

Usama Bin Ladin Denies `Terrorism' Link

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[Interview with Saudi Businessman Usama Bin Ladin by 'Ali 'Abd-al-Karim and al-Nur Ahmad al-Nur in Khartoum; date not given]

[Excerpts] [AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI] The attempted attack on you took place after the horrific incident in the Ansar al-Sunnah Mosque. What is your relationship with the Ansar al-Sunnah group?

Bin Ladin: Our relationship with the Ansar al-Sunnah group is like our relationship with the other Islamic groups—a loose, cordial, and good relationship based on brotherhood in God. It is Muslims' duty toward their Muslim brothers.

AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI: Did you have any dealings with the Afghan groups?

Bin Ladin: We harbor no hostility toward anyone or any Afghan groups. Our relationship with the Afghan mujahedin began in 1399 Hijra (1979), namely when we went to Lahore, Pakistan, and worked with the Islamic group in Pakistan to support the mujahedin against the communist invasion.

We have focused on helping the brothers in Afghanistan since 1985. We opened camps to train young men to fight the Soviet invasion. We cooperated with everyone to help Muslims to defend themselves and their religion, especially as the enemies of Islam want Muslims to remain weak and subservient.

Our work in Afghanistan, which caused some people to insult us, was devoted to fighting the communist invasion and raising the banner that reads ``There is no other god but God."

AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI: In your view, who is responsible for that attack?

Bin Ladin: There are external quarters at which a finger of accusation could be pointed. They are the quarters spitefully hostile to Islam. They do not accept the natural right of Muslims to defend themselves.

Our position in Afghanistan caused some of Islam's enemies to try to obstruct our cooperation with Muslims. The world tends to prefer to overlook the oppression and persecution in Bosnia and occupied Palestine and then hasten to accuse Muslims of terrorism if they defend themselves. It wants to keep Muslims weak and incapable of defending themselves.

We also know that there are contacts among diplomats, all resigned to curb our movement and stop our contacts with our brothers. But we say that cooperation in piety is continuing among Muslims.

AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI: What is the nature of your relationship with Saudi Arabia?

Bin Ladin: There is a disagreement because of their rejection of our cooperation with the Islamic awakening, support of Muslim issues, and opposition to their restrictions on the all

[al-da'wah] and the preachers.

I am accused of supporting fundamentalism, even though everyone knows that this stems from our eagerness to raise the banner that reads ``There is no other god but God'' and support the Afghan mojahedin camps to fight oppression and communist aggression. I believe that all Muslims adopted this position; or that is what we believe was the case.

AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI: And with Egypt?

Bin Ladin: The Egyptian press says that Usama Bin Ladin supports fundamentalism. We know that there are domestic problems in Egypt because of the state's violence against Islamists. Obviously there are bound to be reactions to this government policy.

Like many other Muslim young men, some Islamists in Egypt gained military experience in the Afghan mojahedin camps. These conditions forced some to take such positions in their countries to defend their religion and themselves.

The Egyptians are trying to indicate that I have something to do with the reactions taking place in their country. And they accuse me of posing a threat to them.

AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI: And with Yemen?

Bin Ladin: What I said about Egypt I say about Yemen, which I believe is one of the best Arab and Muslim countries in terms of adherence to traditions and the faith. Nevertheless, its citizens have been subjected to murder and religious persecution. So it is natural for reactions to take place, even if some of Yemen's sons do train in Afghan camps.

The accusation that we support terrorism is a hostile, imperialist method designed to suppress Muslims' determination and paralyze their movement toward one another and toward their religion and faith. [passage omitted]

AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI: What is the nature of your presence in Sudan?

Bin Ladin: I visited Sudan for the first time in 1983, where acquainted myself with its agricultural capabilities and investment opportunities. Four years ago we came here to cooperate and work in the areas of road construction and agriculture. I inherited this type of work from my father, may God have mercy on him. [passage omitted]

Saudi Islamic Opposition Opens London Office

London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 8 Aug 94 p 1

London, AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI-The Saudi Islamic opposition ``Advice and Reform Commission'' headed by Shaykh Usama Bin Ladin has announced the opening of an office in London.

The commission said in a statement signed by Shaykh Bin Ladin that the commission's shura council held a meeting last Monday [1 August] and decided to open the office in question and to appoint Khalid Bin-'Abd-al-Rahman al-Fawwaz as its director. It added that the opening of the office in London came in response to ``the desire to expand the commission's activities and to facilitate contacts with it in order to receive

correspondence and complaints." The statement, a copy of which AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI has received, did not say where the commission's shura council met. It bore an address for the London office and two numbers: a telephone number and a fax number.