

Al-Zawahiri audiotape calling for Musharraf overthrow

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On Thursday 25 March 2004, the Arabic TV station *al-Jazeera* broadcast a seven-minute excerpt from an audio recording attributed to Ayman al-Zawahiri. The TV channel had received the tape the same day. It said the tape was a total of 17 minutes long.

In the tape, a man claiming to be al-Zawahiri called the Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf a traitor and urged Pakistanis to overthrow his government. The tape came at a time when Pakistani troops were in the second week of a large-scale military campaign along the Afghan border in South Waziristan in a hunt for militants.

The CIA later stated they believed that the tape was authentic. It was also unclear when the tape had been made, but the reference to northwestern Pakistani tribes indicated that the tape had been made after the Pakistani military's offensive in Waziristan. The tape did not mention the killing of Ahmad Yassin which took place the previous Monday, suggesting the tape had been recording before that date.

It has not been possible to obtain a complete transcript of the tape. The following are *CNN's* quotes from *al-Jazeera's* broadcast:

“Every Muslim in Pakistan must do his or her best in getting rid of this [Musharraf's] government, which cooperates with the enemies,”

“These tribes [in the northwest border region], which defended Islam throughout all of its history, will not give up to one slave of America,”

“After he [Musharraf] played his deceiving role in killing thousands of Muslims in Afghanistan, the Americans began giving him new duties,”

[The speaker says Musharraf is helping the United States and its allies “suppress the Muslim nation” by cutting support for Islamic militants in Kashmir and betraying Pakistan's nuclear secrets.]

The *Associated Press* included the following quotes from the tapes in their articles:

“Musharraf seeks to stab the Islamic resistance in Afghanistan in the back [...]

Every Muslim in Pakistan should work hard to get rid of this client government, which will continue to submit to America until it destroys Pakistan [...]

I call on the Pakistani army: you, poor army, what a miserable state Musharraf has put you in [...]

Musharraf ruins your natural fences - those tribes on the border - by engaging you in a fight with them, then he removes your nuclear weapons. Will you stay silent until Pakistan is divided again? [...]

Taliban and their supporters are your brothers, so how can you allow the agents of crusaders and Jews to hurt them? [...]

Every soldier who finds this act to be legitimate is an infidel, according to Islamic Law [...]
[The speaker also urged Islamic clerics to tell the Pakistani people] "the truth about Musharraf, the traitor and killer of Muslims. [...]"

They should incite the nation to expel the crusaders from Pakistan [...]

The crusade in Afghanistan, Iraq, Chechnya and Palestine is targeting Pakistan primarily, because America does not want Pakistan to be a special power in the center of Asia. [...]"