

Transcript of Osama bin Laden videotape

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

The following transcript of a videotape of Osama bin Laden talking with others, translated from Arabic into English, was issued by the U.S. Department of Defense. CNN spells the al Qaeda leader's name Osama bin Laden, but the Defense Department spelling -- Usama bin Laden -- is retained. He is identified as UBL in the transcript.

(Transcript and annotations independently prepared by George Michael, translator, Diplomatic Language Services; and Dr. Kassem M. Wahba, Arabic language program coordinator, School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University. They collaborated on their translation and compared it with translations done by the U.S. government for consistency. There were no inconsistencies in the translations.)

In mid-November, Usama Bin Laden spoke to a room of supporters, possibly in Qandahar, Afghanistan. These comments were videotaped with the knowledge of bin Laden and all present. Note: The tape is approximately one hour long and contains three different segments: an original taping of a visit by some people to the site of the downed U.S. helicopter in Ghazni province (approximately 12 minutes long); and two segments documenting a courtesy visit by bin Laden and his lieutenants to an unidentified Shaykh, who appears crippled from the waist down. The visit apparently takes place at a guesthouse in Qandahar. The sequence of the events is reversed on the tape -- the end of his visit is in the beginning of the tape with the helicopter site visit in the middle and the start of the Usama bin Laden visit beginning approximately 39 minutes into the tape. The tape is transcribed below according to the proper sequence of events. Due to the quality of the original tape, it is NOT a verbatim transcript of every word spoken during the meeting, but does convey the messages and information flow.

EDITOR'S NOTE: 39 minutes into tape, first segment of the bin Laden meeting, begins after footage of helicopter site visit

Shaykh: (...inaudible...) You have given us weapons, you have given us hope and we thank Allah for you. We don't want to take much of your time, but this is the arrangement of the brothers. People now are supporting us more, even those ones who did not support us in the past, support us more now. I did not want to take that much of your time. We praise Allah, we praise Allah. We came from Kabul. We were very pleased to visit. May Allah bless you both at home and the camp. We asked the driver to take us, it was a night with a full moon, thanks be to Allah. Believe me it is not in the country side. The elderly...everybody praises what you did, the great action you did, which was first and foremost by the grace of Allah. This is the guidance of Allah and the blessed fruit of jihad.

UBL: Thanks to Allah. What is the stand of the Mosques there (in Saudi Arabia)?

Shaykh: Honestly, they are very positive. Shaykh Al-Bahrani (phonetic) gave a good sermon in his class after the sunset prayers. It was videotaped and I was supposed to carry it with me, but unfortunately, I had to leave immediately.

UBL: The day of the events?

Shaykh: At the exact time of the attack on America, precisely at the time. He (Bahrani) gave a very impressive sermon. Thanks be to Allah for his blessings. He (Bahrani) was the first one to write at war time. I visited him twice in Al-Qasim.

UBL: Thanks be to Allah.

Shaykh: This is what I asked from Allah. He (Bahrani) told the youth: "You are asking for martyrdom and wonder where you should go (for martyrdom)?" Allah was inciting them to go. I asked Allah to grant me to witness the truth in front of the unjust ruler. We ask Allah to protect him and give him the martyrdom, after he issued the first fatwa. He was detained for interrogation, as you know. When he was called in and asked to sign, he told them, "don't waste my time, I have another fatwa. If you want me, I can sign both at the same time."

UBL: Thanks be to Allah.

Shaykh: His position is really very encouraging. When I paid him the first visit about a year and half ago, he asked me, "How is Shaykh Bin-Ladin?" He sends you his special regards. As far as Shaykh Sulayman 'Ulwan is concerned, he gave a beautiful fatwa, may Allah bless him. Miraculously, I heard it on the Quran radio station. It was strange because he ('Ulwan) sacrificed his position, which is equivalent to a director. It was transcribed word-by-word. The brothers listened to it in detail. I briefly heard it before the noon prayers. He ('Ulwan) said this was jihad and those people were not innocent people (World Trade Center and Pentagon victims). He swore to Allah. This was transmitted to Shaykh Sulayman Al ((Umar)) Allah bless him.

UBL: What about Shaykh Al-((Rayan))?

Shaykh: Honestly, I did not meet with him. My movements were truly limited.

UBL: Allah bless you. You are welcome.

Shaykh: (Describing the trip to the meeting) They smuggled us and then I thought that we would be in different caves inside the mountains so I was surprised at the guest house and that it is very clean and comfortable. Thanks be to Allah, we also learned that this location is safe, by Allah's blessings. The place is clean and we are very comfortable.

UBL: (...Inaudible...) when people see a strong horse and a weak horse, by nature, they will like the strong horse. This is only one goal; those who want people to worship the lord of the people, without following that doctrine, will be following the doctrine of Muhammad, peace be upon him. (UBL quotes several short and incomplete Hadith verses, as follows): "I was ordered to fight the people until they say there is no god but Allah, and his prophet Muhammad." "Some people may ask: why do you want to fight us?" "There is an association between those who say: I believe in one god and Muhammad is his prophet, and those who don't (...inaudible...) "Those who do not follow the true fiqh. The fiqh of Muhammad, the real fiqh. They are just accepting what is being said at face value."

UBL: Those youth who conducted the operations did not accept any fiqh in the popular terms, but they accepted the fiqh that the prophet Muhammad brought. Those young men

(...inaudible...) said in deeds, in New York and Washington, speeches that overshadowed all other speeches made everywhere else in the world. The speeches are understood by both Arabs and non-Arabs-even by Chinese. It is above all the media said. Some of them said that in Holland, at one of the centers, the number of people who accepted Islam during the days that followed the operations were more than the people who accepted Islam in the last eleven years. I heard someone on Islamic radio who owns a school in America say: "We don't have time to keep up with the demands of those who are asking about Islamic books to learn about Islam." This event made people think (about true Islam) which benefited Islam greatly.

Shaykh: Hundreds of people used to doubt you and few only would follow you until this huge event happened. Now hundreds of people are coming out to join you. I remember a vision by Shaykh Salih Al-((Shuaybi)). He said: "There will be a great hit and people will go out by hundreds to Afghanistan." I asked him (Salih): "To Afghanistan?" He replied, "Yes." According to him, the only ones who stay behind will be the mentally impotent and the liars (hypocrites). I remembered his saying that hundreds of people will go out to Afghanistan. He had this vision a year ago. This event discriminated between the different types of followers.

UBL: (...Inaudible...) we calculated in advance the number of casualties from the enemy, who would be killed based on the position of the tower. We calculated that the floors that would be hit would be three or four floors. I was the most optimistic of them all. (...Inaudible...) due to my experience in this field, I was thinking that the fire from the gas in the plane would melt the iron structure of the building and collapse the area where the plane hit and all the floors above it only. This is all that we had hoped for.

Shaykh: Allah be praised.

UBL: We were at (...inaudible...) when the event took place. We had notification since the previous Thursday that the event would take place that day. We had finished our work that day and had the radio on. It was 5:30 p.m. our time. I was sitting with Dr. Ahmad Abu-al-((Khair)). Immediately, we heard the news that a plane had hit the World Trade Center. We turned the radio station to the news from Washington. The news continued and no mention of the attack until the end. At the end of the newscast, they reported that a plane just hit the World Trade Center.

Shaykh: Allah be praised.

UBL: After a little while, they announced that another plane had hit the World Trade Center. The brothers who heard the news were overjoyed by it.

Shaykh: I listened to the news and I was sitting. We didn't...we were not thinking about anything, and all of a sudden, Allah willing, we were talking about how come we didn't have anything, and all of a sudden the news came and everyone was overjoyed and everyone until the next day, in the morning, was talking about what was happening and we stayed until four o'clock, listening to the news every time a little bit different, everyone was very joyous and saying "Allah is great," "Allah is great," "We are thankful to Allah," "Praise Allah." And I was happy for the happiness of my brothers. That day the congratulations were coming on the phone non-stop. The mother was receiving phone calls continuously. Thank Allah. Allah is great, praise be to Allah. (Quoting the verse from the Quran)

Shaykh: "Fight them, Allah will torture them, with your hands, he will torture them. He will deceive them and he will give you victory. Allah will forgive the believers, he is knowledgeable about everything."

Shaykh: No doubt it is a clear victory. Allah has bestowed on us...honor on us...and he will give us blessing and more victory during this holy month of Ramadan. And this is what everyone is hoping for. Thank Allah America came out of its caves. We hit her the first hit and the next one will hit her with the hands of the believers, the good believers, the strong believers. By Allah it is a great work. Allah prepares for you a great reward for this work. I'm sorry to speak in your presence, but it is just thoughts, just thoughts. By Allah, who there is no god but him. I live in happiness, happiness...I have not experienced, or felt, in a long time. I remember, the words of Al-Rabbani, he said they made a coalition against us in the winter with the infidels like the Turks, and others, and some other Arabs. And they surrounded us like the days...in the days of the prophet Muhammad. Exactly like what's happening right now. But he comforted his followers and said, "This is going to turn and hit them back." And it is a mercy for us. And a blessing to us. And it will bring people back. Look how wise he was. And Allah will give him blessing. And the day will come when the symbols of Islam will rise up and it will be similar to the early days of Al-Mujahedeen and Al-Ansar (similar to the early years of Islam). And victory to those who follow Allah. Finally said, if it is the same, like the old days, such as Abu Bakr and Othman and Ali and others. In these days, in our times, that it will be the greatest jihad in the history of Islam and the resistance of the wicked people.

Shaykh: By Allah my Shaykh. We congratulate you for the great work. Thank Allah.

Tape ends here

Second segment of Bin Laden's visit, shows up at the front of the tape

UBL: Abdallah Azzam, Allah bless his soul, told me not to record anything (...inaudible...) so I thought that was a good omen, and Allah will bless us (...inaudible...). Abu-Al-Hasan Al-(Masri), who appeared on Al-Jazeera TV a couple of days ago and addressed the Americans saying: "If you are true men, come down here and face us." (...inaudible...) He told me a year ago: "I saw in a dream, we were playing a soccer game against the Americans. When our team showed up in the field, they were all pilots!" He said: "So I wondered if that was a soccer game or a pilot game? Our players were pilots." He (Abu-Al-Hasan) didn't know anything about the operation until he heard it on the radio. He said the game went on and we defeated them. That was a good omen for us.

Shaykh: May Allah be blessed.

Unidentified Man Off Camera: Abd Al Rahman Al-(Ghamri) said he saw a vision, before the operation, a plane crashed into a tall building. He knew nothing about it.

Shaykh: May Allah be blessed!

Sulayman ((Abu Guaith)): I was sitting with the Shaykh in a room, then I left to go to another room where there was a TV set. The TV broadcasted the big event. The scene was showing an Egyptian family sitting in their living room, they exploded with joy. Do you know when there is a soccer game and your team wins, it was the same expression of joy. There was a subtitle that read: "In revenge for the children of Al Aqsa', Usama Bin Ladin executes an operation against

America." So I went back to the Shaykh (meaning UBL) who was sitting in a room with 50 to 60 people. I tried to tell him about what I saw, but he made gesture with his hands, meaning: "I know, I know..."

UBL: He did not know about the operation. Not everybody knew (...inaudible...). Muhammad ((Atta)) from the Egyptian family (meaning the Al Qa'ida Egyptian group), was in charge of the group.

Shaykh: A plane crashing into a tall building was out of anyone's imagination. This was a great job. He was one of the pious men in the organization. He became a martyr. Allah bless his soul.

Shaykh (Referring to dreams and visions): The plane that he saw crashing into the building was seen before by more than one person. One of the good religious people has left everything and come here. He told me, "I saw a vision, I was in a huge plane, long and wide. I was carrying it on my shoulders and I walked from the road to the desert for half a kilometer. I was dragging the plane." I listened to him and I prayed to Allah to help him. Another person told me that last year he saw, but I didn't understand and I told him I don't understand. He said, "I saw people who left for jihad...and they found themselves in New York...in Washington and New York." I said, "What is this?" He told me the plane hit the building. That was last year. We haven't thought much about it. But, when the incidents happened he came to me and said, "Did you see...this is strange." I have another man...my god...he said and swore by Allah that his wife had seen the incident a week earlier. She saw the plane crashing into a building...that was unbelievable, my god.

UBL: The brothers, who conducted the operation, all they knew was that they have a martyrdom operation and we asked each of them to go to America but they didn't know anything about the operation, not even one letter. But they were trained and we did not reveal the operation to them until they are there and just before they boarded the planes.

UBL: (...inaudible...) then he said: Those who were trained to fly didn't know the others. One group of people did not know the other group. (...inaudible...) (Someone in the crowd asks UBL to tell the Shaykh about the dream of ((Abu-Da'ud)).

UBL: We were at a camp of one of the brother's guards in Qandahar. This brother belonged to the majority of the group. He came close and told me that he saw, in a dream, a tall building in America, and in the same dream he saw Mukhtar teaching them how to play karate. At that point, I was worried that maybe the secret would be revealed if everyone starts seeing it in their dream. So I closed the subject. I told him if he sees another dream, not to tell anybody, because people will be upset with him. (Another person's voice can be heard recounting his dream about two planes hitting a big building).

UBL: They were overjoyed when the first plane hit the building, so I said to them: be patient.

UBL: The difference between the first and the second plane hitting the towers was twenty minutes. And the difference between the first plane and the plane that hit the Pentagon was one hour.

Shaykh: They (the Americans) were terrified thinking there was a coup. [Note: Ayman Al-Zawahri says first he commended UBL's awareness of what the media is saying. Then he says it was the first time for them (Americans) to feel danger coming at them.] UBL (reciting a poem): I

witness that against the sharp blade They always faced difficulties and stood together... When the darkness comes upon us and we are bit by a Sharp tooth, I say... "Our homes are flooded with blood and the tyrant Is freely wandering in our homes"... And from the battlefield vanished The brightness of swords and the horses... And over weeping sounds now We hear the beats of drums and rhythm... They are storming his forts And shouting: "We will not stop our raids Until you free our lands"...

Bin Laden visit footage complete. Footage of the visit to the helicopter site follows the poem.