

Osama claims he has nukes: If US uses N-arms it will get same response

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By Hamid Mir

KABUL, Nov 9: Osama bin Laden has said that “we have chemical and nuclear weapons as a deterrent and if America used them against us we reserve the right to use them”. He said this in a special interview with Hamid Mir, the editor of Ausaf, for Dawn and Ausaf, at an undisclosed location near Kabul.

This was the first interview given by Osama to any journalist after the September 11 attacks in New York and Washington.

The correspondent was taken blindfolded in a jeep from Kabul on the night of Nov 7 to a place where it was extremely cold and one could hear the sound of anti-aircraft guns firing away. After a wait of some time, Osama arrived with about a dozen bodyguards and Dr Ayman Al-Zawahiri and answered questions.

Hamid Mir: After American bombing on Afghanistan on Oct 7, you told the Al-Jazeera TV that the Sept 11 attacks had been carried out by some Muslims. How did you know they were Muslims ?

Osama bin Laden: The Americans themselves released a list of the suspects of the Sept 11 attacks, saying that the persons named were involved in the attacks. They were all Muslims, of whom 15 belonged to Saudi Arabia, two were from the UAE and one from Egypt. According to the information I have, they were all passengers. Fateha was held for them in their homes. But America said they were hijackers.

HM: In your statement of Oct 7, you expressed satisfaction over the Sept 11 attacks, although a large number of innocent people perished in them, hundreds among them were Muslims. Can you justify the killing of innocent men in the light of Islamic teachings ?

OBL: This is a major point in jurisprudence. In my view, if an enemy occupies a Muslim territory and uses common people as human shield, then it is permitted to attack that enemy. For instance, if bandits barge into a home and hold a child hostage, then the child's father can attack the bandits and in that attack even the child may get hurt.

America and its allies are massacring us in Palestine, Chechnya, Kashmir and Iraq. The Muslims have the right to attack America in reprisal. The Islamic Shariat says Muslims should not live in the land of the infidel for long. The Sept 11 attacks were not targeted at women and children. The real targets were America's icons of military and economic power.

The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) was against killing women and children. When he saw a dead woman during a war, he asked why was she killed ? If a child is above 13 and wields a weapon against Muslims, then it is permitted to kill him.

The American people should remember that they pay taxes to their government, they elect their president, their government manufactures arms and gives them to Israel and Israel uses them to

massacre Palestinians. The American Congress endorses all government measures and this proves that the entire America is responsible for the atrocities perpetrated against Muslims. The entire America, because they elect the Congress.

I ask the American people to force their government to give up anti-Muslim policies. The American people had risen against their government's war in Vietnam. They must do the same today. The American people should stop the massacre of Muslims by their government.

HM: Can it be said that you are against the American government, not the American people ?

OSB: Yes! We are carrying on the mission of our Prophet, Muhammad (peace be upon him). The mission is to spread the word of God, not to indulge massacring people. We ourselves are the target of killings, destruction and atrocities. We are only defending ourselves. This is defensive Jihad. We want to defend our people and our land. That is why I say that if we don't get security, the Americans, too would not get security.

This is a simple formula that even an American child can understand. This is the formula of live and let live.

HM: The head of Egypt's Jamia Al-Azhar has issued a fatwa (edict) against you, saying that the views and beliefs of Osama bin Laden have nothing to do with Islam. What do you have to say about that ?

OSB: The fatwa of any official Aalim has no value for me. History is full of such Ulema who justify Riba, who justify the occupation of Palestine by the Jews, who justify the presence of American troops around Harmain Sharifain. These people support the infidels for their personal gain. The true Ulema support the Jihad against America. Tell me if Indian forces invaded Pakistan what would you do? The Israeli forces occupy our land and the American troops are on our territory. We have no other option but to launch Jihad.

HM: Some Western media claim that you are trying to acquire chemical and nuclear weapons. How much truth is there in such reports?

OSB: I heard the speech of American President Bush yesterday (Oct 7). He was scaring the European countries that Osama wanted to attack with weapons of mass destruction. I wish to declare that if America used chemical or nuclear weapons against us, then we may retort with chemical and nuclear weapons. We have the weapons as deterrent.

HM: Where did you get these weapons from ?

OSB: Go to the next question.

HM: Demonstrations are being held in many European countries against American attacks on Afghanistan. Thousands of the protesters were non-Muslims. What is your opinion about those non-Muslim protesters ?

OSB: There are many innocent and good-hearted people in the West. American media instigates them against Muslims. However, some good-hearted people are protesting against American attacks because human nature abhors injustice.

The Muslims were massacred under the UN patronage in Bosnia. I am ware that some officers of

the State Department had resigned in protest. Many years ago the US ambassador in Egypt had resigned in protest against the policies of President Jimmy Carter. Nice and civilized are everywhere. The Jewish lobby has taken America and the West hostage.

HM: Some people say that war is no solution to any issue. Do you think that some political formula could be found to stop the present war ?

OSB: You should put this question to those who have started this war. We are only defending ourselves.

HM: If America got out of Saudi Arabia and the Al-Aqsa mosque was liberated, would you then present yourself for trial in some Muslim country ?

OSB: Only Afghanistan is an Islamic country. Pakistan follows the English law. I don't consider Saudi Arabia an Islamic country. If the Americans have charges against me, we too have a charge sheet against them.

HM: Pakistan government decided to cooperate with America after Sept 11, which you don't consider right. What do you think Pakistan should have done but to cooperate with America ?

OSB: The government of Pakistan should have the wishes of the people in view. It should not have surrendered to the unjustified demands of America. America does not have solid proof against us. It just has some surmises. It is unjust to start bombing on the basis of those surmises.

HM: Had America decided to attack Pakistan with the help of India and Israel, what would have we done ?

OSB: What has America achieved by attacking Afghanistan ? We will not leave the Pakistani people and the Pakistani territory at anybody's mercy.

We will defend Pakistan. But we have been disappointed by Gen Pervez Musharraf. He says that the majority is with him. I say the majority is against him.

Bush has used the word crusade. This is a crusade declared by Bush. It is no wisdom to barter off blood of Afghan brethren to improve Pakistan's economy. He will be punished by the Pakistani people and Allah.

Right now a great war of Islamic history is being fought in Afghanistan. All the big powers are united against Muslims. It is ' sawab ' to participate in this war.

HM: A French newspaper has claimed that you had kidney problem and had secretly gone to Dubai for treatment last year. Is that correct ?

OSB: My kidneys are all right. I did not go to Dubai last year. One British newspaper has published an imaginary interview with Islamabad dateline with one of my sons who lives in Saudi Arabia. All this is false.

HM: Is it correct that a daughter of Mulla Omar is your wife or your daughter is Mulla Omar's wife ?

OSB: (Laughs). All my wives are Arabs (and all my daughters are married to Arab Mujahideen). I have spiritual relationship with Mulla Omar. He is a great and brave Muslim of this age. He does not fear anyone but Allah. He is not under any personal relationship or obligation to me. He is only discharging his religious duty. I, too, have not chosen this life out of any personal consideration.