accusing them of becoming like the al-Khawarij sect who held Muslims to be infidels and by committing the excesses of killing them.

We hold them to be martyrs and God will judge them.

All of this happened before the Riyadh explosions in Rabi al-Awwal of this year [around May, 2003].

This campaign came within a drive to implement the US orders in the hope that they will win its blessings.

'Miserable situation'

Based on the above, the extent of the real danger, which the region in general and the Arabian Peninsula in particular, is being exposed to, has appeared.

It has become clear that the rulers are not qualified to apply the religion and defend the Muslims.

In fact, they have provided evidence that they are implementing the schemes of the enemies of the nation and religion and that they are qualified to abandon the countries and peoples.

Now, after we have known the situation of the rulers, we should examine the policy which they have been pursuing.

Anyone who examines the policy of those rulers will easily see that they follow their whims and desires and their personal interests and crusader loyalties.

Therefore, the flaw does not involve a secondary issue, such as personal corruption that is confined to the palace of the ruler.

The flaw is in the very approach.

This happened when a malicious belief and destructive principle spread in most walks of life, to the effect that absolute supremacy and obedience were due to the ruler and not to the religion of God.

In other countries, they have used the guise of parliaments and democracy.

Thus, the situation of all Arab countries suffers from great deterioration in all walks of life, in religious and worldly matters.

We have reached this miserable situation because many of us lack the correct and comprehensive understanding of the religion of Islam.

Many of us understand Islam to mean performing some acts of worship, such as prayer and fasting.

Despite the great importance of these rituals, the religion of Islam encompasses all the affairs of life, including religious and worldly affairs, such as economic, military and political affairs, as well as the scales by which we weigh the actions of men - rulers, ulema and others - and how to deal with the ruler in line with the rules set by God for him and which the ruler should not violate.

Therefore, it becomes clear to us that the solution lies in adhering to the religion of God, by which God granted us pride in the past centuries and installing a strong and faithful leadership that applies the Koran among us and raises the true banner of jihad.

The honest people who are concerned about this situation, such as the ulema, leaders who are obeyed among their people, dignitaries, notables and merchants should get together and meet in a safe place away from the shadow of these suppressive regimes and form a council for Ahl al-Hall wa al-Aqd [literally those who loose and bind; reference to honest, wise and righteous people who can appoint or remove a ruler in Islamic tradition] to fill the vacuum caused by the religious invalidation of these regimes and their mental deficiency.

The right to appoint an imam [leader] is for the nation.

The nation also has the right to make him correct his course if he deviates from it and to remove him if he does something that warrants this, such as apostasy and treason.

This temporary council should be made up of the minimum number of available personnel, without [word indistinct] the rest of the nation, except what the religion allows in case of necessity, until the number is increased when the situation improves, God willing.

Their policy should be based on the book of God [the Koran] and the Sunna [tradition] of his Prophet [Muhammad], God's peace and blessings be upon him.

They should start by directing the Muslims to the important priorities at this critical stage and lead them to a safe haven, provided that their top priority should be uniting opinions under the word of monotheism and defending Islam and its people and countries and declaring a general mobilisation in the nation to prepare for repulsing the raids of the Romans, which started in Iraq and no-one knows where they will end.

God suffices us and he is the best supporter.