

Ayman al-Zawahiri – Al-Azhar: The Lion's Den

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As-Sahaab: "In the name of Allah, and all praise is for Allah, Muslim brothers, peace be upon you and the mercy of Allah and His blessings. As-Sahaab for Media Production is pleased to host today Shaykh Ayman al-Zawahiri for a new conversation with him. To begin, we say to the Shaykh: Peace be upon you and the mercy of Allah, and welcome to you as a guest of as-Sahab.

Zawahiri: "And upon you be Allah's mercy and blessings, and may Allah welcome you."

As-Sahaab: "You will not have been unaware of the critical events we are passing through, and the need to reveal to the Muslim Ummah the facts on the ground, instead of the organized and methodological falsification which most media continue to engage in. We have a large number of questions, so shall we begin with Bush's most recent statements, for example."

Zawahiri: "No problem. Go ahead."

As-Sahaab: "Bush stated in early September that he will withdraw BOW American troops from Iraq and send thousands more to Afghanistan. Also, the chairman of the American joint chiefs of staff admitted defeat in Afghanistan, and claimed that he will take the battle to the tribal regions in Pakistan. What is your comment on that?"
Zawahiri: "The Americans have become experts in the manufacture of fantasies and dishonest media, and have invented an imaginary image of themselves which they spread among those who don't know the truth about them, and thus, they wage more than half their wars in the field of lies, fantasies and deception. And Bush in particular is one of his nations most notorious liars, and he continues to tell one lie after another to the Americans. I tell Bush: The dogs of Afghanistan have yet to eat their fill of the flesh of the Americans. And I challenge you, if you're really a man, to send the entire American army to Pakistan and the tribal regions, for it to end up, with Allah's help, in Hell - and what a terrible fate."

As-Sahaab: "Hamid Karzai recently stated that he has requested the help of the Saudi regime in intermediation between him and the Taliban. What do you read in this statement."

Zawahiri: "I read - by the grace of Allah - two things in this statement. The first is the state of collapse being experienced by the American intelligence clique which Bush and the West call the 'democratic government in Kabul.' This entity which American intelligence put together from its old agents and imposed through bombing and the rigging of elections only elicits the mockery of any intelligent person, but the West insists that it is the legitimate government. And I don't know: Have they provided seats for them and their families on the last American plane departing Afghanistan, or are they going to abandon them to face the same fate as the 'Awakenings' in Iraq? The second thing is the historical role of saboteur played by the House of Saud in ruining the causes of the Muslim Ummah, and how they represent the agents whom the Crusader West uses to disperse the Ummah's energy, starting with the ruining of the

1936 revolution Palestine, followed by their role in sabotaging the Afghan Jihad and supporting the aligned parties which produced first the Mujadidi then the Rabbani government, then Abdullah bin Abd al-Aziz's initiative for the recognition of Israel, which the Zionist fanatic Thomas Friedman dictated to him, and finally, the Makkah conference, in which the Saudi government extracted from the leadership of HAMAS respect for the international resolutions which recognize Israel and throw away most of Palestine.'

As-Sahaab: "It was subsequently reported in the news that the spokesman for the Taliban rejected the call for negotiations, and he said that the Crusader forces which have invaded Afghanistan must leave first."

Zawahiri: "Yes, and the commander of the British forces in Afghanistan stated that the war with the Taliban can't be decided with force alone, and also, Abd al-Rahim Wardak, the Afghan defense minister, stated after returning from America that the problem of Afghanistan won't be solved by force and there must be a political settlement in Afghanistan; and all this is proof of the failure of their Crusade, by the grace of Allah."

As-Sahaab: "OK. We go from Afghanistan to Palestine and Gaza and this unjust, oppressive blockade in which the Hosni Mubarak government colludes with Israel to bring our brothers in Gaza to their knees. What do you see as the way to end it."

Zawahiri: "This embargo will only be lifted by force and pressure, and this is the responsibility of the entire Ummah in general and the people of Egypt in particular. If the puppet governments in general and the one in Egypt in particular were to be subjected to incessant protests, clashes and pressure, these puppet governments would backtrack on their collusion with the Jews in their embargo against our people in Gaza. If the Egyptian were to rise up with their tongues, pens and hands, they would — Allah permitting - be able to demolish a thousand embargoes. Otherwise, the embargo will expand to include Egypt just as it expanded to Iraq before and to Gaza today.

As-Sahaab: "Actually, the war of starvation has already expanded to Egypt, Yemen and a number of Muslim countries."

Zawahiri: "The fact is, our fundamental enemy is this defeatist spirit hesitation and attachment to safety which motivates us to backtrack whenever the tyrants attack us and to plead with them and promise them that we will only resist them with the methods they choose for us, and that we will abandon our brothers to let the corrupt ones to bite at their flesh in front of us while we look on and lament."

As-Sahaab: "But you don't think that the Mujahideen have been liberated from this defeatist spirit."

Zawahiri: 'Yes, and that is from Allah's grace on this Ummah. But what is needed now is that this spirit be transferred to all sections of the Ummah. So for example, what's the problem if students, employees and workers, were to refuse to study and work until the siege is lifted from Gaza? What's the problem if everyone in Egypt were to go on strike and announce that they are blockading themselves in their houses until the government lifts the blockade from our brothers in Gaza? Are we unable to carry out such a peaceful, passive strike? Workers, employees and students just have to

refuse to go to their places of work and study for one or two weeks or more until the siege is lifted from Gaza and this devilish plot to enslave our Ummah and devour us one after the other comes to a halt. Our people and brothers in Egypt want the embargo on Gaza to be lifted, and I tell them that the lifting of the embargo is in your hands and that the neutralization of Israel's plan to apply pressure to the people of Gaza and force them to surrender is in your hands. And know that your remaining in your houses until the siege is lifted is a direct strike against Israel and a step towards the liberation of al-Aqsa. And I call on my brothers in the Islamic and Jihadi sites on the Internet to adopt this call and expand on it.

As-Sahaab: "This might be a new experience and experiment for them."

Zawahiri: "Yes, the experiment of communicating with the Muslim popular bases."

As-Sahaab: "But some might fear that this experiment will fail."

Zawahiri: "Let it fail. And let us repeat and develop it a thousand times until it succeeds. We are obeying Allah and worshiping Him, and Allah doesn't allow the reward of those who do good works to be lost..."

As-Sahaab: "But the people might be afraid of the government oppressing them."

Zawahiri: "Then let's live in humiliation, and let's die in it. Resistance to injustice is a must, and sacrifices are a must for resistance."

As-Sahaab: "But don't these actions need brave leadership which believes in Jihad against tyranny, dictatorship and crusader-Zionist aggression against the Muslim Ummah."

Zawahiri: "Without a doubt, and this is why the rank and file of students and workers must reject the governmental unions which the government imposes on the nation, and the rank and file of students and workers must choose legitimate unions and impose them on the government. And this is peaceful struggle which doesn't require bearing of arms or fighting. And I know that the majority of students defend Islam and want to see it empowered, and that's why that majority must set up its union independent of the investigation bureau-and-government-backed union."

As-Sahaab: "The governmental meddling in the labor unions was exposed in the recent protests in al-Mahallah al Kubra."

Zawahiri: "Yes, and some of the opposition parties took part in conspiring against the workers, and the worker's problem is a fundamental part of the Zionist Crusade which aims to destroy our economy, strike its basic institutions and sell them at the paltriest of prices to Jewish companies, and aims to spread hunger and unemployment in our countries. And the agent of the Crusaders and Jews who rule us are the ones who steal our foodstuffs and rights and siphon them into their bank accounts. This is why I let the workers know that this is not solution to their problems outside of confronting that campaign. Without confronting the Zionist Crusade, we will never gain our independence, and the people won't be able to choose their rulers and hold them to account, and they won't be able to rid themselves of the corrupt clique which has plundered our treasures."

As-Sahaab: What draws one's attention is that the phenomenon of poverty hasn't been limited to impoverished or low-income states, but has spread to states with high incomes like Algeria and Saudi Arabia."

Zawahiri: "Naturally, because through the treasonous rulers the theft of our treasures takes place and our people are starved to make them submit to the American-Zionist plot to finish us off."

As-Sahaab: "But the one who confronts this through protests and strikes will be subject to governmental repression, and America and Israel will consider leaderships or unions with such attributes carrying out strikes to lift the blockade from Gaza to be extremist leaderships which must be made an example of in accordance with American and Zionist standards."

Zawahiri: "Of course. But resistance to the Crusader-Zionist aggression against our Muslim Ummah is a must. And we must appreciate that we are facing a Satanic pact whose head is in the White House and whose limbs include the soldiers of Central Security who make an example out of the women and demonstrators in the streets of Cairo and al-Mahalla and impose the blockade on Gaza, and include the American forces and their allies in the Iraqi and Afghan armies who burn villages in Iraq and Afghanistan."

As-Sahaab: "Talking about popular unions and protests reminds us of an important subject, which is: Why aren't the 'Ulama playing their role in confronting corruption and Crusader Zionist aggression against our Ummah? And don't you think that their current role in this field isn't appropriate for them as bearers of the legacy of Prophethood, who must be leaders of society? So what - as you see it - is the reason for this?"

Zawahiri: "The reason for this is the old colonialist plot to detract from the 'Ulamas' stature; distance them from the leadership of society; nationalize knowledge and issuing of Fatwas; make the 'Ulama employees of the governments; and create a government association with a monopoly on issuing Fatwas. This is why 'Ulama are forbidden in many Islamic countries to create any independent organization. Whether they be countries which have the union system or those which have no union or political system - like the government of the House of Saud - you will find no independent organization, league or union for the Ummah's 'Ulama in those countries. In Egypt, for example, many groups have unions: Even dancers have their unions! But when it comes to the 'Ulama, they are forbidden from having any union organization to take care of their affairs and provide for those of them who are hurt"

As-Sahaab: "Why don't the 'Ulama insist on creating an independent organization or council to speak for them and look after those of them who are hurt."

Zawahiri: It's because of the state of fear and hesitation which has afflicted our societies as a result of repression. But recent events have led many to break free of these shackles which make us like sheep in the hands of the butcher as he drives us one after the other to the slaughter without any objection."

As-Sahaab: "But will the people defend the 'Ulama if they were to defend the Ummah's rights."

Zawahiri: "Allah willing. The Ummah is surging, and it is in need of a leadership which will rally around it. Among the examples of that is when the 'Ulama of al-Azhar University, in 1209 H, declared a general strike and stopped studies in al-Azhar and the markets were closed, in protest at the Mamluks' oppression of the people. The Mamluks were forced to submit, and the Qadi drew up a deed requiring them to refrain from all oppressive acts and to adhere to the laws of the Shari'ah, and the Mamluks signed it..

As-Sahaab: "Do you, in mentioning this example, want the 'Ulama of al-Azhar to lead the Ummah's movement against oppression."

Zawahiri: "Not just against oppression, but also against the Zionist Crusade as well. Why don't the Shaykhs of al-Azhar declare a general strike until the blockade is lifted from Gaza, and invite the Ummah to do the same and declare that as long as our people remain under siege in Gaza, the Ummah will continue to protest and strike?"

As-Sahaab: "But do you expect that the 'Ulama of al-Azhar are psychologically prepared to perform such a great role in the history of the Ummah."

Zawahiri: "Al-Azhar is the lions' den, and it has been the Ummah's bastion in times of severity and crisis."

As-Sahaab: But don't forget that the likes of Sayyaf, Rabbani, Mujadidi and Tantawi graduated from al-Azhar."

Zawahiri: They represent the dark side of al-Azhar."

As-Sahaab: "Then who represents its bright side,"

Zawahiri: "Many, by the grace of Allah, like Shaykh al-Adawi, who declared the rule of Khedive Tawfiq to be invalid due to his allying himself with the English, and Shaykh 'Iz-ud-Din al-Qassam and Shaykh Muhammad Farghali, who fought the English in the Canal, and Shaykh Muhammad al-Awdan, and Shaykh Ahmad Shakir, and Shaykh Ahmad al-Mahalawi, and Shaykh Abd al-Hamid Kishk, and Shaykh Abduilah Azzam - may Allah have mercy on them all - and Shaykh Umar And al-Rahman - may Allah free him. These and their likes are the lions of al-Azhar and its bright side. Ahmad Shawqi says: Rise before the world and hail al-Azhar and sprinkle jewels on the ears of time and make the pearl's place, should you detail it in praise of it, the brilliant beads of the sky and fear much and discharge the right of leaders who rose in it like flowers and made seas surge. They were more majestic than kings and of stronger authority and more imposing in appearance in times of fear, their sides were the sanctuary of safety and their shadow was the refuge [it took] from every sea rich in the Shari'ah and the magnificent character reminds you of a lion O institute whose wall spent the days and whose pillar crossed the nights and eons time came upon it protecting a tradition and defending a devotion and guarding an awareness the club of the divine institute was an axis and pivot for the country's provinces whose cause was born on its prayer-niche and in it crawled as a child and grew into an adult shake the villages from their caves and tablets. You are by Allah the mainstays of the villages. Those who shout if wrong is done to the sanctuary and those who roar if the thicket is invaded not the ignorant and helpless, nor those who walk swaggeringly in shackles of gold."

As-Sahaab: "In the verses you recited, Shawqi says: Shake the villages From their caves and tablets, you are by Allah the mainstays of the villages, it's as if he's pointing to the serious influence al-Azhar's 'Ulama have on the Ummah and Muslims."

Zawahiri: "Yes, and this is why British colonialism and the governments following it were so intent on turning al-Azhar into a governmental organization. In fact, a recently-issued law forbids demonstrating in places of worship: In other words, al-Azhar, which was the historical outlet for gathering and protest against the crimes of the Crusaders, Jews and their agents in our countries."

As-Sahaab: "And does the government in Egypt treat the Christians - for example - the same way it treats the 'Ulama of al-Azhar."

Zawahiri: "The government is unable to interfere in the selection of the Pope [the Patriarch of Alexandria] nor the [Coptic] religious council, but it appoints "Shaykh al-Azhar," the members of the Islamic Research Council, the Mufti, and the Religious Endowments Minister. And along the same lines, it confiscated al-Azhar's endowments and imposed on it a series of laws which paralyze and cripple it."

As-Sahaab: "What has been the result."

Zawahiri: "The result is that al-Azhar has turned into a government agency; and the result is that its presidency is taken over by trembling fingers like Shaykh Tantawi, who welcomed the Israeli ambassador and the chief rabbi of Israel in al-Azhar, and who gave Wafa Constantine over to the dungeons of the monasteries. And in the tragedy of Wafa Constantine, Shaykh al-Azhar [Tantawi] and his helpers were backtracking and handing over Wafa Constantine while the Pope and his priests were being adamant, engaging in escalation and applying pressure. So who are the majority, and who are the minority?"

As-Sahaab: "Speaking of Wafa Constantine, some Egyptian papers have reported that Wafa was killed in the Wadi el Natrun monastery."

Zawahiri: "If that report is true, it's a calamity and disaster, and [responsibility for] the torture, punishment and persecution suffered by this Mujahidah and liability for her death - if she has been killed - is born partly by Shaykh al-Azhar [Tantawi], because he is the one who handed her over to the torturers in monasterial robes."

As-Sahaab: "But how is it possible for someone to disappear without the police and public prosecutor moving to investigate."

Zawahiri: "One of the tragic ironies of Egypt is that the public prosecutor received a number of complaints and notices requesting a search for Wafa Constantine and confirmation of her safety, but the Islam-betraying public prosecutor and the cowardly Egyptian police behave like lions against the weak among the people and against anyone who objects to the government's immorality and corruption and its rebellion against Islam, while it stands meekly and helplessly before the power of the Coptic priesthood which seeks protection with the American Crusader. No one in Egypt - from Hosni Mubarak to the lowest officer - is able to approach the Coptic Church or any one of its monasteries."

As-Sahaab: "Why is that."

Zawahiri: "Because the Coptic Church is an independent state under the protection of the American Cross; and America, which claims to protect religious freedom and fight to prevent religious persecution, is the one who forced the Egyptian government to hand over Wafa Constantine to the Church, and it is the one who protects the Church and its monasteries from any inspection or legal prosecution. Thus, in tortured Egypt, how many a mosque had been invaded, and how many an Imam has been humiliated, arrested and tortured, but the police don't dare to raid a church or touch a priest."

As-Sahaab: "It's not just in Egypt: In fact, Bush supported the invasion and destruction of the Red Mosque and Jami'ah Hafsa in Islamabad and the killing of their students... OK, let's return once more to the topic of the 'Ulama."

Zawahiri: "Go ahead."

As-Sahaab: "You are calling for there to be an assembly or collective for the 'Ulama which would speak in their name, but governments might detour around this grouping by creating a governmental group and imposing it on the 'Ulama. For example, there is the Senior 'Ulama Panel on the Arabian Peninsula, which permitted the forces of the infidels to enter the countries of the Muslims."

Zawahiri: "No, the Senior 'Ulama Panel on the Peninsula and the Islamic Research Council in Egypt and their like represent those who appointed them: Namely, the corrupt and corruptive governments. I'm not talking about them."

As-Sahaab: "Then who are you talking about."

Zawahiri: "I'm talking about the honest 'Ulama, whom the Ummah respects and whose stances in confronting the corruption and treason of our rulers it appreciates: Those who objected to the infidel forces entrance to Muslim countries in general and the Country of the Two Sanctuaries in particular."

As-Sahaab: "Like who."

Zawahiri: "Like Shaykh Hamood al-'Uqla, may Allah have mercy on him, who wrote his valuable and courageous book, 'The Chosen Position on the Ruling of Seeking Help with the Kuffaar.' And like the Mujahid Shaykh Umar Abd al-Rahman, may Allah free him... And like the martyred - as we see them - Shaykhs Abdullah al-Rashood and Umar al-Sayf, may Allah have mercy on them both."

As-Sahaab: "OK, but what's the guarantee that the government won't turn any grouping of Ulama into a governmental panel subservient to it?"

Zawahiri: "The guarantee is that the 'Ulama insist on their panel being financially and administratively independent of the government's interference."

As-Sahaab: "You talk about financial and administrative independence. What do you mean—first—by financial independence."

Zawahiri: "What I mean by financial independence is that there be for each panel or grouping its own sources of financing from the Muslims' wealth and their Zakat and

endowments."

As-Sahaab: "Are there endowments reserved for the 'ulama."

Zawahiri: "There are huge endowments reserved for the 'Ulama of al-Azhar which the Muslims have bequeathed throughout history, but the government has gobbled them up. That's why al-Azhar's endowments must be returned to al-Azhar, for them to be administered by the 'Ulama of al-Azhar, in order to guarantee the independence of al-Azhar and its 'Ulama, so they are able to speak the truth to the government's face and defend the Ummah's rights. As for the Arabian Peninsula, funds are readily available there, praise Allah, but where are the 'Ulama who demand their independence? Don't you see how the Shi'ite 'Ulama on the Peninsula maintain their financial independence from the government? Don't you see the daring demands they make of the government, most recent of which were the demands of Nimr al-Nimr? Why shouldn't the 'Ulama of the majority be at least as independent and daring as the Varna of the minority?"

As-Sahaab: "OK, and what do you mean by administrative independence."

Zawahiri: "I mean by that the 'Ulama must have complete freedom in electing the formations of their grouping or panel; and not just that, but Shaykh al-Azhar must be chosen by al-Azhar's 'Ulama, and the Senior 'Ulama Panel which Abdul Nasser abolished must be brought back."

As-Sahaab: "But don't you see that by that you're asking the 'Ulama to enter into a clash with their governments which might bring harm and punishment upon them."

Zawahiri: "First, the 'Ulama must be examples for the rest of the Ummah. Second, I'm asking of the Ulama something easier than bearing arms, even though bearing arms today is the duty of every Muslim who is able to bear them. I'm asking them to defend their independence and their al-Azhar, and not to permit it to be turned into an administration which sings the praises of the government. I'm asking them to expel from their collective the shaky 'Ulama whom the governments imposed on them, like Tantawi, All Jum'ah, And al-Aziz Aal Shaykh and their like."

As-Sahaab: "Shaykh Tantawi has become more royalist than the king. He called for the journalists who talked about Hosni Mubarak's health to be flogged!"

Zawahiri: "Yes, while he sings the praises of the floggers who gnaw day and night at the peoples flesh and hand the country over to the Crusaders and Jews and forbid sustenance and medication for our people in Gaza."

As-Sahaab: "But don't you think that this call might receive opposition from the senior Shaykhs."

Zawahiri: "First, let me tell you about a historical event. When the French campaign reached Cairo under the command of Napoleon Bonaparte, he gave orders for a Divan made up of 10 senior 'Ulama to be formed for him to rule Egypt in their name and absorb the Muslim Ummah's anger by way of them: i.e., just like the two puppet governments in Iraq and Afghanistan. This matter was presented to a number of senior Shaykhs, and three of them rejected it: Shaykh al-Sadat, Shaykh Muhammad al-Amir, and Sayyid Umar Mukram, chief of the Sharifs - may Allah have mercy on

them all. But other agreed, and the Jajlis was formed and was headed by Shaykh al-Azhar al-Sharqawi (may Allah have mercy on him). However, the Muslim Ummah in Egypt rejected this Jajlis, and the young 'Ulama and students of knowledge rejected the compromise of the senior 'Ulama, and the Ummah followed them and didn't follow the senior Ulama who surrendered to Napoleon; and the first Cairo uprising broke out three months after Napoleon entered Egypt, despite opposition to it from the senior Shaykhs. Then, after the French brutally suppressed it by way or artillery shelling of Cairo and al-Azhar, followed by the invasion on horseback of al-Azhar and the attack on its sanctity and desecration of it, it wasn't long before one of the students from the Levant - the martyr as we see him Sulayman al-Halabi (may Allah have mercy on him) - swooped down on (Jean Baptiste] Kleber, the second commander of the campaign after the flight of Napoleon, and killed him. Then the second Cairo uprising broke out along with to the regional uprisings, despite the opposition of the senior Shaykhs, and those revolutions were one of the most important reasons for the Frenchmen's departure from Egypt. Were the Muslim Ummah to have followed the senior Shaykhs in Napoleon's Majlis, Egypt would have become another Algeria."

As-Sahaab: "Fine. That's first"

Zawahiri: "Yes. And second, we - and for Allah is all praise - don't have a Pope nor a Wali-i-Faqih who speaks in the name of the Hidden Imam. Rather, everyone judges by the Quran and Sunnah. So if someone opposes or hesitates, then the Ummah is in good shape and has i it hose free and noble ones who can shake the regimes of corruption and treason. But the forces must be brought together and organized."

As-Sahaab: "Does this mean you are calling on this vanguard of free and noble ones to make a move."

Zawahiri: "I call on the 'Ulama in general, and the people of courage and dignity in particular, inside al-Azhar and outside of it, to make a move and organize the ranks of the 'Ulama, because the Zionist Crusade if ferocious to the extreme, and if we don't confront it, it will leave nothing behind."

As-Sahaab: "Shaykh Usama Bin Ladin - may Allah protect him - had made an effort along these lines."

Zawahiri: "Yes. And he - may Allah preserve him - told me that after the end of the Afghan Jihad, he had proposed to many of the dynamic preachers the idea of a group of 'Ulama leaving the Peninsula to continue preaching and commanding good and forbidding evil. But their hesitation caused the opportunity to be lost, and then many were arrested, and the transformations and backslides of which you are aware came to pass during and after prison."

As-Sahaab: "What's behind those transformations and backslides, in your opinion?"

Zawahiri: "They failed the first test when they inclined toward safety and recoiled from emigration, which is one of the traditions of the Messengers and their followers. So it wasn't a surprise when they failed in the harder test, which is prison."

As-Sahaab: "Fine. May we turn to Iraq?"

Zawahiri: "Please."

As-Sahaab: "In a recent address of Bush's on September 9th, which we referred to at the beginning of our conversation, he claimed that America had achieved victory in Iraq. So what's your comment on this."

Zawahiri: "My comment - first - is that Bush, in the same address, admitted to the fragility of the alleged victory... And Petraeus stated that he never declared victory in Iraq and that current achievements are fragile and subject to reversal and the United States must face long-term threats in Iraq. Petraeus also stated that the situation in Iraq was 'hard and hopeless,' but has now turned into 'hard but hopeful.' So is this victory? Second: In all of Bush's statements and in official American publicity, there is a fib factor of no less than 50 percent All of us remember the tale of the weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, and Saddam's connection with al-Qaida and the events of September, and Bush's declaration of the end of major military operations in Iraq following the invasion, and the monotonous recital about the remnants of al-Qaida and Taliban and Shaykh Usama's - may Allah protect him - kidney failure, and the numerous attempts to kill my poor self."

As-Sahaab: "OK, OK, we'll get to these assassination attempts, Allah willing. But this fib factor - if we were to deduct it from the American propaganda line, what would we see?"

Zawahiri: We would see the correct picture."

As-Sahaab: "And what is the correct picture?"

Zawahiri: "The correct picture is that there are two facts in Iraq. The first is that America has been defeated, and the second is that the Americans are leaving Iraq, and the Islamic State of Iraq is staying there, by the grace of Allah..."

As-Sahaab: "But the Jihadi operations in Iraq have decreased."

Zawahiri: "First, guerrilla warfare goes up and down, and the Mujahideen continue to inflict great harm on the Americans and their agents by the Americans' own admission. And second, this transformation took place through huge American support for the Iraqi army and police, whom the Americans will abandon to face their fate at the hands of the Mujahideen after the Americans depart..."

As-Sahaab: "And what about the 'Awakening Councils?'"

A: "The 'Awakening Councils' have lost both their religion and worldly life, and the Americans have abandoned them, as is their custom with their agents, like the Shah of Iran and Pervez Musharraf. And the Shiite government won't accept them, and its claim that it will assimilate 20 percent means in actual terms that it more or less won't assimilate anyone. That's assuming it doesn't liquidate them one by one, because it can't possibly accept a non-Shi'ite armed force in Iraq, and the Iraqi government stated that the 80 percent of the Awakening Councils which it won't assimilate into the security forces must be disarmed. This is why I call on everyone who fell into the quagmire of Awakening treason to hasten to honest repentance, which is the only behavior which can possibly avert them from the Mujahideen's retaliation

and save them from something even harsher: The punishment of the hereafter. And the same thing that happened with the 'Awakening Councils' will happen with all of America's agents in Iraq. And those deluded ones who think that Iran will defend them should remember three things. First, that America - which claims that it is the strongest military force in history - was helpless to defeat the Mujahideen in Iraq, and here it is withdrawing and fleeing from them. So will Iran be resolute against them? Second, that Iran is preoccupied with herself, and the threats it is facing can't possibly motivate it to enter into a war in Iraq. And third, that Iran, which abandoned Najaf and Karbala and allowed American rockets to penetrate the walls of the resting place of Imam 'Ali (may Allah bless him) while it warns of woe and destruction for anyone who touches a speck of Iran's soil, is prepared to sacrifice any ally to protect its own interests and benefits."

As-Sahaab: "OK, lets move on to Pakistan and recent events there. What is your take on them?"

Zawahiri: "As I see it, the synopsis of what has happened in Pakistan in the past year is that America realized that Musharraf had outlived his usefulness and that his policy had come to utter failure, and that the Mujahideen are shaking the pillars of the Pakistani regime, and that the army's morale has hit rock-bottom, and that the country might witness a coup or become engulfed by the civil war, in which case America and her agents would lose control of Pakistan. Thus, America decided to change the faces, so it brought back Benazir after making a clear agreement with her that she would give America a free hand in Pakistan. And when Musharraf declared emergency law and Benazir immediately fled from Pakistan out of fear that Musharraf would arrest her, America returned her one day later to Pakistan after assuring her of her safety. But Allah willed that America's plans be turned upside down with the killing of Benazir. Then the elections were run in Pakistan - and we all know how elections are run in Pakistan - and then Musharraf was forced to resign, and rivers of American money flowed into the pockets of the parliamentarians and politicians, and so a corrupt and despicable thief was elected to be president of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in exchange for providing greater backing to America in its war against Islam in Pakistan and Afghanistan. And that's why he told the Wall Street Journal that India doesn't represent a threat to Pakistan and that the Mujahideen in Kashmir are terrorists..."

As-Sahaab: "What are the lessons we can derive from those events?"

Zawahiri: "The lessons are numerous. Among them is that foreign invaders are only able to master us with the help of our domestic enemies. Among them is that confronting this Satanic pact can only be successful through sacrifices, blood and fighting. And among them is that trying to change our regimes by working according to the rotten and corrupt system and law is fruitless futility. The Chief Justice of Pakistan is still deposed, while the thief to whose pardon the Justice objected has reached the office of presidency. And Abdul Qadeer Khan, who spent his life for the protection of Pakistan, is besieged and under house arrest, while the traitors fool around in the corridors of power."

As-Sahaab: "But before we leave the subject of Pakistan, what is the story about the recent attempt to arrest you in Mohmand Agency, which the Pakistan government confirmed?"

Zawahiri: "Inquiries about this story should be made from American intelligence and its Pakistani agents, who made it up or imagined it - or perhaps both! Praise Allah, I am enjoying Allah-given health and favor. This isn't the first time they have invented or imagined this sort of story about my weak person, and this shows us the extent of American lying and charlatanism in their propaganda about how nothing is hidden to their intelligence. This is why I tell my Muslim brothers, and indeed, all the world's oppressed, that America is a huge and tyrannical power, but they are in the end only humans who lie, imagine and fail, and with Allah's help, they will be defeated. So don't be taken in by their propaganda claims, which seek to pump despair into our hearts."

As-Sahaab: "OK, let's go back to Egypt. We've already dealt with conditions there while talking about the siege of Gaza and the role of the 'Ulama, but there's nothing wrong with a bit of elaboration. For example, Egyptian society was shaken by what happened at al-Duwayqah recently. So what did this incident stir up in your mind, especially since you released a message concerning it?"

Zawahiri: "The fact is, this painful incident shows the extent of the corruption which has permeated our country, and the extent of the injustice under which the weak and impoverished are groaning. The weak and impoverished in Egypt haven't only been crushed by the falling rocks of al-Duwayqah, they're also crushed by the inflation, injustice, corruption and despotism and by the barbarity of the security organs. The crocodiles of corruption in Egypt swim in the Ummah's extorted and plundered wealth and are protected by the corrupt judiciary, while the residents of the slums and the rest of the poor toil just to stay alive and are treated like animals by the corrupt government..."

As-Sahaab: "And what do you mean by the corrupt judiciary?"

Zawahiri: "The corrupt secular judiciary which exonerated the absconding owner of the al-Salaam 98 ferry, a member of the [ruling] National Party... even as they crush and behave arrogantly with the free and honorable ones..."

As-Sahaab: "But in the midst of this all-pervasive corruption, overwhelming repression and loyalty to the enemies of Islam, is there any hope for Egypt?"

Zawahiri: "There is great hope - with Allah's help - to be had in the people of Egypt. The people which produced Ibrahim al-Wardani, Karim al-Anadoli, Yahya Hashim, Khalid al-Islambouli, 'Isarn al-Qimari, and Muhammad 'Atta is able to produce thousands more like them, Allah permitting. And the Egypt which defended Islam and was its fortified fortress will continue to be so, with Allah's help. Hope for Egypt remains, by the grace of Allah, because in it are thousands who refuse to beg for the freedom of their Ummah from anyone and are prepared to sacrifice their lives for its sake."

As-Sahaab: "But the Crusade is currently mobilizing campaigns made up of the people or demoralization, rumor-mongering and desertion."

Zawahiri: "This is forever the wont of the tyrants and arrogant invaders, but the light of truth dispels their misconceptions just like light dispels darkness..."

As-Sahaab: "But permit me to make an observation."

Zawahiri: "Please."

As-Sahaab: "In previous speeches, you've criticized those who call for peaceful activism, but today I hear you calling for popular and political movement and strikes."

Zawahiri: "No, I criticized those who call for confining resistance to the ruling regimes in our countries and the Crusader invaders to peaceful work alone. And even worse than them of course are those who criticize anyone who calls for fighting them and waging Jihad against them. But popular actions round out and support the Jihadi combat action, because bearing arms flight not be easy for everyone, so everyone who is unable to bear arms must back those who bear them with everything he can:

As-Sahaab: "But there's a doubt which crosses the minds of some. Someone might say, "Jihad in Allah's path for aiding Islam, liberating its lands and setting up its states requires strong Iman, and I am guilty of many sins, so how can I perform Jihad when my condition is like this?"

Zawahiri: "Enjoining of good and forbidding of evil and Jihad are the duties of each and every Muslim, like prayers and fasting. Jihad has become an individual duty in our era, and it's not a precondition of enjoining good and forbidding evil that one be upright or God-fearing: No, each and every Muslim is required to do it. So Satan shouldn't justify to one of us that as long as he is neglectful of many of his legal obligations, he shouldn't carry out Jihad and enjoining of good and forbidding of evil. No, they are obligatory for the wine-drinker, the smoker, the smooth-shaven, the one neglectful of prayers and fasting, and the improperly-dressed girl as long as the capability exists. It is the duty of the one negligent in matters of Shari'ah to enjoin good, forbid evil and perform Jihad, and do his best to refrain from what he fell into. In fact, Imam al-Qurtubi related that some of the 'Ulama said that if a people or group were to all agree to drink wine, it would be obligatory for them to forbid each other from drinking it."

As-Sahaab: "And Jihad might be a cause of a person's guidance and the forgiving of his sins."

Zawahiri: "Yes, Jihad is one of the greatest causes of the forgiving of sins..."

As-Sahaab: "OK. Among the things which are brought up as well to justify staying away from combat is that some of the Arab states in particular are currently witnessing an unprecedented opening up in terms of freedoms and that persevering in dissent from the inside might lead the peoples to their freedom. What's your comment?"

Zawahiri: "The New York and Washington raids forced America to allow some semblance of freedom in the Arab world, but in fact it's just some scraps which are thrown to the plundered in order to ensure further plunder. As for corruption, exploitation and repression, its the same as ever: They've just permitted some groaning and shouting. And remember that the administration of any prison must allow a little rest, recreation and reward, because it can't lead the prisoners through force and pressure alone. But regardless of any rest, recreation or rewards, it will accept nothing other than the prisoners remaining in prison."

As-Sahaab: "Among the arguments that are brought up as well is that al-Qaida is accused of terrorism and the killing of innocents, and that those who respond to its call will soil their hands with the blood of innocents. What is your comment on that?"

Zawahiri: "First: The accusations of killing of innocents, terrorism, bloodiness and barbarism are accusations which the colonialists and tyrants have attached to Mujahideen and freedom-fighters - whether Muslims or non-Muslims - throughout history. Second: The Mujahideen in this era, among them Qaida al-Jihad, are the targets of a deceitful information war waged by America and its allies, which is something they have admitted in their documents. And if you'll allow me to do so, I can give you some examples of that."

As-Sahaab: "Let's first finish responding to this misconception, then we'll move on to the examples."

Zawahiri: "Fine. Third: The Americans and their allies, at the same time that they accuse the Mujahideen of killing innocents, justify for themselves the killings of millions under the pretext of the requirements of combat operations, and as such is their impudence that they kill hundreds of Muslims in Afghanistan, then accuse the Taliban of being the cause because they mix with them... Fourth: Suppose that al-Qaida is accused of this or that and an information war is being waged against it. But what about you? You, the Muslim: What's your stance towards what is going on? You will come by yourself on the Day of Resurrection, and Allah won't ask you whether al-Qaida did the right or wrong thing. So don't be a victim of the campaign of misdirection which aims to turn you away from Jihad with fantasies. Suppose al-Qaida had yet to be born: Would you allow the enemies to occupy the homelands of Islam and spread corruption in them?"

As-Sahaab: "OK, now what are the examples which you would like to mention?"

Zawahiri: "There is a campaign of lies being waged against the Mujahideen, and this campaign is not exclusive to journalists and writers who bootlick the governments, but in fact, research centers which profess scientific integrity and neutrality are also implicated in it."

As-Sahaab: "Like who?"

Zawahiri: "Like the American army's Combating Terrorism Center, and like the Center on Islam, Democracy and the Future of the Muslim World at the American Hudson institute."

As-Sahaab: "What have they said, in brief?"

Zawahiri: "For example, the American army's Combating Terrorism Center published a book which included a 1 1/2 page report about me featuring a total of 13 errors."

As-Sahaab: "Like what?"

Zawahiri: "Like how I joined the Muslim Brothers when I was 14 years old, although I've never in my life joined the Brothers; and how I was responsible for the killing of

the tourists in Luxor in 1997, although I have no connection - neither close or distant - with this incident which brothers from the Islamic Group carried out and claimed responsibility for, and the security organs have never accused me of it or even come close to accusing me."

As-Sahaab: "The strange thing is that the Discovery Channel at the end of Ramadan broadcast a film called 'The Age of Terror' in which there was a lengthy segment about the Luxor incident and your responsibility for it."

Zawahiri: "It's the war of lies."

As-Sahaab: "OK, and the other 11 errors?"

Zawahiri: "These they'll have to find out for themselves. Do they think they can have enormous budgets spent on them, then have me come along and correct their mistakes for free?"

As-Sahaab: "And have they said anything about al-Qaida?"

Zawahiri: "Yes, and one of the funny things about this center which considers itself to be an expert on al-Qaida is that it produced a book about what it claims are al-Qaida's weak points which it called 'Harmony and Disharmony.' In it, it attributed to me a book rebutting Shaykh al-Albani, may Allah have mercy on him, although the book isn't mine, but it is from a series whose production I used to supervise in al-Jihad Group a long time before joining al-Qaida. And what makes the bereaved laugh is that they said that this book has Hadeeths of ibn 'Abbas (with whom Allah was pleased) and, 'King Al-Shaj'ai'!"

As-Sahaab: "And who is this 'King Al-Shaj'ai'?"

Zawahiri: "I too thought a lot about who this 'King Al-Shaj'ai' might be. Then by searching the aforementioned book, I found that they mean the noble Companion 'Awf bin Malik al-Ashja'i'"

As-Sahaab: "All. It appears that they are well-versed in 'Ilm al-Rijaal [the study of Hadeeth narrators]!"

Zawahiri: "And in this book, they define apostasy as al-Qaida sees it as including all those who differ with al-Qaida's interpretation of Islam!"

As-Sahaab: "Glory be to Allah! They placed al-Qaida among the Khawahil-

Zawahiri: "And they define the Khawarij as being 'an extremist group of the Shiite [sic]; As for the Murj'ah, they are also 'a division of the Shiite.'"

As-Sahaab: "Amazing! It seems they're also well-versed in the sects!"

Zawahiri: "As for the Alliance of Favors, they define it as 'a council which was formed by Prophet Mohammad prior to the spread of Islam. This council was composed of tribal elites in the Arab Peninsula to deal with issues of their people.'"

As-Sahaab: "Amazing! The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

witnessed the Alliance of Favors as child, and it wasn't to deal with the Arabs' affairs, it was to unite to prevent injustice in Makkah!"

Zawahiri: "That's but a small part of their copious knowledge and integrity. As for the Center on Islam and Democracy at the Hudson Institute..."

As-Sahaab: "We'd like to make do with one example from this center, because we've talked a lot about these centers."

Zawahiri: "One example only, Allah willing. This center publishes a journal entitled Current Trends in Islamist Ideology. In the fifth issue of this journal, there is an article by an individual called Tawfiq Hamid in which he attacks the Mujahideen and which he fills with insults to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). This liar claims that he attended a number of speeches of mine which I gave in the mosque of the Cairo medical school, and that I was bearded and dressed in the style of the Taliban and that he shook my hand several times, and that I complimented him. These are all egregious and blatant lies."

As-Sahaab: "None of this ever happened?"

Zawahiri: "Never. I never grew a beard in Egypt except in prison, neither before nor after."

As-Sahaab: "That's in Egypt Otherwise, I see you in front of me right now bearded."

Zawahiri: "Yes, that was in Egypt."

As-Sahaab: "And was this due to security requirements?"

Zawahiri: "Yes, as my friends and enemies know."

As-Sahaab: "Then from where did these stories come?"

Zawahiri: "Nothing can be ruled out from someone who attacks the Noble Prophet (peace and prayers of Allah be upon him)."

As-Sahaab: "Glory be to Allah! Unbelief and lying have come together in him."

Zawahiri: "And he writes in the journal of a center which professes scientific specialization."

As-Sahaab: "Fine. Let's suffice with these examples, because those centers' stories appear to be long ones."

Zawahiri: "And their lies are longer! But I hope you will permit me to make a final observation about a deceitful information war against the Mujahideen."

As-Sahaab: "Please:"

Zawahiri: "In more than one book by the American army's Combating Terrorism Center, two extremely critical things were emphasized: First, that the information war against the Mujahideen must be clandestinely funded from behind a curtain and

following the methods used in the Cold War against the Communist bloc. And I referred to this in the book 'The Exoneration' while talking about the killing of the girl Shayma (may Allah have mercy on her) during the attack on the Egyptian prime minister... And the second thing is that Western governments must attack the Mujahideen by convincing Muslim leaders and Salafists to condemn the Mujahideen..."

As-Sahaab: "Then this calls for investigation and research into many of the statements attacking the Mujahideen."

Zawahiri: "Of course. It is a war in which they deem everything to be permissible."

As-Sahaab: "And here the importance and seriousness of Jihadi media in bringing the truth to the Muslim Ummah becomes dear."

Zawahiri: "Of course, and this is why I request all who desire fairness, whether those who agree with the Mujahideen or those who oppose them, to listen directly to their words without an intermediary, and to appreciate that the Crusade is waging a propaganda campaign whose most important elements are lying, misdirection, and concealment or distortion of the facts."

As-Sahaab: "So what about the tiresome talk in the media about honesty, integrity, professionalism, and so on?"

Zawahiri: "Ah. These things are like Saddam's weapons of mass destruction."

As-Sahaab: "Alright, as long as we're talking about the misconceptions which are attached to the Mujahideen, and are talking about the information war, there's a misconception which the media often repeats, in an attempt to make it an axiom by repeating it often enough which is the misconception that al-Qaida is an American creation which America financed and trained. What's your comment on that?"

Zawahiri: "My comment is the American Congress's official recognition of the falseness of the misconception in its report on the events of September 11th."

As-Sahaab: "OK, talk of the killing of innocents brings to mind America and what is going on there at present. This fierce crisis in America: What's your comment on it?"

Zawahiri: "This crisis is one of the installments of the series of American economic hemorrhages after the strikes of September 11th, by the grace of Allah. And these installments will continue as long as the foolish American policy of wading in Muslim blood continues. The summary of what has occurred - from my point of view - is that the American economy was afflicted by a downturn and loss of investor confidence in the market following the events of September 11th, so the government pumped in huge numbers of taxpayer dollars, and the Federal Reserve lowered the interest rate on debts to 1 percent; and banks found their liquidity had increased, and thus they encouraged loans with the least preconditions, and home-buying was one of the most important of the fields which were encouraged; and people began to take out loans to buy homes and consumer goods, and so property prices rocketed; and banks would give loans to borrowers in the full knowledge they were incapable of paying them back, with the objective of repossessing their homes and reselling them for a higher price, since they thought that the rise in property prices would

continue; then borrowers began to default, and banks began to repossess homes, and defraud borrowers by selling their debts to other banks at higher interest rates, but the problem grew bigger, and property prices fell, and mortgaged homes began to be put up for sale for a price less than the price at which they were bought, and so the property-mortgage companies began to go bankrupt, and along with them, the banks which hadn't recovered their money; then panic spread among banks, and they would no longer loan to one another, and so finally, the American government and some other Western governments resorted to pumping funds into the banks in the hundreds of billions, and the ones shouldering the burden are the taxpayers, whose money was spent to rescue the senior capitalists and to protect the fraudulent interest-based system from collapse. And from this it becomes clear that the problem has three causes, two of which are to be found in the capitalist system - namely usury [Interest] and fraud - and the third of which is to be found in the aggressive Crusader nature: Namely, the unjust policy followed by America and her allies against the Muslims, among the results of which were the events of September 11th and then the hopeless Crusades which America and its allies are waging."

As-Sahaab: "Is there any way out for them?"

Zawahiri: "It's difficult for there to be a way out for them, because they have to abandon usury ['interest] and the market economy. But they might be able to lighten their losses if they were to stop the insane hemorrhaging of funds which they are spending on wars against Muslims in what they call the war on terror and their crusades in Afghanistan and Iraq, which are bleeding them dry with a flood of back-to-back losses. And after seven years, they've gained nothing but failure."

As-Sahaab: "But they seek, through those campaigns of theirs, to quash the Jihad' confrontation of their aggression so they can take sole possession of the oil and resources which they hope will furnish them with the means of well-being and prosperity."

Zawahiri: "Then they're going to bleed to death, Allah permitting."

As-Sahaab: "And is it possible for this crisis and that collapse to happen under Islamic Sharrah?"

Zawahiri: "Of course not. The Shari'ah prohibits usury [Interest] in the first place, and forbids contracts based on fraud, risk, deceit and ignorance. The defeatists among us, when it was said to them that usury [Interest] is Haraam and leads to corruption and ruin, used to say, 'You don't understand anything about the modern era, whose economy is based on interest' So here's the modern economy being destroyed - by the grace of Allah - by the strikes of the Mujahideen and by usury and by what they claim is the freedom of the market."

As-Sahaab: "Do you have any message for the Crusader West, then?"

Zawahiri: "We tell them: Embrace Islam and you will be safe. Embrace Islam to live a life free of greed, exploitation, forbidden wealth and the beasts of capitalism who crush the poor."

As-Sahaab: "And if they refuse Islam?"

Zawahiri: "Then at least they could keep away from us their stupidity and greed, which will lead them to pitfall after pitfall - Allah permitting - if they don't come to their senses."

As-Sahaab: "And what about Muslims who invest their money in the West?"

Zawahiri: "Regrettably, most of their dealings are illegal, so they must invest their money in Muslim countries so that they don't lose both the world and the hereafter."

As-Sahaab: "OK. Before we finish talking about America, I deem it appropriate that we make a stopover at the American elections. Do you have a comment?"

Zawahiri: "Yes. These elections confirm the extent of the American peoples' animosity to Islam and Muslims. Both candidates are competing to curry favor with Israel, and one of them believes that America must stay in Iraq until it eliminates all resistance there to the American Crusader project, while the other believes that they must pull out of Iraq in collusion with Iran in order to free themselves up to strike Afghanistan and eliminate all opposition there to the Western Crusader project. Thus, we are looking at a nation hostile to Islam. This is a fact from which we mustn't flee, lest we lose our way."

As-Sahaab: "Alright. We turn from America to Iran, with your permission."

Zawahiri: "Please."

As-Sahaab: "Recently in a number of videos, and especially in as-Sahab's recent video 'Results of 7 Years of the Crusades,' you have clearly attacked Iran and blatantly accused it of colluding with the Crusader occupier invading the homelands of Islam. Some might ask: Why this attack at a time when both you and Iran are being targeted by America?"

Zawahiri: "All praise is due to Allah. Of course, the whole world knows that Shaykh Usama's basic line was mobilization of the Ummah to face the greater enemy: The Zionist-Crusader alliance. But Iran didn't leave the Mujahideen alone, and they began to insult the Taliban before the events of September 11th and heap on the Taliban all sorts of lies, and then they colluded with the Americans in the invasion of Afghanistan, and I referred to that in some detail in the video 'A Review of Events.'"

As-Sahaab: "And before that in several tapes, you talked about the religion-sellers who cooperate with the invaders."

Zawahiri: "Yes. Then, after September 11th, their lie machine invented the inconsistent lie which said that America and the Jews were the ones who manufactured the September 11th attacks to use them as a justification for striking Iran."

As-Sahaab: "Ha. And despite that they cooperated with America in the occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq, and America has yet to strike Iran."

Zawahiri: "Which is why we had to speak and explain the facts to the Ummah. My noble brother: History caught Iran and its followers red-handed in the crime of cooperating with the enemy invading the lands of Islam, and that is a historic scandal which will be handed down over generations and centuries, unless Allah

permits them to repent and turn to Him. I myself heard Muhammad Bagir al-Hakim after the American Crusader occupation of Iraq being asked by the BBC Arabic host, 'Will you call for resistance to the occupation?' To which he replied in the negative, and said that they are now calling for calm and stability. In other words, that fighting Saddam was Jihad, whereas fighting the Americans has become terrorism."

As-Sahaab: "And why did the Iranians rush to demonstrate their cooperation with the enemy invading the lands of Islam, although this matter revealed their true nature to the Muslims?"

Zawahiri: "Out of their greed and desire for power and hegemony."

As-Sahaab: "Ahmadi-Nejad recently stated that were anyone to dare to violate Iranian borders, the Iranian forces would break his arm before he could press the button. This is despite the fact that he visited Iraq and was welcomed in the Green Zone under American protection and care. In your view, what is the secret behind this inconsistency?"

Zawahiri: "The prevalent nationalistic fanaticism which employs religion for its own ends. Afghanistan and Iraq are legitimate game, and the puppet governments there are friends, whereas Iran is holy and forbidden and must not be touched."

As-Sahaab: "There is a topic connected with Iran and its followers on which I would like to hear your view."

Zawahiri: "Please."

As-Sahaab: "In a number of media, there is a campaign of overstatement and embellishment surrounding Hizbollah, and on the other hand, an attempt to belittle or pass over the actions of the Mujahideen. So what's your opinion on that?"

Zawahiri: "Of course the matter is extremely clear, and I'll give you two clear examples of that: First, how the channels ignored the scenes released in 'Results of 7 Years of the Crusades' which show the torture of Afghans by the American intelligence agent Jack [Idema] and his meeting with the Libyan consul in Kabul, despite this representing a media scoop. The second example: When Hizbollah made the exchange for the five prisoners, it held celebrations and ceremonies the length and breadth of Lebanon, under the eyes and ears of the Israeli air force, and the media carried - and repeatedly carded - the celebrations. And generally speaking, we are delighted at the release of any captives who resist Israel. But when the Mujahideen of the Islamic Emirate attack Kandahar prison, and it's not the first time they attack the prison, and they take the prison by force, and not just that, but annihilate its defenders and administration, and free more than 1500 male and female prisoners, then take them to safety by the Grace of Allah and His Generosity, the news agencies give the story a token glance. And were we to measure with the same measure and weight with the same scales, the Islamic Emirate should have held more than 300 celebrations.'

As-Sahaab: "You talk about celebrations, but how can you hold celebrations when America's aircraft and missiles are searching for the Mujahideen everywhere and killing dozens to target just one of them?"

Zawahiri: "All praise is due to Allah for His favor and grace. The Mujahideen, whether in Iraq, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Somalia, the Islamic Maghreb, or the Yemen, have a clear methodology: No negotiations, and indeed, not so much as one word of dialogue before the exit of the Crusader invader/occupier from the lands of Islam. Do you appreciate the reason?"

As-Sahaab: You mentioned in your reply the Yemen. A number of observers have pointed to escalating Jihadi activity in the Yemen. What's your comment?"

Zawahiri: "The Yemen is the land of Iman and wisdom and support of Islam. It was hope that it would be a base for the supplying, stockpiling and supporting of the Zionist Crusade against the lands of Islam under the so-called Imamate of 'Ali 'Abdullah Salih, but the people of Iman, Jihad and honor refused to let that agent attach this shame to the honorable and defiant people of the Yemen as he had wanted, and they confronted him and his plans to help the Crusaders against the Muslims and his theft of the Muslims' oil, with which he supports the infidels' armies and fleets. And the honorable and defiant people of the Yemen will write a bright page in the history of Islam, Allah permitting, with their confrontation of this arrogant agent and with their backing of their noble Mujahid sons. The noble and generous believing Muslim people of the Yemen can't possibly agree to see the forces of the Zionist Crusade desecrate the homelands of Islam in Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine and Somalia and spill the blood of the Muslims and assault their sacred things, and then have their ships come in to refuel, resupply and relax in the Yemen of Iman and Ribat. I give the good news to the Muslim Ummah that the reinforcements of the Yemen are advancing and continuous, with Allah's help and will, and that the people of the Yemen will be nothing but helpers of Allah and His Messenger, Allah permitting. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, 'There will come from Aden Abyan 12,000 helping Allah and His Messenger. They are the best of those between me and them.' I ask Allah that the Yemen of Iman and wisdom be cleansed of the Crusaders and their aides, and that He aid the Jihad and Mujahideen and their Amir, Abu Basir Nasir al-Wuhayshi, whom I have only known as the best of brothers, companions, Murabiteen, Mujahideen, patient ones and reward-seekers. And I ask Him (Glory to Him) to disappoint the Zionist Crusade in the Yemen, and that He make the Yemen fiery for the enemies of Islam and cool and peaceful for His saints, and a bastion for Jihad and Mujahideen and a citadel for Islam and Muslims."

As-Sahaab: Recently, the chief prosecutor at the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for the Sudanese president"

Zawahiri: "I read in it the justice of divine predestination. In the same way he evicted the Mujahideen and emigrants and hurled them into the unknown and exposed them to dangers and terrified their women and children to please the Crusaders, here they are pursuing him and exposing him to dangers and terrifying him, and they've neither thanked him for what he did, nor remembered any favor of his. And neither the Jews nor the Christians will ever be pleased with you unless you follow their creed.' (2:120) And perhaps it's an opportunity for him to review himself and his deeds, and repent of his excesses and mistakes, because it's better for him to die nobly and honorably as a Mujahid in the field - like Dhokhar Dudayev and Asian Mashkhadov, may Allah have mercy on them - than to die a broken captive in the prisons of the international Court like Milosevic."

As-Sahaab: "But don't you see in this step a clear anti-Sudan bias? At a time when the butchers of the Zionist Crusade like Bush, Blair, and Sharon are honored, al-Bashir is being pursued."

Zawahiri: Without a doubt, because the Sudan is being targeted in its Islam and Arabness. This is a clear fact which the ruses of the Crusader West have been unable to conceal. Al-Bashir isn't being pursued because of the crimes which they attribute to him in Darfur, because the world is full of crimes and criminals. Rather, al-Bashir is being pursued in order to divide the Sudan and erase its Islamic and Arab identity, and for them to make an example out of it for everyone who ever thought of applying the Sharfah or opening up the Sudan to shelter the emigrants and Mujahideen."

As-Sahaab: "But who can deny that in Darfur, the blood of thousands has flowed and their sacred things have been violated?"

Zawahiri: "I'm not denying that but I'm explaining why the Crusader West's heart of stone has softened over the blood of Darfur, while it relishes the spilling of blood - and asks for more - in Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan and Chechnya, and why the Crusader West pretends to cry over human rights in Darfur, while it violates them in its prisons and detention facilities."

As-Sahaab: "It was reported in the news that the cargo of the Ukrainian ship which was hijacked off the Somali coast carrying 38 tanks and a large amount of weapons, ammunitions and missiles was on its way to the south of the Sudan, and that another load had preceded it in November of last year. And it is being said that the south already has 100 tanks and is in a race against time to arm itself in preparation for the partition of the Sudan following the 2011 referendum."

Zawahiri: "Yes, and the one who signed the accord with the south is that ruling clique in Khartoum which turned against that which it used to claim to believe in and call to, and froze the Jihad in the south, and evicted its Muslim brothers and gave Crusader intelligence information about them, and continues to backtrack and compromise."

As-Sahaab: "Then what is the way out in your opinion?"

Zawahiri: "The way out is in two things, and Allah knows best The first is that the people of intelligence, wisdom and !man in Darfur, the land of the (Duran, get together and solve their problems among Themselves by judging by Islamic Sharfah at the hands of those whom they trust among the people of knowledge and piety, far away from the interference of the Khartoum government or the powers of the Cross and their vassal, the United Nations; and that they unite and agree to apply those rulings to both the powerful and the weak, instead of living for decades as slaves of the Crusaders and Jews. And the second is that the people of the Sudan prepare themselves for Jihad, for nothing else will dignify them; and they mustn't look towards the Khartoum government, for it is too helpless and weak to repel from them the wrongs of the Crusaders. And let them take their lesson from the case of Iraq, where the Crusader plot was only thwarted by the small yet patient party of Mujahideen who got ready for Jihad, then started it as soon as the Crusader invader came in, after those who surrendered surrendered, those who fled fled, and those who betrayed betrayed."

As-Sahaab: "Speaking of those who surrendered and fled, what feelings do the news of the surrender of 180 members of Fatah to Israel - foremost among them Ahmad Hills, Fatah's secretary in Gaza - stir up in you?"

Zawahiri: "The fact is, the first thing which it brings to my mind is the extent of the deterioration experienced by the Arab nationalist movements, at the heart of which is the Fatah movement. Their surrender took place after Abu Mazen's Authority contacted Israel. All of them, including those who were taken to Ramallah, or those who were detained in Israel - including Ahmad Hills - were interrogated by Israeli intelligence. In fact, the papers reported that the head of the Shin Beth, Yuval Diskin, had a lengthy meeting with Hills in which he discussed with him the political conditions in Gaza and Fatah's chances of taking control there. It would have been nobler and cleaner if those who surrendered to Israel had surrendered to HAMAS instead. But this is what has been fallen into by the Arab nationalist movements which agreed to recognize Israel and international legality, from Abdul Nasser to Ahmad Hills. This is why everyone possessing a remnant of intelligence, conscience or honor in Fatah must ask himself a serious question: Where to? And what's the point of continuing in a movement half of which has sold out the cause and the other half of which surrenders to Israel and the third half of which observes a deathly silence?"

As-Sahaab: "Perhaps because of salaries, benefits and continued support."

Zawahiri: "Then this is what they've come to. Actually, let me tell you something else: Many of those who call themselves nationalists, leftists and whatnot work directly or indirectly with the Americans through their governments to combat the Islamic movements."

As-Sahaab: "So what is it you're asking of them?"

Zawahiri: "I'm not asking them to join HAMAS nor al-Qaida. I'm asking them to come back to their Lord, their religion and their Ummah. Enough of this decline and fall."

As-Sahaab: "Speaking of nationalist decline and leftist fall, as-Sat-tab broadcast in 'Results of 7 Years of the Crusades' clips from the videos of the American intelligence agent Jack, and among the things which were shown was his torturing of Afghans and his meeting with the Libyan consul in Kabul, who spoke proudly of the American-Libyan friendship and how the Libyans paid reparations to the Americans and settle the problems between them, prompting Jack's bitter, evocative and cynical comment to the Libyan consul, 'You see, Qaddafi just had to see the light. He had to see Saddam come out of a hole in the ground.'"

Zawahiri: "Yes, and this is a security and media exclusive for the Mujahideen. We ask Allah to reward you well for it."

As-Sahaab: "And you and the Muslims as well. Shaykh Ayman: As we conclude this meeting, would you like to add something?"

Zawahiri: "May Allah reward you well. I would like to extend my congratulations to the Islamic Ummah in general and the Mujahideen on its frontlines in particular on the occasion of the blessed month of Ramadan and 'Eid al-Fitr. I ask Allah to

accept your fasting, prayers and good deeds, and that He bring us to the next 'Eid with the banners of 'man and Tawheed lifted above Grozny, Kabul, Baghdad, al-Quds, Mogadishu, Algiers, Makkah, Madinah, Cairo and all lands of Islam. I would also like to inform the Ummah of Islam of the Mujahideen's mobilization of it with its sons, wealth, knowledge, expertise and information, and that it must not listen to those who call on it to sit down, those who want the Ummah to sit with them in order to justify their own sitting or so that the senior criminals be pleased with them - or both. And Allah suffices us and He is the best of Guardians. So everyone in whose heart is a remnant of religion, honor, zeal or morality must come out to the Mujahideen, and if he is unable, then he must help them in every way he can. Have I conveyed? O Allah, bear Witness. I would also like to send a special greeting and message to the unknown soldiers on the frontlines of Jihad' media, whom I tell: May Allah bless you, grant you steadfastness, make your hands successful and reward you well. And now, after you have established your feet in the field of invitation and communication - in spite of the enemies of Islam - you must strive to raise the quality of your work, so that it appears in the best form and look its best. So you must develop further and raise the level of communication and purify it of all that is of no benefit. May Allah grant you success, bless your efforts, preserve you and reward you well,"

As-Sahaah: 'Noble brothers, this has been our meeting with Shaykh Ayman al-Zawahiri, and we extend to him, you and all Muslims our thanks, prayers and congratulations on the occasion of 'Eid al-Fitr.'

Zawahiri: "And may Allah reward you well, and accept the good deeds from us, you and the Muslims."

As-Sahaab: "We ask Allah to bring the Ummah of Islam to the next 'Eid accompanied by victory and empowerment."