

Al-Zawahiri videotape denouncing US elections as irrelevant

November 29, 2004

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

On Monday 29 November 2004, the Arabic TV station al-Jazeera aired portions of what seemed to be a new videotape with Ayman al-Zawahiri. Al-Jazeera said the original tape was 8 minutes long and had been received earlier on the same Monday.

In the tape, Zawahiri sat in front of a brown background, wearing glasses and a white turban, with a rifle at his side. The imagery was very similar to that of al-Zawahiri's appearance on 9 September 2004 (see above).

The video seemed to have been recorded before the US elections on 2 November 2004, because al-Zawahiri refers to the elections as "upcoming". Officials from the CIA said they believed "with a high degree of confidence" that the recording was authentic.

The recorded statement addressed the American people directly and said it would not make any difference to al-Qaida who wins the American elections, because the prime objective is to evict the US military from Muslim territory. It said terrorist attacks would continue until this objective had been achieved.

The statement echoed Usama bin Ladin's 29 October statement (see above) which also addressed the American people directly and referred to the American elections. It was not clear, however, why the publication of this message had been delayed. The statement seemed to receive somewhat less media attention than other al-Qaida statements, reflecting perhaps a relative absence of significant new rhetorical points or specific threats.

The following is an edited version of BBC Monitoring's translation of the quotes aired by al-Jazeera:

"The United States is nowadays playing the election game in the United States, Afghanistan and Iraq. As for the US elections, the two candidates are competing to win the satisfaction of Israel. In other words, they are competing for the continuation of the crime against the Muslim nation in Palestine that has been going on for 87 years. This proves that the only solution with the United States is to force it to bow to the truth by force.

Ahmad Shawqi [an early 20th century Arab poet] said: If you counter evil with good, it will overwhelm you, but if you counter it with evil, it will subside.

We tell the US nation: Elect whoever you wish: Bush, Kerry or the cursed devil himself. This does not concern us. What concerns us is to cleanse our land from the aggressors and to confront whoever attacks us, violates our sanctities or plunders our wealth. What remains is one last piece of advice for the United States, which I must tell them, although I know that they will not take it: You should select one of two methods for dealing with the Muslims, either dealing with them on the basis of respect and exchange of interests or dealing with them as an open bounty, a looted land and humiliated sanctities. This is your problem. You have to make your own choice. You should know that we are the nation of patience and perseverance. We will hold fast in fighting you, with the help of God, until Judgment Day.

If we are the nation of patience and perseverance, then we should realize a number of serious facts. First, the fall of Baghdad is indeed a fall for all the regimes that have abandoned jihad and helped the Iraq invasion. Those which did not fall in public have fallen, without any noise, sabre-rattling, or bombing, a long time ago. Those which were not occupied by the crusader forces now will be the expected target tomorrow.

The second fact is that Baghdad did not fall on 9 April 2003. Instead, it fell long time ago. It fell since Khedive Tawfiq [Egypt's monarch 1879-1892] sought the help of the English to return him to the throne of Egypt in return for occupying it, since al-Sharif Hussayn [Bin-Ali, ruler of Mecca] agreed with the English to revolt against the caliphate [in 1916], since 'Abd al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud agreed to come under US protection [Al-Zawahiri corrects himself] under the British protection and then under US protection and since the Arabs accepted the armistice agreement in 1949 and then continued to fall down from one agreement to another until they reached the Oslo [Agreement] and the four-way [Quartet] road map."