

FFI RAPPORT

**AL-QAIDA STATEMENTS 2003-2004 - A
compilation of translated texts by Usama
bin Ladin and Ayman al-Zawahiri**

HEGGHAMMER Thomas

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8) ABSTRACT <p>This report gives an overview of the statements and declarations issued by the two al-Qaida leaders Usama bin Ladin and Ayman al-Zawahiri in 2003 and 2004. It is not primarily an analytical work, but rather a publication in the genre of "documentary readers". Its purpose is to provide a reliable research tool that can stimulate more in-depth research in the field of radical Islamist ideology. It supplements an earlier FFI report (FFI/Rapport 2002/01393) which compiled al-Qaida statements issued between 1990 and 2002.</p> <p>The study is based on extensive and systematic compilation of sources from radical Islamist Internet forums, Western and Arabic media, as well as Internet sites specializing in the documentation of radical Islamist literature.</p> <p>The report presents a total of 25 documents in chronological order, 22 of which are deemed authentic. These include 11 documents by Usama bin Ladin, 10 by Ayman al-Zawahiri, and one in which they both appear. Some documents include more than one statement/message. Each document is preceded by an introduction that provides contextual information based on available secondary sources. References to the original Arabic text are provided wherever possible.</p>				
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AL-QAIDA STATEMENTS 2003-2004 - A compilation of translated texts by Usama bin Ladin and Ayman al-Zawahiri

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This report sets out to provide an overview of the statements and declarations issued by the two al-Qaida leaders Usama bin Ladin and Ayman al-Zawahiri in 2003 and 2004, as well as available translations of these texts.¹ This work represents a sequel to an earlier research report issued by the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI) which compiled a large amount of primary sources related to al-Qaida, including most Bin Ladin and al-Zawahiri statements between 1990 and 2002.²

This ongoing documentation effort is motivated by the observation that the research literature on militant Islamism in general, and on the al-Qaida phenomenon in particular, lacks a comprehensive and reliable overview of all the ideological literature produced by Bin Ladin and al-Zawahiri. Despite the massive political, journalistic and academic interest in the intentions and whereabouts of these two icons of radical Islamism, only very few attempts have been made at gathering their texts in a single volume. It is in fact rather difficult for the student of political and religious thought to locate the corpus of texts produced by bin Ladin and al-Zawahiri, be it in the Arabic original or in English translation.

The documentation task is limited to these two leaders for two principal reasons: First is the fact that the proliferation of radical Islamist Internet sites and online discussion forums in the past 3-5 years have dramatically increased the amount of textual material emanating from jihadist circles, making it virtually impossible to produce a complete compilation of al-Qaida-inspired literature. Second is the fact that the fall of the Taliban regime in late 2001 and the subsequent arrests of key bin Ladin associates have largely destroyed al-Qaida as an organization in the analytically useful sense of the word. Instead, a loose ideological movement has emerged, complex and diverse in its political orientations, but bound together by an extreme anti-Americanism and willingness to inflict harm on Western targets. The al-Qaida phenomenon today seems to consist of several geographically defined clusters of militants – “new al-Qaidas” – who fight on different arenas and have only limited

¹ I am grateful to the director of the “Transnational Radical Islamism Project”, Dr. Brynjar Lia, for providing a large collection of sources and articles used in the writing of this report

² Thomas Hegghammer, *Dokumentasjon om al-Qaida*, FFI/Rapport 2002/01393 (<http://rapporter.ffi.no/rapporter/2002/01393.pdf>)

organizational contact.³ Hence it has become extremely difficult to speak of a coherent “al-Qaida ideology” or an “al-Qaida corpus” of texts. However, all of the “new al-Qaidas” consider Usama bin Ladin and Ayman al-Zawahiri as their supreme ideological guides. As such, the texts by Bin Ladin and al-Zawahiri may be considered the lowest common ideological denominator between the groups of anti-western militants operating today. Most analysts and commentators today would question the degree to which the old al-Qaida leaders still exercise operational leadership over today’s “global jihadists”, but it is fair to assume that the ideological and motivational influence of Bin Ladin and his aide is still significant.

1.2 Existing literature and relevant sources

A few books and articles presenting English translations of al-Qaida statements have indeed been published, but most of them set out to provide only a selection of texts, not to compile an exhaustive list of publications by al-Qaida’s leaders.⁴ Attempts have also been made at creating lists and chronologies of statements from Bin Ladin and his colleagues, but all of these lists differ from one another.⁵ The past few years have seen the emergence of several web-based think-tanks and institutes specializing in monitoring and translating of new radical Islamist literature.⁶ These services has considerably increased the amount of available documentation about contemporary radical Islamist ideology, but most of them require paid subscriptions and have not been running for very long. It should be added that anonymous

³ Such separate organizational clusters can be identified in Iraq, Saudi-Arabia, Pakistan/Afghanistan, Europe/North Africa and probably South-East Asia. In some regions the organizational coherence and self-awareness of these units are stronger than in others. Hence in some areas we find names of new organizations such as “al-Qaida in Mesopotamia” (Iraq) and “al-Qaida on the Arabian Peninsula” (Saudi-Arabia), whereas in Europe/North Africa for example, organizational structures are much more vague.

⁴ See for example Robert O. Marlin IV, *What Does Al-Qaeda Want?*, Berkeley: North Atlantic, 2004; Barry Rubin and Judith Colp Rubin (eds), *Anti-American Terrorism and the Middle East*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002; [no author], *The Jihad Fixation*, Delhi: Wordsmiths, 2001; [no author] *The Al-Qaeda Documents*, Alexandria (VA): Tempest, 2004

⁵ Such overviews are published regularly in the media, see for example “Tapes From Bin Laden, Deputy Al-Zawahiri”, *Associated Press*, 29 November 2004. One of the best lists are maintained and continuously updated by *The Guardian*, see “Timeline: The al-Qaida tapes”, *Guardian.co.uk*, [no date/updated continuously], (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/alqaida/page/0,12643,839823,00.html>). Another good list is “alQaeda messaging/attacks timeline” by the *Intelcenter* at <http://www.intelcenter.com/qaeda-timeline-v2-0.pdf>. See also the list maintained by the *Northeast Intelligence Network*, available at (<http://www.homelandsecurityus.com/agrecordings.asp>). The Joyner Library at East Carolina University also has a good online collection of documents (<http://www.lib.ecu.edu/govdoc/terrorism.html>). An extremely useful Arabic-language bibliographical database is *Minbar al-Tawhid wa’l-Jihad*, at www.tawhed.ws (accessed 20 May 2005).

⁶ The most prominent of these include the Rita Katz’ *SITE institute* (<http://www.siteinstitute.org>), the *Middle East Media Research Institute* (<http://www.memri.org>) Evan Kohlman’s *Global Terroralert* (<http://www.globalterroralert.com/>), Reuven Paz’ *Project for the Research of Islamist Movements* (<http://www.e-prism.org/>), Laura Mansfield’s *Strategic Translations and Analysis* (<http://www.lauramansfield.com/cc.htm>), and *The Jamestown Foundation* (<http://www.jamestown.org>). The large and well-established media translation services *World News Connection* (<http://wnc.dialog.com/>) and *BBC Monitoring* (<http://www.BBCmonitoring.com/>) also translate statements by al-Qaida leaders. Most of these services charge money for their translation services.

participants on radical Islamist Internet sites have also helped the documentation effort, because they help distribute new texts and recordings, rapidly produce written transcripts of audio messages, re-publish compilations of older statements and texts, etc.

1.3 Objective and approach

All this means, however, that information about, and translations of, statements by Usama bin Ladin and Ayman al-Zawahiri are in fact dispersed across a vast number of different sources in a variety of languages. In this report, the information is compiled in a way that should provide as complete a picture as possible of what Bin Ladin and al-Zawahiri said in 2003 and 2004. This report is not primarily an analytical work, but rather a publication in the genre of “documentary readers”. However, the complexity of the field of radical Islamist literature is such that compiling such a reader requires dealing with a vast amount of information critically and methodically.

1.4 Method

The current report is the result of systematic Internet-based information gathering over a long period of time. In the compilation process, the author has consulted, on a regular basis, radical Islamist Internet forums (such as *al-Ansar*, *al-Qal‘a*, and *al-Islah*), a wide range of Western and Arabic media, as well as a variety of Internet sites specializing in the documentation of Islamist literature.⁷ The writing process proceeded in three steps.

First, the author sought to construct a detailed list of all relevant statements issued during the period in question. This was done by merging and comparing lists already available, and by adding the results of detailed searches in media archives from 2003 and 2004.

The second step consisted of searching the Internet and other free archives for the Arabic original texts and the English translations of the statements. The available translations were then edited and standardized (for reasons of readability) and included in the report. Some documents were available in Arabic but not in English translation, and many documents have only been partially translated into English. It is unfortunately beyond the scope of this study to provide new translations of the hitherto untranslated documents.

The third stage consisted of compiling a maximum of contextual information about each statement and writing a short introduction to each document presented in the report. In these introductions details are provided, wherever possible, about key aspects of each document⁸, notably:

⁷ In this process I also benefited from the generosity of Dr. Brynjar Lia, who provided me with a large compilation of relevant articles drawn from his personal archive.

⁸ In this report, a “document” is defined as a carrier of written or spoken text. The text may be divided into several semantic units. Thus for example, an audiotape containing two distinct statements will be considered as one document.

- Date and place of the document's first publication or diffusion
- Form and length of the document
- Origin or details of transmission/acquisition of the document
- Views on the document's authenticity
- Time and place of production of the document
- Political context at the time of its appearance
- A brief summary of the content of the document
- Noteworthy aspects of the reception of the text

It is not always possible to illuminate all these points, because in many cases the contextual information available about a document is very sparse.

In this report, an attempt has been made at distinguishing between likely authentic documents on the one hand, and unauthenticated documents on the other. The classification is the result of an overall evaluation of each document based on the information available at the time of writing. It is quite possible that other scholars and analysts will disagree with this judgment, or that some of the texts deemed authentic in this report will later turn out to be fabricated, and vice versa.

1.5 Outline

The report presents 22 documents that are probably authentic, together with three documents (written statements of unclear origin) which remain unauthenticated. The 22 likely authentic documents include 11 from Usama bin Ladin, 10 from Ayman al-Zawahiri, and one in which they both appear. Some documents include two separate statements/messages (see footnote 7 above), so the number of authentic statements/messages is probably closer to 25. The documents are being presented in chronological order.

2 LIKELY AUTHENTIC DOCUMENTS

2.1 Bin Ladin audiotape, "Message to our Muslim Brothers in Iraq", 11 February 2003

On Tuesday 11 February 2003, the Arabic-language TV station *al-Jazeera* broadcast an audio message allegedly presented by Usama bin Ladin.⁹ The tape was said to be a total of 16

⁹ "Bin Ladin asks Muslims to resist the American attack", *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 11 February 2003 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=48276>); "Bin Ladin asks Iraqis to emulate Afghans in resistance against the Americans", *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 12 February 2003 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=48331>); "Bin Laden' condemns Iraq plans", *BBCNews.com*, 11 February 2003 (<http://news.BBC.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/2751041.stm>); "Bin Laden' calls for Iraqi resistance", *BBCNews.com*, 12 February 2003 (http://news.BBC.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/2751417.stm); Neil Macfarquhar, "Tape Ascribed to bin Laden Urges Muslims to Stand With Iraq", *New York Times*, 12 February 2003; David Johnston, "Bin Laden Tape May Hint at Attack, C.I.A. Says", *New York Times*, 13 February 2003

minutes long. *Al-Jazeera* said the tape had been “received along the same route as the last one”, but would not give further details.

US officials later said they believed the recording was authentic.¹⁰ Transcripts of the statement in Arabic were posted on *al-Jazeera.net* and on Islamist websites shortly afterwards and are now widely available on the Internet.¹¹

It later emerged that the tape was one of the first to be handed over from Qatar to US authorities in the framework of a new diplomatic agreement under which Qatar allegedly obliges itself to provide a copy of al-Qaida tapes before *al-Jazeera* airs them.¹²

The statement called on Muslims to resist any US aggression against Iraq, and urged Iraqis to apply the military lessons learned by al-Qaida in Afghanistan. It also said that fighting on the side of Saddam’s regime was permissible in order to achieve the greater aim of repelling the Americans.

If authentic, this tape would be the first sign of life from Usama bin Ladin since the release of an audiotaped statement on 12 November 2002.¹³ The timing of the message was probably not coincidental, as the tape was aired on the first day of the important Muslims holiday of *Id al-Adha* (the feast of sacrifice). Most important, however, was that the message came at a time of high international political tension over the Iraq issue. Thus the Bin Ladin message was interpreted by both proponents and opponents of military action against Iraq as an argument supporting their respective positions. Hardliners said Bin Ladin’s message represented yet another indication of an alliance between al-Qaida and Saddam Hussain, while critics of the looming war said the message was a reminder of the dangerous consequences of military action against Iraq.

The following is the *BBC*’s translation of the statement:¹⁴

¹⁰ “US authenticates ‘Bin Laden’ tape”, *BBCNews.com*, 15 February 2003 (http://news.BBC.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/2765325.stm)

¹¹ See for example “Bin Ladin’s latest audiotaped statement on the Iraq crisis”, *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 16 February 2003 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/88FAC230-1177-41C9-89A3-586C9B822F78.htm>) or the website called *Minbar al-tawhid wa’l-jihad*, see <http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=865> (last accessed 10 May 2005)

¹² “Diplomatic source: Washington obtained Bin Ladin tape early and agrees with Qatar on exchange agreement for letters from al-Qaida leader”, *al-Sharq al-Awsat* [in Arabic], 14 February 2003; “Bin Laden tape to show Iraq link”, *BBCNews.com*, 11 February 2003 (<http://news.BBC.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/2750439.stm>)

¹³ Thomas Hegghammer, *Dokumentasjon om al-Qaida*, FFI/Rapport 2002/01393 (<http://rapporter.ffi.no/rapporter/2002/01393.pdf>)

¹⁴ “Bin Laden tape: Text,” *BBCNews.com*, 12 February 2003 (http://news.BBC.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/2751019.stm)

“In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. A message to our Muslim brothers in Iraq, may God’s peace, mercy, and blessings be upon you. O you who believe fear God, by doing all that He has ordered and by abstaining from all that He has forbidden as He should be feared. Obey Him, be thankful to Him, and remember Him always, and die not except in a state of Islam [as Muslims] with complete submission to God.

We are following up with great interest and extreme concern the crusaders’ preparations for war to occupy a former capital of Islam, loot Muslims’ wealth, and install an agent government, which would be a satellite for its masters in Washington and Tel Aviv, just like all the other treasonous and agent Arab governments. This would be in preparation for establishing the Greater Israel. God is sufficient for us and He is the best disposer of affairs.

Amid this unjust war, the war of infidels and debauchees led by America along with its allies and agents, we would like to stress a number of important values: First, showing good intentions. This means fighting should be for the sake of the one God. It should not be for championing ethnic groups, or for championing the non-Islamic regimes in all Arab countries, including Iraq. God Almighty says: *Those who believe fight in the cause of God, and those who reject faith fight in the cause of evil. So fight ye against the friends of Satan: feeble indeed is the cunning of Satan.*

Second, we remind that victory comes only from God and all we have to do is prepare and motivate for *Jihad*. God Almighty says: *Oh ye who believe! If ye will help the cause of God, He will help you and plant your feet firmly.* We must rush to seek God Almighty’s forgiveness from sins, particularly the grave sins. The Prophet Muhammad, God’s peace be upon him, said: ‘Avoid the seven grave sins; polytheism, sorcery, killing, unless permitted by God, usury, taking the money of orphans, fleeing from combat, and slandering innocent faithful women.’ Also, all grave sins, such as consuming alcohol, committing adultery, disobeying parents, and committing perjury. We must obey God in general, and should in particular mention the name of God more before combat. Abu al-Darda, may God be pleased with him, said: ‘Perform a good deed before an attack, because you are fighting with your deeds.’

Third, we realized from our defence and fighting against the American enemy that, in combat, they mainly depend on psychological warfare. This is in light of the huge media machine they have. They also depend on massive air strikes so as to conceal their most prominent point of weakness, which is the fear, cowardliness, and the absence of combat spirit among US soldiers. Those soldiers are completely convinced of the injustice and lying of their government. They also lack a fair cause to defend. They only fight for capitalists, usury takers, and the merchants of arms and oil, including the gang of crime at the White House. This is in addition to crusader and personal grudges by Bush the father.

We also realized that one of the most effective and available methods of rendering the air force of the crusader enemy ineffective is by setting up roofed and disguised trenches in large numbers. I had referred to that in a previous statement during the Tora Bora battle last year. In that great battle, faith triumphed over all the materialistic forces of the people of evil, for principles were adhered to, thanks to God Almighty. I

will narrate to you part of that great battle, to show how cowardly they are on the one hand, and how effective trenches are in exhausting them on the other:

We were about 300 *mujahidin*. We dug 100 trenches that were spread in an area that does not exceed one square mile, one trench for every three brothers, so as to avoid the huge human losses resulting from the bombardment. Since the first hour of the US campaign on 20 Rajab 1422, corresponding to 7 October 2001, our centres were exposed to a concentrated bombardment. And this bombardment continued until mid-Ramadan.

On 17 Ramadan, a very fierce bombardment began, particularly after the US command was certain that some of al-Qaeda leaders were still in Tora Bora, including the humble servant to God [referring to himself] and the brother *mujahid* Doctor Ayman al-Zawahiri. The bombardment was round-the-clock and the warplanes continued to fly over us day and night. The US Pentagon, together with its allies, worked full time on blowing up and destroying this small spot, as well as on removing it entirely. Planes poured their lava on us, particularly after accomplishing their main missions in Afghanistan. The US forces attacked us with smart bombs, bombs that weigh thousands of pounds, cluster bombs, and bunker busters. Bombers, like the B-52, used to fly over our head for more than two hours and drop between 20 to 30 bombs at a time. The modified C-130 aircraft kept carpet-bombing us at night, using modern types of bombs. The US forces dared not break into our positions, despite the unprecedented massive bombing and terrible propaganda targeting this completely besieged small area. This is in addition to the forces of hypocrites, whom they prodded to fight us for 15 days non-stop. Every time the latter attacked us, we forced them out of our area carrying their dead and wounded.

Is there any clearer evidence of their cowardice, fear, and lies regarding their legends about their alleged power. To sum it up, the battle resulted in the complete failure of the international alliance of evil, with all its forces, [to overcome] a small number of *mujahidin* - 300 *mujahidin* hunkered down in trenches spread over an area of one square mile under a temperature of -10 degrees Celsius. The battle resulted in the injury of 6% of personnel - we hope God will accept them as martyrs - and the damage of two percent of the trenches, praise be to God. If all the world forces of evil could not achieve their goals on a one square mile of area against a small number of *mujahidin* with very limited capabilities, how can these evil forces triumph over the Muslim world? This is impossible, God willing, if people adhere to their religion and insist on *jihad* for its sake.

O *mujahidin* brothers in Iraq, do not be afraid of what the United States is propagating in terms of their lies about their power and their smart, laser-guided missiles. The smart bombs will have no effect worth mentioning in the hills and in the trenches, on plains, and in forests. They must have apparent targets. The well-camouflaged trenches and targets will not be reached by either the smart or the stupid missiles. There will only be haphazard strikes that dissipate the enemy ammunition and waste its money. Dig many trenches. The [early Muslim caliph] Umar, may God be pleased with him, stated: 'Take the ground as a shield because this will ensure the exhaustion of all the stored enemy missiles within months.' Their daily production is too little and can be dealt with, God willing.

We also recommend luring the enemy forces into a protracted, close, and exhausting fight, using the camouflaged defensive positions in plains, farms, mountains, and cities. The enemy fears city and street wars most, a war in which the enemy expects grave human losses.

We stress the importance of the martyrdom operations against the enemy - operations that inflicted harm on the United States and Israel that have been unprecedented in their history, thanks to Almighty God.

We also point out that whoever supported the United States, including the hypocrites of Iraq or the rulers of Arab countries, those who approved their actions and followed them in this crusade war by fighting with them or providing bases and administrative support, or any form of support, even by words, to kill the Muslims in Iraq, should know that they are apostates and outside the community of Muslims. It is permissible to spill their blood and take their property. God says: *O ye who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors: they are but friends and protectors to each other. And he amongst you that turns to them [for friendship] is of them. Verily, God guideth not a people unjust.*

We also stress to honest Muslims that they should move, incite, and mobilize the [Islamic] nation, amid such grave events and hot atmosphere so as to liberate themselves from those unjust and renegade ruling regimes, which are enslaved by the United States. They should also do so to establish the rule of God on earth. The most qualified regions for liberation are Jordan, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, the land of the two holy mosques [Saudi Arabia], and Yemen.

Needless to say, this crusade war is primarily targeted against the people of Islam. Regardless of the removal or the survival of the socialist party or Saddam, Muslims in general and the Iraqis in particular must brace themselves for *jihād* against this unjust campaign and acquire ammunition and weapons. This is a prescribed duty. God says: [And let them pray with thee] *taking all precautions and bearing arms: the unbelievers wish if ye were negligent of your arms and your baggage, to assault you in a single rush.* Fighting in support of the non-Islamic banners is forbidden. Muslims' doctrine and banner should be clear in fighting for the sake of God. He who fights to raise the word of God will fight for God's sake.

Under these circumstances, there will be no harm if the interests of Muslims converge with the interests of the socialists in the fight against the crusaders, despite our belief in the infidelity of socialists. The jurisdiction of the socialists and those rulers has fallen a long time ago. Socialists are infidels wherever they are, whether they are in Baghdad or Aden.

The fighting, which is waging and which will be waged these days, is very much like the fighting of Muslims against the Byzantine in the past. And the convergence of interests is not detrimental. The Muslims' fighting against the Byzantine converged with the interests of the Persians. And this was not detrimental to the companions of the Prophet.

Before concluding, we reiterate the importance of high morale and caution against false rumours, defeatism, uncertainty, and discouragement. The prophet said: 'Bring good

omens and do not discourage people.’ He also said: ‘The voice of Abu Talha in the army is better than 100 men.’ During the al-Yarmuk Battle, a man told Khalid bin al-Walid: ‘The Byzantine soldiers are too many and the Muslims are few.’ So, Khalid told him: ‘Shame on you. Armies do not triumph with large numbers but are defeated if the spirit of defeatism prevails.’ Keep this saying before your eyes: ‘It is not fitting for a Prophet that he should have prisoners of war until he hath thoroughly subdued the land.’ ‘Therefore, when ye meet the unbelievers (in fight), smite at their necks.’

Your wish to the crusaders should be as came in this verse of poetry: ‘The only language between you and us is the sword that will strike your necks.’ In the end, I advise myself and you to fear God covertly and openly and to be patient in the *jihad*. Victory will be achieved with patience. I also advise myself and you to say more prayers. *O ye who believe! When ye meet a force, be firm, and call God in remembrance much (and often); That ye may prosper. God, who sent the book unto the prophet, who drives the clouds, and who defeated the enemy parties, defeat them and make us victorious over them. Our Lord! Give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter and save us from the torment of the Fire! May God’s peace and blessings be upon Prophet Muhammad and his household.*”

2.2 Bin Ladin audiotape, sermon on the first day of Id al-Adha, 16 February 2003

On Sunday 16 February 2003, Arab media reported that a new 53-minute audiotape featuring Bin Ladin’s voice had been posted on Islamist Internet site.¹⁵ The London-based Arabic newspaper *al-Hayat* said the recording had been posted on a website called “Jihad Forum” located at www.arabforum.net.¹⁶ The Arab TV station *al-Jazeera* said they had found the recording on a website known as *Abu Banan*.¹⁷ *Al-Jazeera* later aired excerpts from the statement and posted an Arabic transcript of the entire statement on its website.¹⁸

It was not clear where or when the recording had been made. It was said to be a recording of a sermon given by Usama bin Ladin on the first day of *Id al-Adha* (Feast of the Sacrifice), which in 2003 started on 11 February.

It is possible that the tape was identical to a recording mentioned in an article in the New York Times late edition on 13 February: “Tonight [i.e. 13 February 2003], a British-based Islamic news agency, Ansaar, said it had bought a nearly hour-long tape of Mr. bin Laden in which he

¹⁵ “‘Bin Laden’ tape attacks ‘crusaders’”, *BBCNews.com*, 16 February 2003 (http://news.BBC.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/2768397.stm); David Johnston, “New Bin Laden tape”, *New York Times* (late edition), 16 February 2003

¹⁶ “‘Bin Laden’ tape attacks ‘crusaders’”, *BBCNews.com*, 16 February 2003 (http://news.BBC.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/2768397.stm)

¹⁷ “Bin Ladin vows to continue fighting Americans and attacks Arab leaders”, *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic] 16 February 2003 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=48480>);

¹⁸ “Text of Bin Ladin letter”, *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 16 February 2003 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/9C1479F9-B994-4CE3-A1E3-319FE56FB2E7.htm>)

predicted his own death in an act of ‘martyrdom.’ The news agency said it bought the recording from an unidentified man who approached the news organization through the Internet. American intelligence officials said they had received a transcript of the statement but had reached no conclusions about its authenticity.”¹⁹

In the rather long statement published on 16 February, the voice purporting to be Bin Ladin exhorts young Muslims to fight the Americans, saying the strategic aim of the US in the Middle East is to establish Greater Israel. He says the two principal barriers to *jihad* today are the tyrannical Arab regimes and the hypocritical Islamic scholars.

This statement received relatively little media attention. One of the reasons may have been that it emerged just a few days after the 11 February statement. Another factor may have been the fact that the 16 February recording was more general in content and included few specific threats or comments on recent events.

The following is an edited version of the statement published on 16 February as translated by the *Middle East Media Research Institute*.²⁰

“Praise be to God who revealed the verse of the Sword to his servant and messenger, in order to establish truth and abolish falsehood.

Praise be to God who said: *When the sacred months are over, kill the idolaters wherever you find them, take them captive, lay siege to them and lie in wait for them at every place of ambush. But if they repent and perform the prayers and give alms, let them go. For God is most forgiving and merciful.*

And praise be to God who said: *Fight them, may God punish them by your hands and put them to shame and give you victory over them and heal the hearts of the believers.*

Prayers and blessings of peace upon our Prophet Muhammad, who said: ‘I was sent with a sword in preparation for the Day of Judgment when God alone will be worshipped with none beside him. He assigned me a livelihood under the shadow of my spear and he assigned humiliation and lowliness to those who disobey my command. He who makes himself resemble a community of people, is one of them.’ He also said: ‘Expel the idolaters from the Arabian peninsula.’

¹⁹ David Johnston, “Bin Laden Tape May Hint at Attack, C.I.A. Says”, *New York Times*, 13 February 2003

²⁰ MEMRI Special Dispatch 473, 5 March 2003 (<http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP47603>). The *BBC* also translated excerpts of the statement, see “‘Bin Laden’ tape urges ‘jihad’”, *BBCNews.com*, 16 February 2003 (http://news.BBC.co.uk/1/hi/not_in_website/syndication/monitoring/media_reports/2768873.stm). The *Middle East Media Research Institute* (MEMRI) is a Washington-based organization (with international offices) founded and directed by former Israeli intelligence officials. It has been accused of being politicized and of selecting articles for translation that portray Arabs negatively. Its translations are generally considered to be reliable. See Brian Whitaker, “Selective memri”, *Guardian*, 12 August 2002 (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/elsewhere/journalist/story/0,7792,773258,00.html>); and Yigal Carmon, “Media organization rebuts accusations of selective journalism”, *Guardian*, 21 August 2002 (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/israel/comment/0,10551,778373,00.html>).

Muslim blood is being spilt unheeded in Palestine, Chechnya, the Philippines, Kashmir and Sudan; our children are dying in Iraq because of the American siege; we still suffer from the injuries inflicted by the Crusaders' wars on the Islamic world in the last century and by the Sykes-Picot agreement between Britain and France which divided the Muslim world into fragments and truncated limbs where Crusaders' agents still rule. And now we find ourselves confronted once more with the spirit of the Sykes-Picot agreement [under another name]: the Bush-Blair agreement, which is conducted under the same banner and for the same purpose -- the banner is that of the cross, the purpose is the destruction and plunder of the Nation of God's beloved [Muhammad], God's prayers and peace upon him.

The Bush-Blair agreement pretends that it wants to put an end to terrorism. However, it is no longer a secret even from the masses that it wants [in fact] to put an end to Islam. Nonetheless, the rulers of the region emphasize in their notes and speeches their support for Bush in his war against terrorism, which is [in fact] a war on Islam and Muslims, in flagrant betrayal of both faith and Nation; their validation comes from the '*ulama* [scholars] who serve them and from the palace lackeys.

Nor is it a secret that the preparations underway at present for an attack upon Iraq are but one link in a chain of attacks -- [currently] in preparation -- on the countries of the region, including Syria, Iran, Egypt and Sudan. However, the preparations for the division of the Land of the Two Holy Places [i.e., Saudi Arabia] constitutes the main part of their plan. This, we know, is a long-standing strategic aim [which has existed] ever since [Saudi Arabia] transferred its dependence from Great Britain to the United States six decades ago.

Three decades ago America tried to achieve this goal in the wake of the War of the Tenth of Ramadan [i.e., the Arab-Israeli war of 1973], when President Nixon threatened to invade the Land of the Two Holy Places. He was not successful at the time, thank God. However, with the start of the second Gulf War the Americans established important and dangerous military bases which have spread throughout the Land of the Two Holy Places, particularly in the area of the capital, and nothing remains [now] except for them to divide it up. Now it appears that they feel the time for it has come. We put our trust in God.

In conclusion: the American targeting of the area in general and specifically the division of the Land of the Two Holy Places is not just a passing summer cloud; it is a strategic aim which deceitful American policy has never lost sight of. What preparations have the governments of the regions made to oppose this aggressive strategic objective? Nothing worthy of mention, except for increased loyalty to the Crusaders. To this we should add the meeting of the Arab ministers for internal affairs [in Tunis, on January 13th, 2003] which was convened for the purpose of combating the *Mujahidin* and further beleaguering the honest '*ulama* and preachers who are trying to warn the Nation and rouse it to defend itself.

One of the most important objectives of the new Crusader attack is to pave the way and prepare the region, after its fragmentation, for the establishment of what is known as 'the Greater State of Israel,' whose borders will include extensive areas of Iraq and

Egypt, through Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, all of Palestine and large parts of the Land of the Two Holy Places.

Come let me tell you what is meant by ‘Greater Israel’ and what disasters will beset the region. What is happening to our people in Palestinian is merely a model which the Zio-American alliance wishes to impose upon the rest of the region: the killing of men, women and children, prisons, terrorism, the demolition of homes, the razing of farms, the destruction of factories. People live in perpetual fear and paralyzing terror, awaiting death at any moment from a missile or shell which will destroy their homes, kill their sisters and bury their babies alive. What response shall we make to God tomorrow [on the Day of Judgment]? What is happening there is unbearable [even] for able-bodied men - is it not even harder for the enfeebled mothers who see their children killed before their very eyes? We come from God, and unto Him we shall return. We put our trust in God. Oh God, I beg you [to save us] from the actions of the Jews, the Christians the treacherous rulers and their ilk, and I apologize to you for the actions of those who fail to take part in the struggle for Islam.

The founding of ‘Greater Israel’ means the surrender of the countries of the region to the Jews. Come let me tell you who the Jews are. The Jews have lied about the Creator, and even more so about His creations. The Jews are the murderers of the prophets, the violators of agreements, of whom God said: *Every time they make a promise under oath, some of them violated it; most of them are unbelievers.* These are the Jews: usurers and whoremongers. They will leave you nothing, neither this world nor religion. God said of them: *Have they a share in [God’s] dominion? If they have, they will not give up so much [of it] as would equal a spot on the stone of a date.* Such are the Jews who, in accordance with their religion, believe that human beings are their slaves and that those who refuse [to recognize this] should be put to death. God said of them: *They said: ‘We need not fulfill any undertaking to these unlettered people [i.e., non-Jews]. They deliberately attributed falsehood to God.*

These are some of the Jews’ qualities, of which you must beware, and these are some of the features of the Crusader plot, which you must resist. Now, what can be done to block the evil of the infidels and save the Muslim lands? In response I say -- [though] success comes only from God, as His prophet Shu‘ayb said: ‘I wish only to set things right insofar as it is in my power, and my way will prosper only with the help of God, on whom I rely and to whom I appeal’. *Jihad* for the sake of God is the way to stop the infidels, as God said: *Fight for the sake of God, you are accountable only for yourself, and urge the believers [to join the Jihad]. Perhaps God will curb the might of the infidels; God is most mighty and most capable of inflicting punishment.*

First of all, I am happy to tell you that the [Islamic] Nation today possesses tremendous forces sufficient to save Palestine and the rest of the Muslim lands. However, these forces are shackled, and action must be taken to liberate them. The [Islamic] Nation has been promised victory, but if victory is delayed, it will be because of our sins and because we failed to help the cause of God. God said: ‘If you help [the cause of] God, he will give you victory and strengthen your position.’

The [Islamic] Nation has also been promised victory over the Jews, as the Prophet Muhammad has told us: ‘The Day of Judgment will not arrive until the Muslims fight the Jews and kill them, until the Jew hides behind the stones and the trees; and each

stone or tree will say: Oh Muslim, Oh servant of God, there is a Jew hiding behind me, come and kill him; apart from the *gharqad*, which is the tree of the Jews.’ This *hadith* also teaches [us] that the conflict with the enemy will be settled by killing and warfare, and not by disabling the potential of the Nation for decades by a variety of means such as the deception of democracy.

After these tidings, I want to tell you about a number of things which help us in our *Jihad* for the sake of God, and among them I will mention some of the campaigns and wars in which the Muslims have been victorious in the past two decades, in order to strengthen the self-confidence of the Nation’s sons - an important element in mobilizing the Nation to defend itself against the Crusader-Zionist alliance. The truth is that the Muslim Nation can be the greatest human force if [the Nation] genuinely observes the precepts of Islam. This has been historically proved in previous centuries. [The Muslim Nation] is capable of fighting and resisting the so-called ‘great powers.’

First of all, however, I should like to mention an event which is related to combating the great powers. The Prophet’s biographers related that al-Muthanna al-Shaybani came to Medina to ask the Caliph for reinforcements in his battle against the Persians. Caliph ‘Umar tried for three days to summon people, but no-one went forth [to battle]. ‘Umar understood that the people suffered from a complex with regard to waging war on great powers and he ordered al-Muthanna to tell the people of the victory which God had given him over the Persians, in order to dispel fear from their hearts. Al-Muthanna stood up, spoke and spurred on the warriors, saying, amongst other things: ‘Oh people, do not be afraid, we have already mocked the Persians, we have overcome them and have captured the better of the two sides [i.e., the western side] of the agricultural region of Iraq, we have crossed [their camp] and done them harm; others before us have dared to stand against them, and, if God so wills, others will do so after us.’ The people’s enthusiasm was kindled, and Abu ‘Ubayd al-Thaqafi stood up, the Caliph gave him the standard and the people followed him.

Like these exalted heroes I say: Oh people, do not fear America and its army. By God, we have struck them time and time again, and they have been defeated time after time. In combat they are the most cowardly of people. Our defense and our war against the American enemy have shown that [America’s] warfare is mainly psychological in nature, because of the vast propaganda apparatus at its disposal. It is also based upon intensive bombing from the air, which is designed to conceal its most obvious weakness: cowardice and the American soldier’s lack of fighting spirit. Were it not for the need for brevity, I would tell you almost unbelievable stories of this from our fighting against them in Tora Bora and Shahi-Khot in Afghanistan. May God make it possible to go into this in detail [in the future].

First of all I should like to remind you of the defeats suffered by a number of the great powers at the hands of the *Mujahidin*. I want to remind you of the defeat of the former Soviet Union, of which nothing remained after ten years of hard fighting by the Afghans and those Muslims who came to their aid, by the grace of God. Similarly, the Russian defeat in Chechnya, where the *Mujahidin* displayed the finest examples of self-sacrifice. The Chechen *Mujahidin*, together with their Muslim brethren, deflated the Russians’ pride and caused them loss after loss. Beaten, they withdrew after the first war. Later the Russians returned with American support, and Russia is still suffering

heavy losses because of a small group of believers, whom, we pray, God will support and make victorious.

I should also like to remind you of the defeat of the American forces in the year 1402 of the Muslim calendar [1982], when the Israelis invaded Lebanon. The Lebanese resistance sent a truck full of explosives to the American Marines' center in Beirut and killed over 240 of them, may they go to hell and to a bitter end.

Later, after the second Gulf War, the Americans sent their forces into Somalia, where they killed thirteen thousand Somalis. There is no power and no strength save in God. Then the lions of Islam awoke among the Afghan Arabs and they came to the aid [of the Somalis] and, together with their brothers in that country, they dragged America's pride through the mud. They killed them, they destroyed their tanks and brought down their planes. America and her allies fled under cover of night, each avoiding looking at the others. Praise and thanks be to God!

At the same time young *Mujahidin* prepared explosive charges [for use] against the Americans in Aden. When they went off, the cowards had no choice but to flee within 24 hours. Later, in the year 1415 of the Muslim calendar [1995], there was an explosion in Riyadh in which four Americans were killed. This sent a clear message that the local people were opposed to the American policy of support for the Jews and the occupation of the Land of the Two Holy Places.

The following year there was another explosion in al-Khobar [Saudi Arabia], in which nineteen people were killed and over four hundred wounded. As a result, the Americans were forced to move their large bases from the towns to the desert. In the year 1418 of the Muslim calendar [1998] the *Mujahidin* publicly threatened America, [hoping this] would cause it to stop supporting the Jews and to depart the Land of the Two Holy Places. The enemy rejected the warning and the *Mujahidin* managed, through the grace of God, to deliver two tremendous blows in east Africa. Later America was warned again, but paid no heed, and God sent success to the *Mujahidin* who, in a tremendous act of self-sacrifice, annihilated the American destroyer Cole in Aden. This was a resounding slap in the face for the American military establishment. This operation also revealed the fact that the Yemeni government, like that of the other countries in the region, had collaborated [with the U.S.].

Later the *Mujahidin* saw that the gang of black-hearted criminals in the White House was misrepresenting the event, and that their leader, who is a fool whom all obey, was claiming that we were jealous of their way of life, while the truth - which the Pharaoh of our generation conceals - is that we strike at them because of the way they oppress us in the Muslim world, especially in Palestine and Iraq, and because of their occupation of the Land of the Two Holy Places. When the *Mujahidin* saw this they decided to act in secret and to move the battle right into his [the U.S. president's] country and his own territory.

On that blessed Tuesday, the 23rd of *jumada al-thani*, 1422, which corresponds to 11 September 2001, while the Zionist-American alliance was still using American tanks and planes and Jewish hands to reap [the lives] of our sons and our people in the land of al-Aqsa [i.e. Palestine]; while our sons in Iraq were dying as a result of the oppression of the unjust siege [inflicted on them] by America and her agents; and while

the Muslim world was still very far from genuinely supporting Islam; while things were in this state of frustration, desperation and procrastination -- on the part of the Muslims, with the exception of those on whom God had had mercy -- and a state of injustice, arrogance and aggression -- on the part of the Zio-American alliance; and while the land of Uncle Sam, heedless in its transgressions, bellowing its tyranny, 'puffed up its cheeks in contempt of the people and strutted merrily on the face of the earth,' without paying heed to anyone, believing that nothing could harm it -- then disaster struck them.

Come let me tell you what that terrible disaster means: the 'unkept of hair and dusty of foot' pounced -- they who are everywhere hunted down, young men who believed in their Lord, whom God had guided to the right path, whose hearts He had strengthened and filled with faith. [These young men, when it comes to acting] for God's cause, do not fear 'the reprimands of those who seek to find fault' because they desire only God's recompense; their hearts do not allow them to close to injustice; they sacrifice their lives, but never their honor.

They carried out the raid by means of enemy planes in a courageous and splendid operation the like of which mankind had never before witnessed. They smashed the American idols and damaged its very heart, the Pentagon. They struck the very heart of the American economy, rubbed America's nose in the dirt and dragged its pride through the mud. The towers of New York collapsed, and their collapse precipitated an even greater debacle: the collapse of the myth of America the great power and the collapse of the myth of democracy; people began to understand that American values could sink no lower. The myth of the land of freedom was destroyed, the myth of American National security was smashed and the myth of the CIA collapsed, all praise and thanks to God.

One of the most important positive results of the raids on New York and Washington was the revelation of the truth regarding the conflict between the Crusaders and the Muslims. [The raids] revealed the strength of the hatred which the Crusaders feel towards us, as the two raids peeled the lamb's skin off the back of the American wolf and revealed the hideous truth. The whole world awoke from its slumber, and the Muslims were alerted to the importance of the principle which states that positions of alliance or hostility may be taken [only] for the sake of God. The spirit of religious brotherhood among Muslims was likewise strengthened, which constitutes a great step forward along the road towards uniting Muslims under the banner of monotheism in order to establish the rightly-guided Caliphate, God willing. People discovered that it was possible to strike at America, that oppressive power, and that it was possible to humiliate it, to bring it into contempt and to defeat it. For the first time, the majority of the American people [now] understand the truth of the Palestinian issue and that what hit them in Manhattan is a result of the oppressive policy of their government.

To sum up: America is a great power possessed of tremendous military might and a wide-ranging economy, but all this is built upon an unstable foundation which can be targeted, with special attention to its obvious weak spots. If it [America] is hit in one hundredth of those spots, God willing, it will stumble, wither away and relinquish world leadership and its oppression.

A small group of young Islamic [fighters] managed, despite the international alliance drawn up against them, to provide people with [concrete] proof of the fact that it is possible to wage war upon and fight against a so-called 'great power.' They managed to protect their religion and effectively to serve the objectives of their Nation better than the governments and peoples of the fifty-odd countries of the Muslim world, because they used *Jihad* as a means to defend their faith. As Abu Hilala said: 'Victory has its reasons, as does defeat, and any means which brings victory is worthwhile; the paths which lead to exalted ends are different, and the shortest of them is that which sheds blood and which has noble people [standing] at both its sides.'

Thanks to God, many people in the [Muslim] Nation resemble those young heroes, but they are held in check, and we must all work together to release them from their bonds, so that they can burst forth as *Mujahidin* for the sake of God, because *Jihad* is the way to might and security for the [Muslim] Nation. The limitations and the obstacles standing in the way of the [Muslim] Nation's young men [and preventing them] from erupting into *Jihad* are many, and we shall discuss [only] the most important.

Before anything else, I want to quote a *hadith* from the two authoritative collections of traditions. Those who followed it took [the straight path], and those who deviated from it were lost. The Prophet said: 'What brought about the destruction of your predecessors was, that when a respected man from among them stole, they took no action; but when a weak man from among them stole, they punished him in accordance with the law.' Take note, oh wise ones: this is one of the reasons for our destruction.

I should also like to mention the story of Khalid [ibn al-Walid]'s conversion to Islam, in order to free [your] thought from blind obedience. He was asked, after his belated conversion: 'Where was your wisdom, Oh Khalid, that you did not perceive the light of prophecy which had been among you for twenty years?' Khalid replied: 'We were led by men whose intellect appeared to us like mountains.'

The Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal said: 'A lack of understanding is when a man imitates [others] in his religious belief.'

Our generation is shackled and barred [from action], firstly by those rulers and false witnesses among the impious '*ulama*, the palace lackeys, the hired pens and their ilk. As far as the rulers are concerned, it is generally agreed that they are powerless and treacherous. To those who demand that people be loyal to these rulers despite all this, we ask: have the peoples ever withdrawn their allegiance to these rulers, so that they can be advised restore their allegiance to them? This has [never] happened, and the result is as you see: we are dominated by unbelievers, and it has already been said that 'He who is unable to foresee consequences in tranquil times will never plan well when the situation gets out of control.'

Our quarrel with the rulers is not a minor disagreement which can be solved, as we are speaking of the main principle of Islam: of the *shahada* [i.e. the Muslim profession of faith] [which states that] 'there is no God but God and Muhammad is God's Prophet.' These rulers have violated the very basis of [this principle] by allying themselves with unbelievers, by passing man-made laws and by approving and applying the infidel laws of the UN. As far as religious law is concerned, their rule has long been null and void, and it is impossible to remain under their dominion. This is not the time or the place to

go into details, but we have mentioned the words of the *'ulama*, may God have mercy upon them, in manifesto number 17 of the Authority for Counsel and Reform.

After this, we ask: is it conceivable that a Muslim should tell [other] Muslims: be loyal to [President] Karzai [of Afghanistan] and cooperate with him so as to establish Islam, remove oppression and prevent America from carrying out her evil schemes? It is inconceivable, because Karzai is a collaborator who was brought in by the Americans, and so to support him against the Muslims is one of the ten acts which violate Islam and exclude the perpetrator from the Muslim community. We ask: what is the difference between Karzai of the *'ajam* [i.e. the non-Arab peoples] and Karzai of the Arabs? Who appointed the rulers of the Gulf States? The Crusaders. Those who appointed Karzai of Kabul and shaped Karzai of Pakistan appointed Karzai of Kuwait, Karzai of Bahrain, Karzai of Qatar and the other states. Those who appointed Karzai of Riyadh one hundred years ago and brought him in after he had been a refugee in Kuwait to fight alongside them against the Ottoman state and its [provincial] governor Ibn al-Rashid - were the Crusaders. They still protect this family [i.e., the Saudi royal family]. There is no difference between Karzai of Riyadh and Karzai of Kabul. Take note, oh wise ones: 'Are your unbelievers better than these? Or [do you believe that] they have been given acquittal in the holy books?'

The rulers who want to solve our problems, one of the most important of which is the Palestinian issue, by means of the UN or the dictates of the USA, as was the case with the initiative of Prince Abdallah ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz in Beirut, on which all the Arabs agreed - an initiative by means of which he sold out the blood of the martyrs and the territory of Palestine in order to please the Jews and America and in order to support them against the Muslims - these rulers have betrayed God and his Prophet, and they have expelled themselves from the Muslim community and betrayed the [Muslim] Nation.

I also say: Those who want to solve our problems by means of these impotent and treacherous rulers are deluding themselves and misleading their Nation. They rely on those [rulers] who acted tyrannically, erring [themselves] and leading others into flagrant error. The best that can be said of them is that they are impotent and depraved. Muslims should admonish them, and if they do not heed the admonition, then they [the Muslims] should beware of them and warn others about them.

It is also incumbent on all Muslims to disavow these tyrannical rulers. It is well known that to disavow these tyrants is not merely a supererogatory meritorious act; rather, it is one of the two pillars of monotheism without which Islam cannot stand firmly. God said: 'He who renounces tyranny and believes in God - he surely grasps a firm support. God hears all and knows all.'

As for the corrupt *'ulama*, the palace lackeys, the pens for hire and their ilk - as the saying goes: every generation has its [own] regime and its own men. These [are] men [in the service] of the regime who distort the truth and bear false witness even in the holy city [Mecca], even in the holy house [of the Ka'ba], even in the holy month. There is no power and no strength save in God. They claim that these treacherous rulers are our custodians. There is no power and no strength save in God. They say this in order to bolster up the regime. These *'ulama* have surely strayed from the right path. [A Muslim] should distance himself from them and warn others about them.

The regime bases itself upon its *'ulama* and puts them on religious programs dealing with *fatwas* only because, every now and again, it needs them for just a few minutes to provide legitimacy for its actions, as was the case when the [Saudi] king opened up the Land of the Two Holy Places to the Americans: he gave instructions to his *'ulama*, and [on his orders] they issued that disastrous *fatwa* which violated the [laws of] Islam, mocked the intelligence of the Muslims, and supported his treacherous action in [causing] this grave disaster. It is because of that destructive decision [by the Saudi king] and that hypocritical *fatwa* that the Nation now suffers all the catastrophes, fear and threats that it is [now] suffering. Those who read the biographies of sincere religious teachers in times of trial, such as the biography of Ahmad ibn Hanbal and others, God's mercy upon them, recognize the difference between *'ulama* who practice what they teach and those *'ulama* who flatter [those in power] -- as one can read in *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala'* and other books.

The poet said: 'We patch our world by tearing our religion to pieces; neither our religion survives nor that which we are patching.'

The second barrier [to *Jihad*] are the *'ulama* and preachers who love Truth and loathe falsehood, but refrain from participating in *Jihad*; they have devised interpretations and have turned the young people against taking part in *Jihad*. There is no power and no strength save in God. These men watched the falsehood spread and grow, and summoned each other to fulfill their obligation to support Truth, to command [the doing of] good and forbid [the doing of] evil. Many have been instructed by them in the right path and in religious knowledge. They did well, and may God reward them for it. But falsehood cannot tolerate Truth or its people, and [the false rulers] began to obstruct them and frighten them; [they] prevented them from teaching and delivering sermons, they dismissed them from their posts and finally imprisoned those who persisted in continuing to obey the command to [do] good and forbid evil.

These severe pressures gradually caused [people] to stray from the right path, except for those upon whom God had mercy. This is only natural, as a man cannot make the right decision when conditions are not right, especially where [his own] safety [is concerned]. As the Prophet said: 'A judge shall not pronounce judgment between two people at a time when he is angry.' If this may be said of a person who is angry, is it not much more applicable to a person who is afraid?

The [tactics of] terror which the Arab states use against their people have destroyed all [aspects of] life, including matters of Islam, because Islam means giving counsel, and one cannot give counsel when one is not safe. Fear has split the people [i.e., the religious scholars] into groups, some of which I shall [now] describe:

One group has lapsed; it has joined the regime and supported it. There is no power and no strength save in God.

Another group thought that they would not possibly be able to continue to preach and teach, to secure their institutes or associations, or to secure their [own] lives, standing and money, unless they praised the tyrant; so they devised corrupt interpretations, and thus they fell into glaring error, and caused many [other] people to err.

Another group has been protected by God from placating and flattering the treacherous rulers; they persisted in remaining under the banner of ‘commanding [the doing of] good and forbidding [the doing of] evil.’ They made commendable efforts in preaching the cause of God. However, the pressures we mentioned above were very heavy and [this group] have not prepared themselves to bear the burdens [of the cause], whose two most important duties are *hijra* and *Jihad*. In the past two decades they have had the opportunity [to perform *hijra* and *Jihad*], but they did not avail themselves of it. Thus they lost the ability to make the right decision in these difficult days, except for those upon whom God has had mercy. Therefore, we see that some of them, to this day, have not decided in favor of *Jihad* and resistance. According to the Qur’an and the biography of the Prophet, God’s prayers and peace upon him, and the biographies of his noble Companions -- may God be pleased with them -- supporting the Religion [of Islam] involves grave obligations and distinct qualities. He who does not have these qualities cannot act in support of Religion. God the Exalted mentions these qualities in the Qur’an, saying, among other things: ‘Oh you who have embraced Islam, whosoever among you lapses from his faith, God shall bring other people who love Him and whom He loves, who will be humble toward the Believers and stern toward the unbelievers; they will engage in *Jihad* for the sake of God without fearing any reproach from anyone. Such is the grace of God; He bestows it upon whomever He will. God is munificent and omniscient.’

In the conversation between Waraqa ibn Nawfal and the Prophet, Waraqa said: ‘I wish I were a young man at it [that is, at the beginning of your mission], so that I would still be alive when your people expel you.’ The Prophet then asked: ‘Are they really going to expel me?’ Waraqa said: ‘Yes. There has never been a man who brought a revelation like yours, who was not treated with enmity. If the day of your expulsion comes while I am still alive, I shall give you my full support.’

[We see then that] the [natural] condition of those who truly want to take upon themselves the [obligations of] Islam is enmity from the people of falsehood, not coexistence with them. There is no power and no strength save in God. He who wishes to uphold Islam should strive on its behalf, and be prepared to sacrifice life and possessions for its sake, as Waraqa said: ‘If your day comes when I am still alive, I shall fully support you.’ This was also the situation at the time of the oath of Aqaba. To struggle for Islam does not mean just giving lectures; Islam cannot be sustained by crumbs of our time and money. Indeed, God’s reward is precious, and there is a great difference between sitting and giving lectures and sacrificing one’s life for the sake of God. This is why al-’Abbas ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib, who [at the time] still professed the [polytheistic] religion of his people, wanted to be assured that his nephew Muhammad, God’s prayers and peace be upon him, was safe with the *Ansar*. He [therefore] said to the *Ansar*: ‘If you are people of strength and perseverance, versed in war and [prepared] to withstand alone the hostility of all the Arabs, for they will shoot you with one bow.’

I say [therefore]: The [early] Believers needed these qualities in order to defend God’s messenger, God’s prayers and peace be upon him, and today, too, they are necessary in order to defend the religion of God’s messenger. When al-’Abbas concluded his speech, al-Barra’ ibn Ma’rur of the *Ansar* said: ‘We heard what you said. By God, had there been in our hearts something other than what we have said, we would have said it. What we want is to keep our word, to be truthful and to sacrifice our lives to defend

the messenger of God.’ I say [therefore]: Islam is sustained by loyalty, truthfulness and self-sacrifice for the sake of the Way [i.e., Islam]. And when they [the *Ansar*] stood up to swear allegiance, As’ad ibn Zurara said: ‘Act not in haste, Oh people of Yathrib. We spurred our mounts towards him only after we had recognized that he was the messenger of God. To take him out [of Mecca] now means [risking] conflict with all the Arabs, the death of your best men and being bitten by swords. So, if you can endure all this – then take him and your reward is with God; but if you are afraid for yourselves, leave him, and God will excuse you.’ They answered: ‘O As’ad, give your hand on our behalf [to swear allegiance]; by God, we shall not abandon or forsake this undertaking.’

Such were the qualities of those who wanted to defend and keep up the religion of Islam, may God be pleased with them; and the same is true today. The *Mujahidin* say to the ‘*ulama* and preachers who love the truth and do not flatter falsehood: you have raised the banner of Islam and you know that it is truly the religion of God’s messenger and that bearing it truly means conflict with all Arab governments and all non-Arab governments throughout the world, the killing of your best men and the bite of the sword. Now, if you can endure all this, uphold the banner and your reward is with God; but, if you are afraid for yourselves, abandon the banner of defense and fighting, but do not stand in the way of the youth of the [Muslim] Nation to keep them from [waging] *Jihad* for the sake of God. God will then excuse you.

Now, let me talk about what is incumbent upon Muslims in the face of this Crusader-Zionist war against the Nation of Islam. God has said: *Fight for the sake of God, you are accountable only for yourself, and urge the believers [to join the Jihad], perhaps God will ward off the might of the infidels; God is most mighty and most capable of inflicting punishment.*

The most important religious duty – after belief itself – is to ward off and fight the enemy aggressor. Shaykh al-Islam [Ibn Taymiyya], may God have mercy upon him, said: ‘To drive off the enemy aggressor who destroys both religion and the world – there is no religious duty more important than this, apart from belief itself.’ This is an unconditional rule.

Jihad is obligatory now for the Islamic Nation, which is in a state of sin unless it gives of its sons, its possessions and its powers whatever is required to maintain *Jihad*, which will preserve all Muslims in Palestine and elsewhere from the military might of the infidels. It is incumbent on the Muslims to engage in *Jihad* so as to establish the truth and abrogate falsehood – each according to his capability. God’s messenger said in Muslim’s reliable book: ‘Whosoever fights them [the enemies of Islam] with his arm is a believer, whosoever fights them with his tongue is a believer and whosoever fights them in his heart is a believer, but there is not even the slightest measure of belief without this [that is, without at least one of the three].’

This sublime *hadith* embraces all Believers. Since we are Believers, we are [necessarily] *Mujahidin* for the sake of God on behalf of Islam. Hence, a Muslim who is unable to engage in *Jihad* with his hand or tongue must engage in *Jihad* in his heart. This means that he should incessantly hate God’s enemies and curse them, [just] as he should constantly be loyal to the Believers and the *Mujahidin*; he should pray for them and feel the brotherhood of belief that binds him to all Muslims everywhere in the

world, in both east and west. He should feel that the Believers are in one tent and that the infidels are in another, until God bestows on the [Islamic] Nation one government which will unite all Muslims under its banner, God willing. He [who engages in *Jihad* in his heart] should [at least] urge himself to engage in *Jihad* with his hand and his tongue. This [*Jihad* of the mind] is the weakest kind of Islamic faith. He should boycott products [manufactured by] the Americans and their allies. The Believer should be particularly careful not to support falsehood because assisting infidels against other Muslims [even] if only verbally is flagrant unbelief, as has been determined by the scholars. He should beware of those of whom God said: ‘God knows those of you who hold the others back; who say to their brethren: Come, join us! and seldom take part in the fighting.’ He should not add the grave sin of discouraging [others] to the grave sin of avoiding *Jihad*.

Today personal participation in *Jihad*, though it is incumbent on the [Islamic] Nation as a whole, is especially emphasized where young men are concerned, rather than with regard to the middle-aged and elderly. Likewise, the obligation to participate financially in *Jihad* is emphasized primarily with regard to the wealthy. God, in His grace, has opened the heart of many of our young people to engage in *Jihad* for His sake and to defend His religion and His servants [the Muslims]. It is incumbent upon the Nation to help them, encourage them and facilitate things for them, so that they can defend it and protect it from injustice, shame and sin. It must also maintain the current *Jihad* and support it with all its might, which is very difficult, as we can see in Palestine, Chechnya, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Indonesia, the Philippines and other Muslim lands. The banner of *Jihad* would not remain aloft there in the face of the enemies’ cruel attack, were it not – besides God’s grace – for the immense sacrifice of suffering, blood and torn bodies, may God accept them as martyrs.

I am happy to tell you that the *Jihad* in Afghanistan is going well, thank God, and that things are improving in favor of the *Mujahidin*, thanks to God. We are now in the second year of fighting, and America has not managed to accomplish its objectives; on the contrary, it has become embroiled in the Afghan swamp. What America regarded in the first months [of the war] as a victory, after it took control of the cities evacuated by the *Mujahidin* [has turned out to be something quite different]. Military experts in general, and those familiar with Afghanistan in particular, know that this was a tactical withdrawal, which suited the nature of the Taliban state and the nature of the Afghans who have a long history of guerrilla warfare. The Taliban state had no regular army to defend the cities. Therefore, the Afghans relied – after placing their trust in God – on their [greatest] strength, namely, their ability to conduct guerrilla warfare from the depths of their impassable mountains, using the same tactics with which, thanks to God, they had previously defeated the Soviet army. This became an established fact after the guerrilla operations began, and their number has now reached an average of two operations per day. The Americans are now in real trouble: they are unable to defend their own forces, nor can they establish a state capable of protecting its own president - let alone anyone else.

By the grace of God, coordination among all the *Mujahidin* has been achieved in the past year, and all engage enthusiastically in *Jihad* and consider it a duty. If their means were not so limited, they could increase the number of daily operations to that of their earlier *Jihad* against the Russians, and which the Americans would not be able to endure. Hence it is incumbent on the [Islamic] Nation today to support *Jihad* in

general, and [specifically] in Palestine and Afghanistan. These pivotal [areas] are highly important, and we should focus on them, so as to exhaust the Jews, who are the Americans' allies, and so as to exhaust the Americans, who are allied with the Jews. America's defeat in Afghanistan will be, God willing, the beginning of its end.

You shall suffer no harm from us nor from our brethren the Afghan *Mujahidin*, God willing. We hope that we shall suffer no harm from you. The [Islamic] Nation is now facing a battle for God, in which there should be no display of either weakness or evil-doing. The forces of the Muslims will gather against the forces of the infidels. Now is the time to repent of sins and transgressions. It is likewise incumbent upon the Nation, now that it's facing this crucial issue – which is very serious and no joking matter – to give up a life of fun and enjoyment, extravagance and luxury. It [the Islamic Nation] should toughen itself and prepare itself for real life, a life of killing and war, of shooting and hand-to-hand combat. Here is what Shaykh al-Islam said with regard to a situation of internal conflict similar to the one in which we find ourselves. He said: 'You should know, may God render you successful, that, according to an authentic tradition transmitted from the Prophet by many chains [of transmitters], [the Prophet] said: 'There will always be within my Nation a group which knows the truth, who are not affected by whosoever abandons them or opposes them until the Day of Judgment.'

In this *fitna* [internal strife] people have split into three groups: [1] those who will triumph with God's help, i. e., those who are waging *Jihad* against the [aforementioned] corrupt people. [2] The disobedient, i. e., those [corrupt] people [whom we have just mentioned] and those who joined them from among the feeble-minded so-called Muslims. [3] The laggards, i. e., those who refrain from joining the *Jihad*, even though they are true Muslims. Let every one [of you] examine whether he belongs to the 'triumphant group,' the 'laggards' or the 'disobedient group,' for there is no fourth one.

He, may God have mercy on him, also said: By God, if the early Muslims from among the *Muhajirun* and the *Ansar*, such as Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman, 'Ali and others, were alive today, they would regard fighting against those criminals as one of the most virtuous acts. Only he who miscalculates will allow himself to miss such a battle; [by refraining] he makes a fool of himself and is deprived of immense reward in this life and in the hereafter.

I instruct the young people to exert every effort in *Jihad*, for it is they upon whom this duty primarily devolves, as was indicated by al-Shatibi in his al-Muwafaqat.

You should know that seeking to kill Americans and Jews everywhere in the world is one of the greatest duties [for Muslims], and the good deed most preferred by God, the Exalted.

I also bid them [the young people] to rally round the honest '*ulama* and the sincere preachers, that is, those who practice what they teach; I also counsel them to manage their affairs in secrecy, especially the military affairs of *Jihad*.

I am happy to inform all of you – and our brothers in Palestine in particular – that your brethren who are engaged in *Jihad* continue to pursue the way of *Jihad*, targeting the Jews and the Americans. The Mombasa operation is just the first drop which heralds

the approaching rain, God willing, may He be praised and exalted. We shall never abandon you. Go on, continue the fighting with God's blessing, and we too, with you, will continue to fight, God willing.

Before concluding, I urge myself, as I urge my Muslim brethren, to set their faces towards *Jihad*, for the sake of God, with the words of the poet:

I am leading my horse and casting him and myself this year into one of the battles

O Lord, when death arrives, let it not be upon a bier covered with green shrouds

Rather, let my grave be in the belly of a vulture, tranquil in the sky, among hovering vultures

I shall be martyr resting among a group of young men whom death will overtake in a terrible ravine

Horsemen of [the tribe of] Shayban, whom piety united, brave warriors alighting from their mounts [to fight face to face] when the two armies advance to meet each other

When they leave this world they will leave behind suffering and attain that which is promised in the Qur'an

Finally, I instruct myself and my Muslim brethren to fear God both privately and publicly, and to implore God and beseech him to accept our repentance and relieve us of our distress.

O Lord, give us your blessing in this world and in the next, and protect us from the fires of Hell.

We beseech God to free our captives from the hands of the Americans and their accomplices – foremost among them Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd al-Rahman and Shaykh Sa'id ibn Zu'ayr and our brethren in Guantanamo – and to strengthen the *Mujahidin* in Palestine and other Muslim lands. May they be victorious, and may He help us triumph over our enemy.

I also bid you, as I bid myself, to keep the name of God on your lips, to read the Qur'an often, and to ponder it, for it contains counsel from your Lord and healing for the heart, and guidance and mercy for the Muslims. God is all-powerful, but most people do not understand.

Our final word is: praise be to God, Lord of the universe."

2.3 Bin Ladin audiotape calling for suicide attacks, 8 April 2003

On Tuesday 8 April 2003, the news agency *Associated Press* (*AP*) reported that it had received a 27-minute audiotape purportedly recorded by Usama bin Ladin.²¹ *AP* said one of its journalists obtained the tape on Monday 7 April in North-Western Pakistan from an Algerian national identified only as “‘Adil”. The tape was not broadcast, and a complete transcript of the recorded statement does not seem to have been made available.

Security officials did not comment publicly on the question of the authenticity of the tape. *AP* wrote that an Arab-speaking Afghan who had met with Bin Ladin in the past said the voice sounded like that of the al-Qaida leader. The Algerian source said he had just crossed the border from Afghanistan, where the tape had been recorded. The tape itself contained no other indications as to where it had been made. The tape seemed to have been produced recently, because it contained references to the Iraq war as having taken place already.

According to *AP*, the Algerian messenger ‘Adil has an association with bin Ladin dating back to the 1980s, when ‘Adil worked in Peshawar with ‘Abdallah ‘Azzam. ‘Adil said he was in Pakistan to locate two colleagues arrested in early April 2003 in the northwestern city of Peshawar after FBI agents intercepted calls made from a cell phone.

AP described the message on the tape as “having a single theme”, namely suicide attacks. Moreover, the voice on the tape mentioned several countries and state leaders by name. It urged attacks on Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, criticized President George W. Bush and Prime minister Tony Blair for attacking Iraq, and accused Afghan President Hamid Karzai as well as the Saudi regime of being agents of America.

The following is an edited version of the available excerpts from the tape, as translated by *Associated Press*:²²

“O Muslim Brothers, let us promise to devote our lives to martyrdom in the way of God. America has attacked Iraq and soon will also attack Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Sudan. You should be aware the infidels cannot bear the existence of Muslims and want to capture their resources and destroy them.” [...]

“Get up and raise your weapons against America and Britain. If you hesitated today, you will be ashamed in front of God. The war in Iraq has two purposes: to capture the Islamic world and to secure Israel.” [...]

“America has decided to eliminate all Islamic movements, (and) kill their religious leadership. Let us get them out of the Arabs’ land. For this purpose, *jihad* is the only way because they have targeted Iraq after Afghanistan. You should avenge the innocent

²¹ Kathy Gannon, “Purported bin Laden Tape Urges Attacks,” *Associated Press*, 8 April 2003

²² “Excerpts From Purported bin Laden Tape,” *Associated Press* 8 April 2003, Kathy Gannon, “Purported bin Laden Tape Urges Attacks,” *Associated Press*, 8 April 2003,

children who have been assassinated in Iraq. You should avenge the demolished houses of Palestinians. I tell you to act upon the orders of God, be united against Bush and Blair and defeat them through suicide attacks so that you may be successful before God.”[...]

“It is a great pity that we are flattering the American troops and are apologizing for them. Beware, Afghanistan and Palestine are already in the custody of America and if this story is not given an end, we shall lose all the Muslim countries.” [...]

“America wants to take revenge for Somalia. America is a cowardly country. If you start suicide attacks, you will see the fear of Americans all over the world. One of the slaves of America is (President Hamid) Karzai in Afghanistan because he supported non-Muslims over Muslims. Pakistan, Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi are also agents of America. There is no difference between the Karzai of Riyadh and Kabul. All of them have been imposed upon you and *jihad* against them is your duty.” [...]

“I ask Muslim women to join the *jihad* by providing food to the *mujahidin*. The elders should pray for us. I am proud of those martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the sake of Islam. O God, give the Muslims success.” [...]

“Do not be afraid of their tanks and armored personnel carriers. These are artificial things. If you started suicide attacks you will see the fear of Americans all over the world. Those people who cannot join forces in *jihad* should give financial help to those *mujahidin* who are fighting against U.S. aggression.” [...]

2.4 Al-Zawahiri audiotape about collaborating Arab countries, 21 May 2003

On Wednesday 21 May 2003 the Arabic TV channel *al-Jazeera* broadcast an excerpt of an audio message allegedly recorded by Ayman al-Zawahiri.²³ The excerpt lasted 3 ½ minutes, and the total length of the recording was said to be 11-minutes. *Al-Jazeera* said they received the tape on 21 May but would not comment on how they obtained it.

Al-Zawahiri accused a number of countries in the Middle East - notably Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Egypt, Yemen, and Jordan - of helping the Americans in their war on Iraq. Furthermore, he singled out America, England, Australia and Norway as enemy countries, which should be attacked. He urged Muslims to learn from the 19 hijackers in the 9/11 operation and carry out more strikes against western targets.

²³ “Al-Zawahiri urges Muslims to emulate the September attacks”, *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 21 May 2003, (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=53873>); “Al-Qaeda’ urges fresh attacks”, *BBCNews.com*, 21 May 2003 (http://news.BBC.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/middle_east/3047457.stm); “Disagreement between fundamentalists over the date of recording of new al-Zawahiri tape”, *al-Sharq al-Awsat* [in Arabic], 22 May 2003 (<http://www.asharqalawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issue=8941&article=172211>); Neil Macfarquhar and Don Van Natta Jr., “New Tape, Linked To bin Laden Aide, Urges More Attacks”, *New York Times*, 22 May 2003

The statement represented the first sign of life from Ayman al-Zawahiri since a message published by the Associated Press on 9 October 2002.²⁴ *Al-Jazeera* immediately drew strong criticism from US authorities, who said it was “irresponsible” to broadcast the message. Reactions to the content of al-Zawahiri’s message were perhaps strongest in Norway, where officials and commentators were perplexed at seeing Norway included on al-Zawahiri’s list of recommended target countries.²⁵

The following is the *BBC*’s translation of the 3 ½ minute excerpt of the recording that was aired on *al-Jazeera*.²⁶

“After dividing Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Syria, and Pakistan will come next. They would leave around Israel only dismembered semi states that are subservient to the United States and Israel.

O Muslims, these are the facts that have been made clear to you. All the worn out and shabby masks have fallen. Here are the rulers of the Muslims with their airports, bases, and facilities. They allow their ships to pass in their water, provide them with fuel, food, and supplies and allow their planes to cross their airspace and to even take off from their airports. They welcome their armies to attack Iraq from their territories. The armies also advance from Kuwait. We have Qatar where the command of the campaign has taken up its headquarters. We also have Bahrain, which hosts the command of the Fifth Fleet. We have Egypt where war vessels pass through its canal. And we have Yemen that supplies the crusader vessels from its ports. And we have Jordan where the crusader forces are stationed and where Patriot missile batteries have been deployed to protect Israel. After all this, they shout with all hypocrisy and deception that they oppose the war on Iraq.

Protests will not do you any good, neither will demonstrations or conferences. Nothing will do you good, but toting arms and taking revenge against your enemies, the Americans and the Jews. Demonstrations will not... protect your jeopardised holy places or expel an occupying enemy, nor will they deter an arrogant aggressor. The crusaders and the Jews do not understand but the language of killing and blood. They do not become convinced unless they see coffins returning to them, their interests being destroyed, their towers being torched, and their economy collapsing.

²⁴ Thomas Hegghammer, *Dokumentasjon om al-Qaida*, FFI/Rapport 2002/01393 (<http://rapporter.ffi.no/rapporter/2002/01393.pdf>); “Al-Zawahiri’s uncle: we are happy that he is fine”, *al-Sharq al-Awsat* [in Arabic], 23 May 2003 (<http://www.asharqalawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issue=8942&article=172398>)

²⁵ “Threat unsettles Norway’s press”, *BBCNews.com*, 22 May 2003 (<http://news.BBC.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/europe/3050677.stm>); “Fundamentalists solve ‘the Norwegian Riddle’ in New al-Zawahiri tape; the reason is Mulla Krekar”, *al-Sharq al-Awsat* [in Arabic], 22 May 2003 (<http://www.asharqalawsat.com/details.asp?section=1&issue=8941&article=172275>); “Shock in Norway over al-Zawahiri statement and strong security measures around western embassies”, *al-Sharq al-Awsat* [in Arabic], 23 May 2003 (<http://www.asharqalawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issue=8942&article=172397>)

²⁶ “Al-Qaeda’s Statement: Full Text”, *BBCNews.com*, 21 May 2003 (http://news.BBC.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/middle_east/3047903.stm). According to Dr. Brynjar Lia, who studied the Arabic text in detail for the Norwegian government, the BBC’s translation is not entirely accurate.

O Muslims, take matters firmly against the embassies of America, England, Australia, and Norway and their interests, companies, and employees. Burn the ground under their feet, as they should not enjoy your protection, safety, or security. Expel those criminals out of your countries. Burn the ground under their feet, as they should not enjoy your protection, safety, or security. Expel those criminals out of your countries. Do not allow the Americans, the British, the Australians, the Norwegians, and the other crusaders who killed your brothers in Iraq to live in your countries, enjoy their resources, and wreak havoc in them. Learn from your 19 brothers who attacked America in its planes in New York and Washington and caused it a tribulation that it never witnessed before and is still suffering from its injuries until today.

O Iraqi people, we defeated those crusaders several times before and expelled them out of our countries and holy shrines. You should know that you are not alone in this battle. Your *mujahid* brothers are tracking your enemies and lying in wait for them. The *mujahidin* in Palestine, Afghanistan, and Chechnya and even in the heart of America and the West are causing death to those crusaders. The coming days will bring to you the news that will heal your breasts, God willing.”

2.5 Bin Ladin audiotope attacking Muslim scholars, 7 July 2003

On 7 July 2003, Islamist Internet sites posted a 96-minute audio recording of what was said to be the voice of Usama bin Ladin.²⁷ Shortly afterwards, an Arabic transcript of the first 20 minutes of the recording was posted and circulated on the radical Islamist web forums.²⁸ Curiously, the posting does not seem to have been noticed and covered by the international media, and hence no official comments on the tape’s authenticity have so far been published.

The following is an edited version of excerpts from the statement, as translated by the *Middle East Media Research Institute*:²⁹

“[...] Since the fall of the Islamic Caliphate state, regimes that do not rule according to the Qur’an have arisen. If truth be told, these regimes are fighting against the law of God. Despite the proliferation of universities, schools, books, preachers, imams, mosques, and [people who recite the] Qur’an, Islam is in retreat, unfortunately, because the people are not walking in the path of Muhammad [...]

In order to establish the Islamic state and spread the religion, there must be [five conditions], a group, hearing, obedience, *Hijra*, and *Jihad*. Those who wish to elevate Islam without *Hijra* and without *Jihad* sacrifices for the sake of God have not understood the path of Muhammad [...]

²⁷ See for example the 7 July 2003 posting on *al-Qal’a* at <http://www.qal3ati.net/vb/showthread.php?t=88483> (accessed 18 May 2005). The original link to the recording is now unfortunately broken (<http://www.jahra.org/free/131313/Hamza3.wma>).

²⁸ See for example the 7 July 2003 posting on *al-Qal’a* at <http://www.qal3ati.net/vb/showthread.php?t=88479> (accessed 18 May 2005)

²⁹ MEMRI Special Dispatch 539 (<http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP53903>)

We are in a situation of no longer having a country to which to make *Hijra*. There was an opportunity [to create such a country] – a rare opportunity. Since the fall of the Caliphate, the Crusaders made sure not to enable the true Islam to establish a state. God decreed that there be events in Afghanistan, and the U.S.S.R. attacked [Afghanistan]. The Crusaders relinquished their resolve [to prevent the establishment of an Islamic state] because of their fear of the U.S.S.R. [They] had no choice but to repel the U.S.S.R. by any and all means, even by means of the *Mujahidin*, the fundamentalists, and the young *Jihad* warriors of Islam.

Thus the gate opened. But unfortunately, a decade later, the [Islamic] nation – particularly the clerics, preachers, and sermonizers, and Islamic universities – did not meet the obligation. Those who came to the land of *Jihad* in order to support the Muslims and the *Mujahidin* were a small handful of the youth of the [Islamic] nation, in addition to the funds donated by some merchants; these were not sufficient to establish a strong country detached from geographical and tribal loyalties. Our Afghan brothers found themselves in a unique situation; an Islamic state could easily have been established according to Islamic, not national or geographic, standards. But unfortunately [...] this opportunity was lost, and the people did not take advantage of it. I mention this in order to tell you that it is not an easy thing, and that now conditions have become [even] harder.

Then, God made it possible to establish the Taliban state. The Taliban established [the state] and removed the conflict among the Afghans. They remained [in power] for six years, more or less. But the people remained captive to their fixed ideas and captive to the world media, which launched a mad attack on the Taliban and harmed their reputation [...]

Afghanistan is [but] a few hours away from the Arabian Peninsula, or from any of the countries of the Islamic world [...] but the Taliban state disappeared, and they did not lift a finger. I say that I am convinced that thanks to God, this nation has sufficient forces to establish the Islamic state and the Islamic Caliphate, but we must tell these forces that this is their obligation. Similarly, we need to tell the other forces, those who [are] restricting these forces, that they are sinning by restricting these forces [...]

There are people who say, and it is no secret, that *Jihad* does not require the [participation] of the entire nation; these words are true, but their intent is not. It is true that *Jihad* cannot include the entire nation today, and that repelling the aggressive enemy is done by means of a very small part of this nation; but *Jihad* continues to be a commandment incumbent personally upon every Muslim. But they [i.e. the clerics identified with the regimes] disagree with us [on] this ruling and say: ‘If we sent you a few thousand, you would not manage to take them in. It is not logical that we abandon all the breaches [on other fronts] and go, all of us, to wage *Jihad* [...]’

If *Jihad* becomes a commandment incumbent personally upon every Muslim, it [*Jihad*] rises to the top of the priorities, and there is no doubt of this, as Shaykh Al-Islam [Ibn Taymiya] said: ‘Nothing is a greater obligation than repelling the aggressive enemy who corrupts the religion and this world – except faith itself.’

There is no place to claim that if everyone went to *Jihad* it could not take them all in. This [claim] is the product of an abnormal flaw in Islamic religious law, and of the

abnormal submission to the [concepts of] this world. When the number of [*Mujahidin*] will be sufficient to repel the aggressive enemy, *Jihad* will automatically be transformed from a commandment incumbent personally upon every Muslim to a commandment incumbent upon all Muslims as a collective [...] He who claims that *Jihad* is a tremendous ritual but that there are other [important] rituals does not understand the path of Muhammad [...]

Most unfortunately, the young people who have the ability to sacrifice [themselves] for the religion are suffering by listening to and obeying Islamic clerics who refrain [from fulfilling the commandment of *Jihad*], even though such people must not be listened to or obeyed. Therefore, these forces [who obey these clerics] remain paralyzed; they [the clerics] incite them away from carrying out the commandment that is incumbent upon them personally and towards commandments incumbent upon the collective, such as study. [Even] if everyone became a cleric, there would be no religious revival that does not include [the five conditions of] a group, hearing, obedience, *Hijra* and *Jihad* [...]

Great evil is spreading throughout the Islamic world: the imams calling people to hell are those who appear more than others at the side of rulers in the region, the rulers of the Arab and Islamic world. Through the media and their own apparatuses, through their ruin of the country by their adoption of destructive ideas, and laws created by man [...] from morning to evening, they call the people to the gates of hell [...]

The heresy against God and His Prophet is being carried out before the eyes and ears of all in newspapers, television, radio, and symposiums, and none oppose it [...] In this situation, only one thing takes precedence over all other commandments, apart from faith itself [...] This immense obligation [i.e. *Jihad*] [...] has no place among the clerics today who do not speak of it. They all, except for those upon whom God had mercy, are busy handing out praise and words of glory to the despotic imams [i.e. Arab rulers] who disbelieved God and His Prophet. They send telegrams praising those rulers who disbelieve God and His Prophet. Their newspapers and media spread heresy against God and His Prophet. Other telegrams are sent from the rulers to these clerics, praising them for deceiving the nation.

The nation has never been as damaged by a catastrophe like the one that damages them today. In the past, there was imperfection, but it was partial. Today, however, the imperfection touches the entire public because of the communications revolution and because the media enter every home. No home, in [the] city or in [the] desert, was spared this *Fitna* [internal strife]. None will be spared [...]

The clerics are the prisoners and hostages of the tyrants. Some of them told me: 'We cannot speak the truth [because we are civil servants] [...]' Young people must understand the nature of the connection today between civil servants and the ruler. A civil servant is a civil servant [...] It is amazing that some object to our linking them with this tyrannical ruler when that is what they are [...]

The true role of some civil servants is to bear false witness. The role of the information minister, for example, is to bear false witness. He and his apparatus deceive the public every day and portray the country as the best country and the ruler as an unparalleled genius. Likewise, the defense minister deceives the people and bears false witness, saying that our situation is good and our armed forces are good, while we have been

under occupation for over a decade. The whole world knows we are under occupation and that the American planes take off whenever they want, with no prior notification, night or day, and then the defense minister comes to us and says: ‘We are independent, and no one uses our land without our approval.’ This is bearing false witness. God be praised, the people know that they are civil servants. Yet the danger does not come from the interior minister and his subordinates, because no matter what they do, they are unable to mislead anyone [...] because the people know they are lying to them and deceiving them.

The true danger is when the falsehood comes from the imams of the religion who bear false witness every morning and evening and lead the nation astray. This is all the more so when the false witness comes from the house of Al-Haram [the mosque in Mecca] and from the Ka‘ba [...]

Bearing false witness is one of the biggest sins on any piece of soil, all the more so when you bear false witness in the house of Al-Haram every Friday and at every opportunity in order to lead an entire nation astray for a handful of coins [...] How great is the sin of he who does this. They are civil servants to whom no reasonable person can turn [to] on religious matters. The least you can say about them, as Shaykh Muhammad bin ‘Abd al-Wahhab said, the least you can say about the clerics who defend the tyrants, is that they are corrupt. The people must boycott and banish them [...]

[They are mistaken], those who want to tell people that the religion exists even though the imam [i.e. ruler] disbelieved God and His Prophet a hundred years ago, ever since he rose through English strength, English support, English weapons, and English gold [i.e. the family of Hussein bin ‘Ali, who in World War I conspired against the Ottoman Caliphate with the British][...] It is inconceivable that there be faith, and that the religion will continue to rule, if the imam is an infidel. This must be clear: If the imam is an infidel [...] Islam ceases to exist and there must be an act that will elevate a [believing] imam [...]

The region’s rulers deceive us and support infidels and then claim they still cling to Islam. What increases this deceit is the establishment of bodies to lead the people astray. People may wonder how it is that bodies engaging in [studying] Islamic law and jurisprudence play this role, whether wittingly or unwittingly. The aim of the regime in putting some [unfaithful] clerics on satellite television and radio stations to issue *Fatwas* for the people is not [to spread knowledge of Islamic law] – were this the case, the regime would put the faithful clerics on satellite television and radio; the goal of these authorities [in putting the unfaithful clerics on television and radio] is to [use them] when necessary.

For example, when the regime decided to bring the American Crusader forces into the land of the two holy places [i.e. Saudi Arabia], and the youth raged, these bodies [the unfaithful clerics][...] issued *Fatwas* and praised the behavior of the ruler, whom they called *Wali Amr* [man of legitimate authority], while in truth he was not really *Wali Amr* over the Muslims. We must pay attention to this.

People may wonder and ask how it is possible that Shaykh ‘So-and-So,’ or ‘Anonymous,’ who is a respected elder shaykh with great knowledge of religion, could

sell out his religion for a meager sum from this world. I say that no man is protected from error. If we examine the history of the Islamic world over the past centuries, we will find that these instances recur [...] Many clerics have misled [people] because of threats of beating, imprisonment, or perhaps even death [by the regimes]; only a few stood fast, and one of these, as you know, is Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal [...]"

"The regime appropriates a huge budget for these bodies [i.e. the unfaithful clerics] whose role is to grant legitimacy to the regime [...] Imagine! The offices of the Clerics Authority [in Saudi Arabia] are adjacent to the royal palace, and the building of the *Fatwa* Authority of Al-Azhar is adjacent to Hosni Mubarak's Palace of the Republic [...] In such a situation [when even the offices are linked], is it reasonable to ask a civil servant, who receives his salary from the king? What is the ruling regarding the king, and should the king be regarded as supporting infidels? [...]"

Civil servants don a robe and take for themselves grand titles, but they are in fact civil servants [...] We learned from their books, where it says that one of the 10 acts that contradict Islam is supporting infidels. In closed forums, they speak to us candidly, but [in public] they are afraid, and give [other interpretations].

The spirit of martyrdom is our strength and our weapon for the sake of the survival of our religion, and for resistance to any domestic or foreign attempt to distort our religion.

Jihad is the way to attain truth and abolish falsehood. Therefore, the youth [...] who love the religion and sacrifice [themselves] for God must pay no attention to these civil servants and to those who refrain [from waging *Jihad*] [...] As a result of the communications revolution and the enormous advances in communication [...] the young people hear from a young age that Shaykh 'So-and-So' sent a telegram to the king, and the king sent him a telegram in return, and he appears at the king's right hand every Monday, and so on [...] The public is misled and says: 'If that king were no good, Shaykh 'So-and-So' would not visit him.' They disregard the fact that anyone who goes to see the king is a civil servant in the Royal Office or the Interior Ministry [and not an independent, faithful cleric] [...]"

There is nothing of Muhammad's religious Law in the religious law of the government clerics and sultans, and they do not understand the nature of the path of God. We must be aware that clinging to the religion requires us to show hostility to the people of falsehood [...]"

The faithful clerics possess characteristics described in the book of God [...] The most prominent characteristics are faith and *Jihad* for the sake of God [...] Those who do *Hijra*, and those who support God and His Prophet and wage *Jihad* for the sake of God, are the faithful ones [...] In contrast, the other clerics [are those who] see [and remain silent when] the rulers support infidels and [do not] rule in accordance with what was sent down by God, who praise the tyrants and ignore the bank towers next to the Al-Haram Mosque, that charge interest [which is forbidden in Islam] [...] No faithful cleric can claim that interest is not a great sin [...]"

A fundamental and realistic fact is that the land [of the holy places, i.e. Saudi Arabia] is occupied – and if it is occupied [by the U.S. military], the greatest commandment

after faith itself is to repel the aggressive enemy. Their [the rulers of Saudi Arabia] statements attest to their situation. In an interview with some world press agencies, [Saudi] Prince Talal bin ‘Abd al-‘Aziz said: ‘Were we to tell the American forces to leave, they wouldn’t.’ That is candor. Also, the Qatari foreign minister said: ‘If we tell the American government and the American forces to leave Qatar, we’ll be wiped off the map.’

The land is occupied in the full sense of the word. Yet despite this, people are busy with all sorts of [other] rituals. We must focus on making the starting point *Jihad* for the sake of God, guarding against those who refrain [from *Jihad*], and *Hijra* and *Jihad* for God. All these are obligatory in the present situation in order to establish the truth and abolish falsehood.”

2.6 Al-Zawahiri audiotape about Guantanamo Bay prisoners, 3 August 2003

On Sunday 3 August 2003 the Arabic TV channel *al-Arabiya* aired an audiotape containing what was believed to be a message from Ayman al-Zawahiri.³⁰ The TV station said it had received the tape late Saturday 2 August, but it provided no further details about its origin and total length. The CIA later stated that they believed the recording was authentic.³¹ The tape, which deals with the Muslim prisoners on Guantanamo Bay, seemed to be a response to Washington’s announcement on 3 July 2003 that it would start putting the detainees on military trials that could result in death sentences.³²

The statement warned the USA saying it would be punished for the harm done to Muslim detainees in Guantanamo Bay and elsewhere. The speaker urged Muslims to avenge the prisoners.

On 5 August, the Indonesian militant Islamist group *Jemaah Islamiyah* executed a car bomb attack on the Marriott Hotel in Jakarta. This led to some speculation over the possibility of a link between the al-Zawahiri statement and the timing of the Jakarta operation.³³

The following is an edited version of AP’s English translation of the statement broadcast on *al-Arabiya*:³⁴

³⁰ “Top al-Qaeda official: U.S. will pay dearly for harming Gitmo detainees”, *Associated Press*, 3 August 2003; “New Tape attributed to al-Zawahiri warns America it will pay dearly for any harm done to Guantanamo detainees”, *al-Sharq al-Awsat* [in Arabic], 4 August 2003 (<http://www.asharqalawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issue=9015&article=185438>).

³¹ Pam Benson, “CIA: Tape likely contains al Qaeda deputy’s voice”, *CNN*, 4 August 2003 (<http://www.CNN.com/2003/WORLD/meast/08/04/alqaeda.tape/index.html>)

³² “Bush designates six for possible trials by military tribunals”, *Associated Press*, 3 July 2003

³³ David Johnston, “Connection to Terror Threats Is Seen in Jakarta Bombing”, *New York Times*, 6 August 2003

³⁴ “Text of Alleged al-Qaida Audiotape,” *Associated Press*, 3 August 2003

“Muslim brothers everywhere [...] America has announced it will start putting Muslim prisoners in Guantanamo on trial before military courts that could sentence them to death. I swear by the almighty God [...] that Crusader America will pay dearly for any harm done to any of the Muslim prisoners it is holding.

With God’s help, all those who helped it [America] capture a prisoner or hand him to it or to any of its agents will also pay the price. Let it be clear to those who conspire with America that America cannot protect itself, let alone protect others.

Let every prisoner held by the infidels be sure that his release is a debt hanging from the neck of every *mujahid* and that the end of the ordeal is close, God willing. [And let every prisoner] know that his brothers, the *mujahidin*, have not forgotten that they will avenge him from the new Crusaders.

When America shackles the Muslim prisoners and tortures them, it is torturing itself. When it puts them on trial, it is putting its children on trial, and when it convicts them it is convicting its people. We don’t expect any justice, fairness, or commitment to morals or beliefs from America. It has shown the world an example of making light with principles, even those they were bound to by agreements.

But we tell America one thing: what you have seen until now is nothing but the first skirmishes. The real battle has not started yet. The American people whose armies have killed our women and children, if it is keen on its future and the future of its generations, has to take initiative and follow reason and logic before it is too late. They have been forewarned [...] Muslims everywhere, America and its agents are torturing your prisoners. Show them how you will avenge them.”

2.7 Videofootage of bin Ladin/al-Zawahiri and audiotape with al-Zawahiri, 10 September 2003

On Wednesday 10 September 2003, the Arab TV station *al-Jazeera* aired portions of a videotape showing Usama bin Ladin and Ayman al-Zawahiri, as well as extracts from a 12-minute audiotape featuring the alleged voice of Ayman al-Zawahiri.³⁵ The videotape shows the two al-Qaida leaders walking in rocky and mountainous terrain (see figure 2.1).

³⁵ “Tape from bin Ladin and al-Zawahiri to commemorate second anniversary of 11 September”, *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic] 10 September 2003 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=59947>) ; “Bin Ladin and al-Zawahiri praise the executors of the September attack”, *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic] 10 September 2003 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=59953>); “American intelligence study bin Ladin and al-Zawahiri tape”, *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 11 September 2003; David Teather, “New ‘Bin Laden’ videotape warns of real battle to come”, *The Guardian*, 11 September, 2003; “Little response to anti-Musharraf call”, *BBCNews.com*, 11 September 2003 (http://news.BBC.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/south_asia/3099360.stm); James Risen and David Johnston, “Bin Laden is seen with aide on tape”, *New York Times*, 11 September 2003



Figure 2.1 Still pictures from the videotape aired by *al-Jazeera* on 10 September 2003

The men do not address the camera, but a soundtrack accompanying the tape contains the voices of two individuals. A segment with what seemed to be al-Zawahiri's voice named George W. Bush and Tony Blair as "top criminals" and commanded fighters in Iraq to rise up against the occupying forces.³⁶ In an eight-minute voiceover, what was believed to be Bin Ladin's voice praised the 11 September hijackers.

The separate audiotape with (the presumed) voice of al-Zawahiri urged Muslims in Pakistan to topple the Musharraf regime.

The video footage was believed to have been shot in either Afghanistan or Pakistan. There were very few indications as to the date of the recordings, but *al-Jazeera* said the video images were recorded in April or May 2003, probably because the images seemed to have been shot in a spring climate. There was no information about how the tapes had been made, who had made them or how the channel had obtained them. The CIA first stated that they were quite certain that al-Zawahiri's voice was authentic, but that they were less certain about Bin Ladin's voice. Later the CIA confirmed the authenticity of Bin Ladin's voice too.³⁷

³⁶ "The messages of al Qaeda: Chronological summary 2001-present"
<http://www.homelandsecurityus.com/aqrecordings.asp>

³⁷ "CIA: Voice of Bin Ladin on tape is real", *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 13 september 2003
<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=60129>

Al-Jazeera later published an Arabic transcript of Bin Ladin's and al-Zawahiri's voiceover on the videotape.³⁸ Unfortunately it has not been possible to find an available English translation of the transcript.

2.8 Al-Zawahiri audiotape, "Message to Muslims in Pakistan and Afghanistan", 28 September 2003

On Sunday 28 September 2003, the Arab TV stations *al-Jazeera* and *al-Arabiya* aired an audiotape attributed to Ayman al-Zawahiri.³⁹ There were no indications as to the length of the recording. No details about the acquisition process were given. Officials from the CIA later stated they believed the tape was "probably authentic".⁴⁰

The recording seemed to have been made recently, because it referred to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's visit to India, which took place on 8 September 2003.

The statement denounced the Israeli-Indian rapprochement and called for the toppling of the Pakistani regime. It also called urged Muslims around the world to fight the "Christian-Zionist crusade".

The following is an edited version of *BBC*'s translated excerpts from the recording:⁴¹

"Our Muslim brothers in Pakistan and Afghanistan, may God's peace and prayers be upon you. Brother Muslims in Pakistan and Afghanistan, you know that giving advice is a religious duty. You also know, my dear brothers, that the Crusader campaign, which is led by the United States, supported by its infidel and hypocrite allies and supporters, is intended against Islam and Muslims even if it claims that it is fighting terrorism, for it is what we call *jihad*. This campaign seeks to undermine Islam as a faith and *shari'a*, subjugate the Muslim nation, and turn it into herds following the masters of the world in Washington, Tel Aviv, and London.

Part of the Congressional report on the 11 September events, the publication of which was banned by the US Government, included a recommendation to ban the Saudi Government from printing and distributing the holy Qur'an. Why? Because it includes

³⁸ "Text of the words by Usama bin Ladin and Ayman al-Zawahiri", *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 11 September 2003, (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=59967>)

³⁹ "Al-Zawahiri attacks the Pakistani and Afghan presidents" *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 28 September 2003 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=61099>); "Al-Zawahiri calls for a toppling of the Pakistani president", *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 28 September 2003 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=61115>); Ghaida Ghantous, "Qaeda leader urges Pakistanis to oust Musharraf – TV", *Reuters*, 28 September 2003; Muhammad al-Shafi'i, "Al-Zawahiri calls on Pakistanis to oust Musharraf", *al-Sharq al-Awsat* [in Arabic], 29 September 2003 (<http://www.asharqalawsat.com/details.asp?section=1&issue=9071&article=195353>)

⁴⁰ "New al-Qaeda tape may be authentic: CIA", *Associated Press*, 2 October 2003

⁴¹ "Extracts of new 'al-Qaeda' tape," *BBCNews.com*, 28 September 2003 (http://news.BBC.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3147464.stm)

verses that call for hating Jews and Christians. Crime and arrogance have reached this point. This is why, beloved brothers, Muslims must consult each other, take care of their own affairs, examine their situation, and then strengthen themselves and rely on Almighty God in resisting this Crusader-Jewish campaign, which is aimed at destroying Islam and Muslims.

The effective Israeli-Indian co-operation in the security, military, and other fields is no secret to anyone. The visit by criminal Jew [Israeli Prime Minister Ariel] Sharon - the killer of thousands of Muslims and the one who encroached on the sanctity of the al-Aqsa Mosque - to India, as well as the agreements and deals he concluded with the Indians, are only the tip of the iceberg. This US-Jewish-Indian alliance is against Muslims. This alliance, which is getting stronger, calls on the Pakistanis to recognise Israel so that the United States and Israel will be pleased with them.

It is Musharraf who enabled America to topple the [Taliban] Islamic emirate in Afghanistan. Had it not been for his tremendous help, America would not have been able to do this, nor would it have been able to kill thousands of innocents in Afghanistan. It is Musharraf who is seeking to send Pakistani forces to Iraq so that they, rather than American soldiers, are killed and so that they kill Muslims in Iraq and enable America to control Muslim lands. Muslims in Pakistan must unite and co-operate to topple this traitor and install a sincere leadership that would defend Islam and Muslims.”

2.9 Bin Ladin audiotape with “Message to the American people” and “Message to the Iraqi people”, 18 October 2003

On Thursday 18 October 2003, the Arab TV station *Al-Jazeera* broadcast two separate statements purportedly made by Usama bin Ladin.⁴² The two statements seemed to originate from one and the same audiotape. The length of the two statements and of the recording as a whole was not clear. Officials from the CIA later said the tape was “probably authentic”.⁴³

The two statements were addressed to the American and Iraqi peoples respectively. The letter to the Americans said the Bush administration had slaughtered Muslims in order to serve its own ambition and the Zionist lobby, but that Americans were responsible for electing their leaders. The message to the Iraqis was called “the second letter to our Muslim brothers in Iraq”, the first letter being the one published on 11 February 2003 (see above). It thanked the Iraqi *mujahidin* for their efforts and called on Muslims in Iraq and elsewhere to intensify the fight against the US occupation.

⁴² “Bin Ladin: Washington is stuck in a quagmire in Iraq”, *aljazeera.net* [Arabic], 18 October 2003 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=62419>); “Bin Ladin promises Americans more attacks”, *aljazeera.net* [Arabic], 18 October 2003 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=62437>); “Bin Ladin vows to continue fight against Americans”, *aljazeera.net* [Arabic], 19 October 2003 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=62469>); “Bin Laden tape' warns US”, *BBCNews.com*, 18 October 2003 (http://news.BBC.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/middle_east/3203878.stm)

⁴³ “Bin Laden tape 'probably genuine'”, *BBCNews.com*, 20 October 2003 (http://news.BBC.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/middle_east/3208082.stm)

Around the time of the release of the bin Ladin statement, several video recordings containing footage of the executors of the May 2003 attacks in Riyadh were posted on Islamist websites. This prompted speculation that the near-simultaneous release of the material was intentional.⁴⁴

On Saturday 20 December 2003 the Arabic TV station *al-Arabiya* aired extracts of what it said was a new audio recording with Usama bin Ladin. It later turned out, however, that the extracts were from the tape recording already broadcast on *al-Jazeera* on 18 October.⁴⁵

The following is an edited version of *al-Jazeera*'s translation of the first alleged statement by Usama bin Ladin which is addressed to the American people:⁴⁶

“This is a message from Usama bin Muhammad bin Ladin to the American people regarding your aggression in Iraq. Peace be upon those who follow the righteous path.

Some have the impression that you are a reasonable people. But the majority of you are vulgar and without sound ethics or good manners. You elect the evil from among you, the greatest liars and the least decent and you are enslaved by your richest and the most influential among you, especially the Jews, who lead you using the lie of democracy to support the Israelis and their schemes and in complete antagonism towards our religion [Islam].

These schemes are paid for in our blood and land, and your blood and economy. This has been proved by recent events. And the war on Iraq, which has nothing to do with you, is proof of that.

Bush and his gang, with their heavy sticks and hard hearts, are an evil to all humankind. They have stabbed into the truth, until they have killed it altogether in the eyes of the world. With this behaviour they have encouraged hypocrisy, and spread vice and political bribes shamelessly at the level of heads of state. This gang and their leader enjoy lying, war and looting to serve their own ambitions. The blood of the children of Vietnam, Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq is still dripping from their teeth. They have fooled you and deceived you into invading Iraq a second time. And they have lied to you and the whole world.

Nations are nothing without ethics and morals. If these are gone, the nations are gone. Bush has sent your sons into the lion's den, to slaughter and be slaughtered, claiming that this act was in defence of international peace and America's security, thus concealing the facts.

On one hand he [Bush] is carrying out the demands of the Zionist lobby that helped him to enter the White House. These demands are to destroy the military strength of

⁴⁴ Jason Burke, "Bin Laden urges terror blitz", *Observer*, 19 October 2003

⁴⁵ "Nothing new in bin Ladin message", *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 20 December 2003, <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/571A472A-CDE1-4257-883B-FB04E270350B.htm>

⁴⁶ "Full text of message to Americans," *english.aljazeera.net*, 18 October 2003

Iraq because it is too close to the Jews in occupied Palestine, regardless of the harm that will happen to your people and your economy.

On the other hand, he [Bush] is concealing his own ambitions and the ambitions of the Zionist lobby and their own desire for oil. He is still following the mentality of his ancestors who killed the Native Americans to take their land and wealth. He thought that this time it would be an easy task and a lie that would not be exposed.

But God sent him to Baghdad, the seat of the Caliphate, the homeland of people who prefer death to honey. So they (the Iraqis) turned his profits into losses, his joy into sadness and now he is merely looking for a way back home.

Thanks be to God Almighty who has exposed the lies of George Bush and made his term as president a term of continual catastrophe. To Bush I say: You are begging the world to come to your aid, begging mercenaries from every corner of the world, even from small states. This begging has destroyed your pride and revealed how trivial and weak you are after claiming to defend the whole world. Now you are like the knight who was trying to protect people from the Sword of Malik, and ended up begging someone to protect him.

We reserve the right to retaliate at the appropriate time and place against all countries involved, especially the UK, Spain, Australia, Poland, Japan and Italy, not to exclude those Muslim states that took part, especially the Gulf states, and in particular Kuwait, which has become a launch pad for the crusading forces.

And to the American soldiers in Iraq I say: Now that all the lies have been exposed and the greatest liar has been revealed, your stay on Iraq's land is compounding the oppression and is a great folly. It shows you are selling your lives for the lives of others. And you are spilling your blood to swell the bank accounts of the White House gang and their fellow arms dealers and the proprietors of great companies. And the greatest folly in life is to sell your life for the lives of others.

In conclusion, I say to the American people we will continue to fight you and continue to conduct martyrdom operations inside and outside the United States until you depart from your oppressive course and abandon your follies and rein in your fools.

You have to know that we are counting our dead, may God bless them, especially in Palestine, who are killed by your allies the Jews. We are going to take revenge for them from your blood, God willing, as we did on the day of New York. Remember what I said to you on that day about our security and your security. Baghdad the seat of the Caliphate, will not fall to you, God willing, and we will fight you as long as we carry our guns. And if we fall, our sons will take our place. And may our mothers become childless if we leave any of you alive on our soil.”

The following is an edited version of *al-Jazeera's* translation of the second alleged statement by Usama bin Ladin which is addressed to the Iraqi people:⁴⁷

⁴⁷ “Full text of message to Iraqis,” *english.aljazeera.net*, 19 October 2003; An alternative translation is available from the *BBC*, see “Bin Laden' messages: Full text”, *BBCNews.com*, 18 October 2003 (http://news.BBC.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/middle_east/3204230.stm)

“Praise be to God, who says: *O Prophet! Strive hard against the unbelievers and the hypocrites, and stand firm against them. Their abode is Hell - an evil refuge indeed.*

Prayers and peace on our Prophet Muhammad who says: ‘He who is killed for his money is a martyr, he who is killed for his blood is a martyr, he who is killed for his religion is a martyr and he who is killed for his family is a martyr.’

This is the second letter for our Muslim brethren in Iraq. You the grandsons of Saad, al-Muthanna, Khalid and al-Muanna [...] you the grandsons of Salah al-Din. Peace be upon you, and the mercy and blessings of God.

My congratulations to you on your blessed efforts and your *jihad*. You have indeed slaughtered the enemy and have pleased the hearts of all Muslims, particularly the Palestinian people. You will be rewarded by God the Almighty. Thank you for your *jihad* and may God help you. Be glad of the good news: America is mired in the swamps of the Tigris and Euphrates. Bush is, through Iraq and its oil, easy prey. Here is he now, thank God, in an embarrassing situation and here is America today being ruined before the eyes of the whole world.

You have indeed slaughtered the enemy and have pleased the hearts of all Muslims, particularly the Palestinian people. You will be rewarded by God the Almighty. Thank you for your *jihad* and may God help you

Thank God, who responded to its (America’s) malicious deeds that have forced it to seek help from gangs and beg for mercenaries from the east and the west. Your exemplary punishment of America is no surprise: you are the sons of those great knights who took Islam to the east till they reached China.

Be aware that this war is a new crusade against the Islamic world. It is a decisive war for the whole community. For those who do not know, its repercussions are dangerous and wicked for Islam and Muslims. Oh youth of Islam everywhere, especially in (Iraq’s) neighbouring countries and Yemen, *jihad* is your duty and rightness is your path. Never be followers of those who act to satisfy their fancies [...] and of those who have allied themselves with tyrants in order to discourage you from holy *jihad*.

Voices have risen in Iraq as before in Palestine, Egypt, Jordan, Yemen and elsewhere, calling for a peaceful democratic solution in dealing with apostate governments or with Jewish and crusader invaders instead of fighting in the name of God. Hence, it is necessary to warn against the danger of this deviant and misleading practice that contradicts God’s teachings to fight in the name of God.

How can you obey those who have never fought for God? Have you never imagined it was they who have disabled the nation’s stock of faithful men and followed their whims? They have chosen democracy, the faith of the ignorant, through becoming members of legislative councils. They have gone astray and misled many people. Why do they become members of the councils of polytheism? Islam has rejected such representative councils. By so doing those members renounce the essence of their faith, so what do they have left? They allege that they follow the right path. They are in great danger, while Islam is clear about their deeds.

Islam is the faith of God, while the legislative councils are the faith of the ignorant. Those who obey their kings or scholars - in permitting what God has prohibited, such as becoming members of the legislative councils, or prohibiting what God has permitted, such as *jihad* for the sake of God - they have thus made them their lords, rather than obey God.

I am calling upon Muslims in general and Iraqi people in particular, to tell them to avoid supporting the American Crusaders and those who back them. Those who assist them, irrespective of the names, are renegades and infidels. I am calling upon Muslims in general and Iraqi people in particular, to tell them to avoid supporting the American crusaders and those who back them. Those who assist them, whatever they are called, are renegades and infidels. This applies to those who support parties of infidels such as the Baath party, the Kurdish parties and the like.

It is also obvious that any government set up by America will be a puppet and traitorous regime, as are governments of the region such as Karzai's and Mahmud Abbas's governments, which were formed to abort *Jihad*. The 'road map' plan is only a new link in the circle of conspiracies to stop the blessed *Intifada*. Hence, *jihad* must continue until a Muslim government is established on the basis of *Shari'a* law.

Fellow Muslims! This issue is so serious, it is no joking matter. Those who can contribute effort, opinions, assistance, energy or money, this is the right time for giving. In such circumstances, people will be judged to sort the honest from the lying and the altruists from the selfish. Our prudent Muslim women are also expected to play their role.

I will tell my *Mujahidin* brothers in Iraq that I share their concerns and feel what they feel while I envy them their *jihad*. As God is my witness, if I had the opportunity to join you, I would not delay. How could I not join you when our Prophet and leader (peace be upon him) said that were it not too hard for Muslims, he would join every invasion for the sake of God. He also said he wished he could join an invasion and be killed, invade and be killed and again invade and be killed. This is the path of our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the path that leads us to the triumph of our faith and the establishment of the Muslim state. You Muslims have to follow this path. You the descendants of Rabiaa, Mudar and the Kurdish clans, you must hoist your flags. Never be scared of those bastards with their weaponry, for God has weakened their cunning.

Never be afraid of their multitudes, for their hearts are empty while their strength has begun to weaken - militarily and economically. This was particularly true after the blessed day of New York, by the grace of God, when their losses reached more than one trillion dollars, following the attack and its aftermath.

Moreover, they have had a budget deficit for the third consecutive year. This year, the deficit reached a record peak of more than US \$4.5 billion. Praise be to God. Never be scared of their multitudes, for their hearts are empty while their strength has begun to weaken - militarily and economically

In conclusion, my compliments to my brothers the *Mujahidin* in Iraq, to the heroes in Baghdad, the centre of the Caliphate, to the supporters of Islam, the descendants of Salah al-Din, to the free people of Baquba, Mosul and Anbar, to those who have immigrated for the sake of God so that they may be killed for the sake of their religious faith. To those who have left their parents, their sons, their relatives and towns, I convey my greetings.

I am also telling you that you are the soldiers of God, the arrows of Islam and the first line of defence for this nation. The Romans gathered under the banner of the cross to fight against the nation of Muhammad (peace be upon him). So, maintain the *jihad*. I hope Islam will not be undermined through you. God is blessing what you have been responsible for. We are putting a great deal of hope on your efforts, after God. So do not frustrate Muslims - follow the example of Sa'd (may God be pleased with him) who said on the day of the *al-Khandaq* battle that death is welcome when one is destined to die.

I call upon you, and myself, to obey God, implicitly and explicitly, and to recite the Qur'an, contemplate its meaning and follow its teachings, particularly such *suras* as *al-Tawba* and *al-Anfal*. You have to glorify and pray to God.

May God bestow virtue upon us in this world and in the afterlife and keep us away from Hell. May God lead the hearts of our youth to the path of *jihad*, strengthen their hearts, give them courage, help them reach their targets and link their hearts in amity and unity. May God bestow his triumph upon the *Mujahidin* everywhere in Palestine, Iraq, Chechnya, Kashmir, the Philippines and Afghanistan."

2.10 Al-Zawahiri audiotape on second anniversary of Tora Bora battle, 19 December 2003

On Friday 19 December 2003, the Arab TV station *al-Jazeera* broadcast an audio recording allegedly made by Ayman al-Zawahiri.⁴⁸ No details about the length of the tape nor about the acquisition process were provided. The CIA later concluded that the voice on the tape was probably that of Ayman al-Zawahiri.⁴⁹

The tape marked the second anniversary of the battle of Tora Bora in Afghanistan in late 2001. The recording was said to have been made in November during Ramadan, and it could have been made no earlier than October 2003 because it referred implicitly to the 26 October missile attack on the al-Rashid hotel in Baghdad during the visit of Paul Wolfowitz to Iraq. The statement gave an insider's account of the Tora Bora battle and said that the *mujahidin* were

⁴⁸ "al-Zawahiri: Americans are being chased everywhere", *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 19 December 2003 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=67142>); "al-Zawahiri: al-Qaida will hunt Americans everywhere", *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 20 December 2003 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=67231>); "Al-Qaida leader calls US soldiers 'cowards'", *english.aljazeera.net*, 19 December 2003 (<http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/E473FEA1-7A63-4D43-8877-28E09F41EEAC.htm>)

⁴⁹ "CIA: New tape is probably with al-Zawahiri's voice", *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 20 December 2003 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=67210>)

still doing fine two years later and that they were gradually driving away the Crusaders from Afghanistan. Western media paid relatively little attention to the statement.

The following is an edited version of the *al-Jazeera*'s own translated excerpts from the statement:⁵⁰

“I am addressing you today after a period of two years from the time of the Tora Bora battle. During this battle, 300 Islamic fighters remained steadfast against attacks by Crusaders, hypocrites and bandits hired by America and supported by its air power and the hypocrites' tanks. They strafed an area not exceeding three square kilometers. The bombing of Tora Bora began with a savage night aerial attack on the first day of the Crusaders' campaign against the Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan.

But the major battle took place on the 17th day of Ramadan, which coincides with the great Badr battle, when the Crusaders' continuous aerial bombing began, along with the siege by the hypocrites and the bandits. Nevertheless, the *Mujahidin*, by God's assistance and support, succeeded in remaining steadfast for 12 days of continuous bombing, siege and the severe cold.

By God's assistance and support, they succeeded in facing the hypocrites' attacks and dealt them a great deal of casualties. The fighters escaped the siege while the Americans were only able to arrest 50% of them through betrayal and treachery, when they arrived in Pakistan following a tiresome trip across a range of high, white mountains.

America has thus been militarily defeated by those fighters despite all the huge military arsenal and the dollars with which they have flooded Afghanistan. Today, by God's grace and bounty, following those two years, what has become of the struggle between the powers of Islam and *Jihad* and the alliance of the Crusaders, the Jews and the hypocrites?

Two years after the battle of Tora Bora, we are still, by God's grace, as we were, chasing the Americans and their allies everywhere, even in their own doorsteps. After two years of Tora Bora, *Jihad* has been escalated at al-Quds [Jerusalem], while all the Crusaders and the Jews' conspiracies have failed in effecting a siege. The *Mujahidin* have scared the Jewish aggressors and have driven them out of their senses.

After two years of Tora Bora, the bloodshed against the Americans has escalated in Iraq. The Americans proved incapable of defending themselves and even of defending officials such as Wolfowitz, the arrogant Zionist.

After two years of Tora Bora, the American collapse in Afghanistan has become an explicit reality, while the powers of Islam and *Jihad* have begun to drive away, bit by bit, the Crusaders and the hypocrites from the sacred land of Afghanistan.”

⁵⁰ “Al-Qaida tape: Afghan anti-US resistance up”, *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 19 December 2003 (<http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/E177A6E2-7D23-4F60-AB40-A7CCF655497D.htm>)

2.11 Bin Ladin audiotape, “Message to brothers and sister in the whole Islamic Nation”, 4 January 2004

On Sunday 4 January 2004, The Arabic TV station *al-Jazeera* aired an audiotape allegedly recorded by Usama bin Ladin.⁵¹ The tape was said to be 14 minutes long. *Al-Jazeera* did not provide details about how it had acquired the tape. An Arabic transcript of the statement was posted on Islamist Internet sites shortly afterwards. The CIA later said they believed the recording to be authentic.⁵²

The statement addressed Muslims worldwide, calling for jihad and denouncing corrupt Arab regimes and moderate Islamic scholars. The speaker urged the creation of a supranational council of honest religious scholars to direct the Muslim struggle in defence of Islam.

It is not clear where or when the tape was made, but it contained a reference to the capture of Saddam Hussain in early December 2003 indicating that it was made after that date.

The following is an edited version of *BBC*'s translation of the statement:⁵³

“From Usama Bin Ladin to his brothers and sisters in the entire Islamic nation: May God’s peace, mercy and blessings be upon you.

My message to you concerns inciting and continuing to urge for *jihad* to repulse the grand plots that have been hatched against our nation, especially since some of them have appeared clearly, such as the occupation of the crusaders, with the help of the apostates, of Baghdad and the house of the Caliphate, under the trick of weapons of mass destruction.

There is also the fierce attempt to destroy the al-Aqsa Mosque and destroy the *jihad* and the *mujahidin* in beloved Palestine by employing the trick of the roadmap and the Geneva peace initiative.

⁵¹ “Bin Ladin attacks the occupation of Iraq and peace initiatives in the region”, *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 4 January 2004 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=68257>); “Bin Ladin attacks Gulf rulers and questions their strength”, *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 5 January 2004 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=68280>); “Bin Ladin still alive and al-Qaida still standing”, *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 5 January 2004 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=68293>); “Bin Ladin warns about religious war for hegemony in the gulf”, *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 5 January 2004 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=68302>); “Bin ladin demands council of scholars instead of ruling regimes”, *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 5 January 2004 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=68315>); “Arab TV airs 'new Bin Laden tape'”, *BBCNews.com*, 4 January 2004 (http://news.BBC.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/middle_east/3367725.stm)

⁵² “American intelligence: Al-Jazeera tape has Bin Ladin’s voice”, *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 5 January 2004 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=68303>)

⁵³ “Full text: ‘Bin Laden’ tape,” *BBCNews.com*, 5 January 2004 (http://news.BBC.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/middle_east/3368957.stm)

The Americans' intentions have also become clear in statements about the need to change the beliefs, curricula and morals of the Muslims to become more 'tolerant', as they put it. In clearer terms, it is a religious-economic war.

The occupation of Iraq is a link in the Zionist-crusader chain of evil. Then comes the full occupation of the rest of the Gulf states to set the stage for controlling and dominating the whole world. For the big powers believe that the Gulf and the Gulf states are the key to controlling the world due to the presence of the largest oil reserves there.

O Muslims: The situation is serious and the misfortune is momentous. By God, I am keen on safeguarding your religion and your worldly life. So, lend me your ears and open up your hearts to me so that we may examine these pitch-black misfortunes and so that we may consider how we can find a way out of these adversities and calamities.

The West's occupation of our countries is old, yet new. The struggle between us and them, the confrontation, and clashing began centuries ago, and will continue because the ground rules regarding the fight between right and falsehood will remain valid until Judgment Day.

Take note of this ground rule regarding this fight. There can be no dialogue with occupiers except through arms. This is what we need today, and what we should seek. Islamic countries in the past century were not liberated from the crusaders' military occupation except through *jihad* in the cause of God. Under the pretext of fighting terrorism, the West today is doing its utmost to tarnish *jihad* and kill anyone seeking *jihad*. The West is supported in this endeavour by hypocrites. This is because they all know that *jihad* is the effective power to foil all their conspiracies. *Jihad* is the path, so seek it.

This is because if we seek to deter them with any means other than Islam, we would be like the one who goes round in circles. We would also be like our forefathers, the *al-Ghasasinah* [Arab people who lived in a state historically located in the north-west of the Persian empire]. The concern of their seniors was to be appointed officers for the Romans and to be named kings in order to safeguard the interests of the Romans by killing their brothers of the peninsula's Arabs. Such is the case of the new *al-Ghasasinah*; namely, Arab rulers.

Words of warning Muslims: If you do not punish them for their sins in Jerusalem and Iraq, they shall defeat you because of your failure. They will also rob you of land of *al-Haramayn* [the two holy places, Mecca and Medina]. Today [they robbed you] of Baghdad and tomorrow they will rob you of Riyadh and so forth unless God deems otherwise. Sufficient unto us is God.

What then is the means to stop this tremendous onslaught? In such hard times, some reformers maintain that all popular and official forces should unite and that all government forces should unite with all their peoples. Everyone would do what is needed from him in order to ward off this crusader-Zionist onslaught. The question strongly raised is: Are the governments in the Islamic world capable of pursuing this duty of defending the faith and nation and renouncing allegiance to the United States?

The calls by some reformers are strange. They say that the path to righteousness and defending the country and people passes through the doors of those rulers. I tell those reformers: If you have an excuse for not pursuing *jihad*, it does not give you the right to depend on the unjust ones, thus becoming responsible for your sins as well as the sins of those who you misguide. Fear God for your sake and for your nation's sake. God does not need your flattery of dictators for the sake of God's religion.

The Gulf states proved their total inability to resist the Iraqi forces. They sought help from the crusaders, led by the United States, as is well known. How can these states stand up to the United States? In short, these states came to America's help and backed it in its attack against an Arab state which is bound to them with covenants of joint defence agreements. These covenants were reiterated at the Arab League just a few days before the US attack, only to violate them in full. This shows their positions on the nation's basic causes. These regimes wavered too much before taking a stand on using force and attacking Iraq. At times they absolutely rejected participation and at other times they linked this with UN agreement. Then they went back to their first option. In fact, the lack of participation was in line with the domestic desire of these states. However, they finally submitted and succumbed to US pressure and opened their air, land and sea bases to contribute toward the US campaign, despite the immense repercussions of this move.

Most important of these repercussions is that this is a sin against one of the Islamic tenets. Most important and dangerous in their view was that they feared that the door would be open for bringing down dictatorial regimes by armed forces from abroad, especially after they had seen the arrest of their former comrade in treason and agency to the United States when it ordered him to ignite the first Gulf war against Iran, which rebelled against it. The war consumed everything and plunged the area in a maze from which they have not emerged to this day. They are aware that their turn will come. They do not have the will to make the difficult decision to confront the aggression, in addition to their belief that they do not possess the material resources for that. Indeed, they were prevented from establishing a large military force when they were forced to sign secret pledges and documents long ago.

In short, the ruler who believes in some of the above-mentioned deeds cannot defend the country. How can he do so if he believes in all of them and has done that time and again? Those who believe in the principle of supporting the infidels over Muslims and leave the blood, honour and property of their brothers to be available to their enemy in order to remain safe, claiming that they love their brothers but are being forced to take such a path - of course this compulsion cannot be regarded as legitimate - are in fact qualified to take the same course against one another in the Gulf states. Indeed, this principle is liable to be embraced within the same state itself.

Those who read and understood the history of kings throughout history know that they are capable of committing more than these concessions, except those who enjoyed the mercy of God. Indeed, the rulers have practically started to sell out the sons of the land by pursuing and imprisoning them and by unjustly and wrongly accusing them of becoming like the *al-Khawarij* sect who held Muslims to be infidels and by committing the excesses of killing them. We hold them to be martyrs and God will judge them. All of this happened before the Riyadh explosions in *Rabi al-Awwal* of this year [i.e. in

May 2003]. This campaign came within a drive to implement the US orders in the hope that they will win its blessings.

Based on the above, the extent of the real danger, which the region in general and the Arabian Peninsula in particular, is being exposed to, has appeared. It has become clear that the rulers are not qualified to apply the religion and defend the Muslims. In fact, they have provided evidence that they are implementing the schemes of the enemies of the nation and religion and that they are qualified to abandon the countries and peoples.

Now, after we have known the situation of the rulers, we should examine the policy which they have been pursuing. Anyone who examines the policy of those rulers will easily see that they follow their whims and desires and their personal interests and crusader loyalties. Therefore, the flaw does not involve a secondary issue, such as personal corruption that is confined to the palace of the ruler. The flaw is in the very approach. This happened when a malicious belief and destructive principle spread in most walks of life, to the effect that absolute supremacy and obedience were due to the ruler and not to the religion of God. In other countries, they have used the guise of parliaments and democracy. Thus, the situation of all Arab countries suffers from great deterioration in all walks of life, in religious and worldly matters.

We have reached this miserable situation because many of us lack the correct and comprehensive understanding of the religion of Islam. Many of us understand Islam to mean performing some acts of worship, such as prayer and fasting. Despite the great importance of these rituals, the religion of Islam encompasses all the affairs of life, including religious and worldly affairs, such as economic, military and political affairs, as well as the scales by which we weigh the actions of men - rulers, '*ulama* and others - and how to deal with the ruler in line with the rules set by God for him and which the ruler should not violate. Therefore, it becomes clear to us that the solution lies in adhering to the religion of God, by which God granted us pride in the past centuries and installing a strong and faithful leadership that applies the Qur'an among us and raises the true banner of *jihad*.

The honest people who are concerned about this situation, such as the '*ulama*, leaders who are obeyed among their people, dignitaries, notables and merchants should get together and meet in a safe place away from the shadow of these suppressive regimes and form a council for *Ahl al-Hall wa al-Aqd* [literally those who loose and bind; reference to honest, wise and righteous people who can appoint or remove a ruler in Islamic tradition] to fill the vacuum caused by the religious invalidation of these regimes and their mental deficiency. The right to appoint an imam is for the [muslim] nation. The [muslim] nation also has the right to make him correct his course if he deviates from it and to remove him if he does something that warrants this, such as apostasy and treason.

This temporary council should be made up of the minimum number of available personnel, without [word indistinct] the rest of the nation, except what the religion allows in case of necessity, until the number is increased when the situation improves, God willing. Their policy should be based on the Book of God [the Qur'an] and the *Sunna* [tradition] of his Prophet [Muhammad], God's peace and blessings be upon him. They should start by directing the Muslims to the important priorities at this critical stage and lead them to a safe haven, provided that their top priority should be uniting

opinions under the word of monotheism and defending Islam and its people and countries and declaring a general mobilisation in the nation to prepare for repulsing the raids of the Romans, which started in Iraq and no-one knows where they will end. God suffices us and he is the best supporter.”

2.12 Two al-Zawahiri audiotapes, on State of the Union Speech and on French headscarf ban, 24 February 2004

On Tuesday 24 February 2004, the Arabic TV stations *al-Jazeera* and *al-Arabiya* aired one audiotape each (a few hours apart), both of which were said to have been recorded by Ayman al-Zawahiri.⁵⁴ Some commentators believed the two TV stations had aired separate sections of one and the same tape, but the stations said there were two different recordings.⁵⁵ Both said they had received the tapes earlier on Tuesday, but did not specify how they had obtained them. They said they had only broadcast newsworthy extracts of longer statements, without indicating the exact total length of the statements. The CIA later said they believed both tapes to be authentic.⁵⁶

The *al-Jazeera* tape criticized and threatened US President George Bush and ridiculed the President’s assertion that two-thirds of al-Qaida had been eliminated. The *al-Arabiya* tape strongly criticized the French plan to ban religious symbols (including Muslims headscarves) in schools.

The recordings seemed to have been made recently, because one of the statements referred to the State of the Union speech delivered by George W. Bush on 20 January 2004, while the other referred to the passing of the French law on religious symbols on 10 February 2004.

It has not been possible to find a complete transcript of the tapes. The following is a list of the quotations available in Western media reports.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ “Al-Zawahiri attacks Bush and promises new attacks”, *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 24 February 2004, (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=71638>); “Al-Zawahiri threatens the United States with new attacks”, *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 24 February 2004 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=71651>); “Al-Zawahiri threatens America and France and accuses Bush of deception and calls for improved defences”, *al-Sharq al-Awsat* [in Arabic], 25 February 2004 (<http://www.asharqalawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issue=9220&article=219732>); “Al-Qaeda 'deputy' blasts US claim”, *BBCNews.com*, 24 February 2004 (http://news.BBC.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/middle_east/3516921.stm); “Al-Qaeda 'joins headscarf row’”, *BBCNews.com*, 24 February 2004 (<http://news.BBC.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/europe/3515959.stm>)

⁵⁵ “FMA 24 Feb: Al-Jazirah, Al-Arabiya Differ in Treatment of Al-Zawahiri Statement,” *FBIS Media Analysis*, 24 February 2004; Sarah El Deeb, “Purported al-Qaida Audiotape Taunts Bush,” *Associated Press*, 24 February 2004

⁵⁶ Neil MacFarquhar, “A Top bin Laden Aide Threatens New Attacks Against the U.S.,” *New York Times*, 25 February 2004

⁵⁷ Neil MacFarquhar, “A Top bin Laden Aide Threatens New Attacks Against the U.S.,” *New York Times*, 25 February 2004; FMA 24 Feb: Al-Jazirah, Al-Arabiya Differ in Treatment of Al-Zawahiri Statement,” *FBIS Media Analysis*, 24 February 2004; Sarah El Deeb, “Purported al-Qaida Audiotape Taunts Bush,” *Associated Press*, 24 February 2004

Quotes from the *al-Jazeera* tape:

[The excerpt included attacks against the President's] "claims that his forces are spreading freedom and security in the world," that "Iraq has obtained freedom thanks to his Coalition forces," that "his government has arrested more than two-thirds of al-Qa'ida," and that "the situation in Afghanistan is stable."⁵⁸

"We remind Bush that the situation is not stable in Afghanistan, or else how do we wage, with God's support and might, our attacks on your troops and agents?"

"We remind Bush that he did not crush two-thirds of Al Qaeda. On the contrary, thanks be to God, Al Qaeda remains on the battleground of the holy war, raising the banner of Islam in the face of the Zionist-Crusader campaign against the Islamic community."

"Bush, fortify your targets, tighten your defense, intensify your security measures, because the fighting Islamic community — which sent you New York and Washington battalions — has decided to send you one battalion after the other, carrying death and seeking heaven."

"Bush appoints corrupt leaders and protects them, a glance at the Islamic world from Morocco to Indonesia will reveal those U.S.-backed leaders."

Quotes from the *al-Arabiya* tape:

"France, the country of liberty, defends only the liberty of nudity, debauchery and decay, while fighting chastity and modesty."

"The latest decision by the French president to create a law preventing Muslim girls from covering their heads in schools is [...] consistent with the burning of villages along with their people in Afghanistan, demolishing houses over their sleeping residents in Palestine, killing the children of Iraq, and [consistent with] the right that the United States granted itself to kill any human being or arrest anyone anywhere."

2.13 Al-Zawahiri audiotape calling for Musharraf overthrow, 25 March 2004

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.⁵⁹ The TV channel had received the tape the same day. It said the tape was a total of 17 minutes long.

⁵⁸ The paraphrasing is from "FMA 24 Feb: Al-Jazirah, Al-Arabiya Differ in Treatment of Al-Zawahiri Statement," *FBIS Media Analysis*, 24 February 2004

⁵⁹ "Al-Zawahiri calls on Pakistanis to overthrow their government", *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 25 March 2004 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=73678>); "al-Zawahiri describes Musharraf as a traitor and calls for his overthrow", *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 26 March 2004 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=73688>); Sarah El Deeb, "Likely al-Qaida Tape Seeks Pakistan Coup", *Associated Press*, 25 March 2004; "Purported Zawahiri Tape Condemns Musharraf", *Associated Press*, 26 March 2004; "Al-Zawahiri calls on Pakistani army to oust Musharraf", *al-Sharq al-Awsat* [in Arabic], 26 March 2004 (<http://www.asharqalawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issue=9250&article=225270>)

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.⁶⁰ 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.⁶¹ 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:⁶²

“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:⁶³

“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? [...]

⁶⁰ “CIA Believes It Was Al-Zawahiri's Voice”, *Associated Press*, 26 March 2004

⁶¹ James Astill and Brian Whitaker, “Zawahiri tape taunts Pakistanis”, *Guardian*, 26 March 2004

⁶² “New tape said to be bin Laden's deputy”, *CNN.com*, 25 March 2004
<http://www.CNN.com/2004/WORLD/meast/03/25/aljazeera.tape/index.html>

⁶³ Sarah El Deeb, “Likely al-Qaida Tape Seeks Pakistan Coup”, *Associated Press*, 25 March 2004; “Purported Zawahiri Tape Condemns Musharraf”, *Associated Press*, 26 March 2004

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. [...]"

2.14 Bin Ladin audiotape offering armistice with Europe, 14 April 2004

On Wednesday 14 April 2004, the Arabic satellite channels *al-Jazeera* and *al-Arabiya* aired an audiotaped message purportedly from Usama bin Ladin.⁶⁴ No details about the origin nor the total length of the recording were provided. The CIA later said the voice on the tape was probably that of bin Ladin.⁶⁵

The statement was addressed to Europeans and offered an armistice between al-Qaida and Europe conditional on the withdrawal of European forces from Iraq and Afghanistan. It said Europe had three months to consider the proposal. It referred to the 11 March terrorist attacks in Madrid

The rather unusual content of the message and the time of its appearance (i.e. in the aftermath of the Madrid attacks) attracted much media attention and prompted a long series of analyses of the intentions behind the statement. Some said the message indicated a change of strategy on the part of the al-Qaida leadership, from a strategy of unconditional and total war on all things western to a politically more pragmatic strategy open to temporary ceasefires. Others interpreted the statement as a clever attempt to drive a wedge between the US and Europe by appealing to the European left's anti-American leanings, drawing on the European scepticism to the Western military presence in Iraq, and exploiting the uneasy atmosphere in Europe after the Madrid attacks. European politicians all immediately rejected bin Ladin's armistice proposal. Some radical Islamist circles in Europe later came to interpret the European rejection

⁶⁴ "Bin Ladin offers truce with Europeans and promises revenge for Yasin", *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 15 April 2004 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=74956>); "Bin Laden' offers Europe truce", *BBCNews.com*, 15 April 2004 (http://news.BBC.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/middle_east/3627775.stm); Magdi Abdelhadi, "Tape plays to European audience", *BBCNews.com*, 15 April 2004 (http://news.BBC.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/middle_east/3628841.stm); Richard Bernstein, "Tape, Probably bin Laden's, Offers 'Truce' to Europe", *New York Times*, 16 April 2004

⁶⁵ "Bin Laden' offers Europe truce", *BBCNews.com*, 15 April 2004 (http://news.BBC.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/middle_east/3627775.stm)

of the bin Laden proposal as a turning point and as a justification for militant activity in Europe.⁶⁶

The following is an edited version of *BBC*'s translation of the tape as broadcast by *al-Arabiya*:⁶⁷

“Praise be to Almighty God; Peace and prayers be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and companions.

This is a message to our neighbours north of the Mediterranean, containing a reconciliation initiative as a response to their positive reactions. Praise be to God; Praise be to God; Praise be to God who created heaven and earth with justice and who allowed the oppressed to punish the oppressor in the same way. Peace upon those who followed the right path.

In my hands there is a message to remind you that justice is a duty towards those whom you love and those whom you do not. And people's rights will not be harmed if the opponent speaks out about them. The greatest rule of safety is justice, and stopping injustice and aggression. It was said: Oppression kills the oppressors and the hotbed of injustice is evil. The situation in occupied Palestine is an example. What happened on 11 September [2001] and 11 March [2004] is your commodity that was returned to you.

It is known that security is a pressing necessity for all mankind. We do not agree that you should monopolise it only for yourselves. Also, vigilant people do not allow their politicians to tamper with their security. Having said this, we would like to inform you that labelling us and our acts as terrorism is also a description of you and of your acts. Reaction comes at the same level as the original action. Our acts are reaction to your own acts, which are represented by the destruction and killing of our kinfolk in Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine. The act that horrified the world; that is, the killing of the old, handicapped Shaykh Ahmad Yasin, may God have mercy on him, is sufficient evidence. We pledge to God that we will punish America for him, God willing. Which religion considers your killed ones innocent and our killed ones worthless? And which principle considers your blood real blood and our blood water? Reciprocal treatment is fair and the one who starts injustice bears greater blame.

As for your politicians and those who have followed their path, who insist on ignoring the real problem of occupying the entirety of Palestine and exaggerate lies and falsification regarding our right in defence and resistance, they do not respect themselves. They also disdain the blood and minds of peoples. This is because their falsification increases the shedding of your blood instead of sparing it. Moreover, the examining of the developments that have been taking place, in terms of killings in our countries and your countries, will make clear an important fact; namely, that injustice is inflicted on us and on you by your politicians, who send your sons - although you are opposed to this - to our countries to kill and be killed.

⁶⁶ Patrick E. Tyler and Don Van Natta Jr., “Militants in Europe openly calls for jihad and the rule of Islam”, *New York Times*, 26 April 2004

⁶⁷ “Full text: ‘Bin Laden tape’,” *BBCNews.com*, 15 April 2004 (http://news.BBC.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3628069.stm)

Therefore, it is in both sides' interest to curb the plans of those who shed the blood of peoples for their narrow personal interest and subservience to the White House gang. The Zionist lobby is one of the most dangerous and most difficult figures of this group. God willing, we are determined to fight them. We must take into consideration that this war brings billions of dollars in profit to the major companies, whether it be those that produce weapons or those that contribute to reconstruction, such as the Halliburton Company, its sisters and daughters. Based on this, it is very clear who is the one benefiting from igniting this war and from the shedding of blood. It is the warlords, the bloodsuckers, who are steering the world policy from behind a curtain.

As for President Bush, the leaders who are revolving in his orbit, the leading media companies and the United Nations, which makes laws for relations between the masters of veto and the slaves of the General Assembly, these are only some of the tools used to deceive and exploit peoples. All these pose a fatal threat to the whole world. The Zionist lobby is one of the most dangerous and most difficult figures of this group. God willing, we are determined to fight them.

Based on the above, and in order to deny war merchants a chance and in response to the positive interaction shown by recent events and opinion polls, which indicate that most European peoples want peace, I ask honest people, especially *'ulama*, preachers and merchants, to form a permanent committee to enlighten European peoples of the justice of our causes, above all Palestine. They can make use of the huge potential of the media. The door of reconciliation is open for three months of the date of announcing this statement.

I also offer a reconciliation initiative to them, whose essence is our commitment to stopping operations against every country that commits itself to not attacking Muslims or interfering in their affairs - including the US conspiracy on the greater Muslim world. This reconciliation can be renewed once the period signed by the first government expires and a second government is formed with the consent of both parties. The reconciliation will start with the departure of its last soldier from our country. The door of reconciliation is open for three months of the date of announcing this statement. For those who reject reconciliation and want war, we are ready. As for those who want reconciliation, we have given them a chance. Stop shedding our blood so as to preserve your blood.

It is in your hands to apply this easy, yet difficult, formula. You know that the situation will expand and increase if you delay things. If this happens, do not blame us - blame yourselves. A rational person does not relinquish his security, money and children to please the liar of the White House.

Had he been truthful about his claim for peace, he would not describe the person who ripped open pregnant women in Sabra and Shatila [i.e. Ariel Sharon] and the destroyer of the capitulation process [reference to the Palestinian-Israeli peace process] as a man of peace. Reality proves our truthfulness and his [George Bush's] lie.

He also would not have lied to people and said that we hate freedom and kill for the sake of killing. Reality proves our truthfulness and his lie. The killing of the Russians was after their invasion of Afghanistan and Chechnya; the killing of Europeans was

after their invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan; and the killing of Americans on the day of New York [reference to 11 September] was after their support of the Jews in Palestine and their invasion of the Arabian Peninsula. Also, killing them in Somalia was after their invasion of it in Operation Restore Hope. We made them leave without hope, praise be to God.

It is said that prevention is better than cure. A happy person is he who learns a lesson from the experience of others. Heeding right is better than persisting in falsehood. Peace be upon those who follow guidance.”

2.15 Bin Ladin audiotape (“O Iraqi People”), offering gold for killing of Paul Bremer and Kofi Annan, 6 May 2004

On Thursday 6 May 2004, Islamist websites posted a 20-minute audio recording allegedly made by Usama bin Ladin.⁶⁸ Shortly afterwards, the Arabic transcript of the statement circulated on Islamist websites, under the title “O Iraqi People”.⁶⁹ The CIA later stated they believed the voice was bin Ladin’s.⁷⁰

The statement praised the ongoing resistance in Iraq and offered 10 kilograms of gold for the killing of top US and UN officials such as Paul Bremer, Kofi Annan and Lakhdar Brahimi, as well as their deputies. Lower prizes were promised in return for the killing of other Western personnel involved in the occupation of Iraq. This rather curious message was received with interest in the international media, not least because it represents a very rare instance of an al-Qaida statement calling for the assassination of specific individuals.

The following is an edited version of excerpts translated by the *BBC*:⁷¹

“First, there was a dangerous development of great magnitude [...] when the occupier [US civil administrator Paul] Bremer announced that he will not accept that Islam be

⁶⁸ See for example <http://www.islah200.org/vboard/showthread.php?t=102915> (accessed 5 May 2005); <http://www.islah200.org/vboard/showthread.php?t=102938> (accessed 5 May 2005); See also “Bin Laden said to offer gold for killings”, *Associated Press*, 6 May 2004; “‘Al-Qaeda’ offers gold for deaths”, *BBCNews.com*, 7 May 2004 (http://news.BBC.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/middle_east/3692079.stm); “Purported bin Laden tape offers gold for Bremer”, *CNN.com*, 7 May 2004 (<http://www.CNN.com/2004/WORLD/asiapcf/05/06/bin.laden.message/index.html>); “Bin Ladin calls for Jihad and offers reward for assassinations in Iraq”, *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic] 7 May 2004 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=76392>); “‘Bin Laden’ offers gold for killing of Bremer”, *Guardian*, 7 May, 2004; Firouz Sedarat, “Bin Laden’s gold bounty to assassins”, *Reuters*, 8 May 2004;

⁶⁹ The transcript is available at <http://www.islah200.org/vboard/showthread.php?t=102880> (accessed 8 May 2005), at <http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=2618> (accessed 24 May 2005) and “Transcript of audiotaped letter attributed to Usama bin Ladin”, *CNNArabic.com*, 5 July 2004 (<http://arabic.cnn.com/2004/world/5/7/benladen.text/>)

⁷⁰ “‘Al-Qaeda’ offers gold for deaths”, *BBCNews.com*, 7 May 2004 (http://news.BBC.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/middle_east/3692079.stm)

⁷¹ “‘Bin Laden’ statement – excerpts”, *BBCNews.com*, 7 May 2005 http://news.BBC.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/3693969.stm

the source of all legislation, meaning that he will not accept Islam as a religion for Iraq. Hence, the announced constitution came according to his will.

This clearly shows on one hand that the [Iraqi] Governing Council is but a puppet and a tool in their hands to implement their plans against an unwary people and on the other hand shows the extent of their hidden hatred against Islam. This also shows that the struggle is an ideological and religious struggle and that the clash is a clash of civilizations. They are keen to destroy Islamic identity in the entire Islamic world. This is their real stand regarding us [...]

It has become clear for everyone that the US campaign has nothing to do with weapons of mass destruction or alleviating the suffering of the Iraqi people, but is a blatant occupation in every sense that this word conveys to me, then *Jihad* is a must for all Muslims in northern, central and southern Iraq [...]

Whoever supports the infidels against Muslims, who supports the occupation forces and their offshoots, whether an interim or permanent government, would have nullified his Islam [...] *Jihad* becomes the individual duty of Iraqis not only against the crusaders but also against the infidel government and its supporters [...]

The so-called transfer of power to Iraqis is an obvious ploy intended to sedate the people and abort the armed resistance. The sincere Iraqi *mujahidin* have not fallen for it. Iraq will not be sovereign as long as there is a crusader soldier on its land and as long as it does not depend on Islam in running all its affairs.

Bush [...] says the top front for fighting terrorism is Iraq, which clearly means that the top front for fighting Islam is in Iraq. This necessitates intensifying efforts to rally Muslims to confront this onslaught [...]

We are at a crossroads. [...] It is obvious that the great trick being promoted by the United States nowadays under the pretext of forcing the so-called reform on the greater Islamic world is a replica of Bremer's plan for Iraq, which provides for excluding religion, plundering wealth, killing men, terrifying people and transgressing on that which is sacrosanct [...]

You know that the United States offered great prizes for whoever would kill those engaged in *jihad* in God's cause. God willing, we within the al-Qaida organization are committed to offering a prize amounting to 10,000 grams in gold to whoever would kill the occupier Bremer, his deputy, the commander of the US troops, or his deputy in Iraq.

With respect to the United Nations, it is merely a Crusader-Zionist tool even though it might seek cover by offering some relief work. [...] Therefore, whoever kills Kofi Annan, the head of his mission to Iraq, or his representatives, like Lakhdar Brahimi, will have the same prize, which is 10,000 grams of gold.

There will be a prize of 1,000 grams of gold for whoever kills a military figure or civilian from the veto masters, such as the Americans or British, and 500 grams of gold for whoever kills a military figure or civilian from the slaves of the General Assembly in Iraq, such as Japan and Italy.

In view of the security circumstances, the handing over of the prizes will be at the nearest possible opportunity, God willing. Whoever is killed after killing one of the soldiers of occupation, the biggest prize will be for us and for him.”

2.16 Al-Zawahiri audiotape denouncing Greater Middle East initiative, 11 June 2004

On Friday 11 June 2004, the Arabic news network *al-Arabiya* aired a 40-second segment of what was said to be a new 10-minute audiotape with Ayman al-Zawahiri.⁷²

The voice on the videotape criticized the United States interference in the Middle East, saying America does not want democracy in the region.

The tape seemed to have been made recently, because the speaker made reference to the Arab summit in Tunisia on 22 and 23 May 2004. The CIA said it believed the tape to be authentic.⁷³

It has not been possible to find an Arabic transcript nor a complete English translation of the statement. The following are translated quotes from subsequent news reports:⁷⁴

“Americans do not want the reforms in the Arab world. The Americans will not give us democracy and freedom. Democracy and freedom should come from within us, from our own souls, and our children and young generation will benefit from it.”

“The Americans do not want democracy and freedom for Muslims.”

“The truth of what it is seeking is to replace the current regimes with new regimes. The human rights they are advocating are the rights of the criminal to the humiliation of the Muslim.”

“The true reform begins from within us. It begins by planting the will of resistance in our hearts and the hearts of our children and coming generations.”

⁷² “al-Zawahiri criticizes ‘the Greater Middle East’”, *alarabiya.net* [in Arabic], 12 June 2004; “New tape attributed to al-Zawahiri attacks plan to reform the Middle East and describes is as American deception”, *al-Sharq al-Awsat* [in Arabic], 13 June 2004 (<http://www.asharqalawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issue=9329&article=239164>)

⁷³ “‘Al-Qaeda deputy’ blasts US plan”, *BBCNews.com*, 11 June 2004 (http://news.BBC.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/middle_east/3800223.stm)

⁷⁴ Caroline Faraj “Audiotape charges U.S. doesn’t want Arab reforms”, *CNN.com*, 11 June 2004 (<http://www.CNN.com/2004/WORLD/meast/06/11/zawahiri.tape/index.html>); “‘Al-Qaeda deputy’ blasts US plan”, *BBCNews.com*, 11 June 2004 (http://news.BBC.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/middle_east/3800223.stm)

2.17 Al-Zawahiri videotape saying US defeat a question of time, 9 September 2004

On Thursday 9 September 2004, the Arabic TV station *al-Jazeera* broadcast excerpts of a previously unknown videotape with what appeared to be Ayman al-Zawahiri.⁷⁵ The person appearing on the videotape was seated next to a Kalashnikov gun and wore a white turban and glasses (see figure 2.2). He looked very similar to al-Zawahiri as he had appeared in previous videotapes. Officials from the CIA later said they believed the tape to be authentic.⁷⁶



Figure 2.2 Still picture from the videotape allegedly featuring Ayman al-Zawahiri, broadcast on *al-Jazeera* on 9 September 2004.

The statement ridiculed US forces in Afghanistan and Iraq and said their defeat was just a question of time. The text of the statement contained no specific dates, but it made reference to the Iraqi transitional government (which came into being on 29 June 2004) and to the Darfur crisis, indicating that it had been made recently. It was the first videotaped message released from the al-Qaida leadership since 10 September 2003 (see above).

The following is an edited version of excerpts translated by *BBC*:⁷⁷

⁷⁵ “al-Zawahiri: Defeat of the Americans a question of time”, *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 9 September 2004, (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=93609>); “Al-Zawahiri: U.S. faltering in Afghanistan”, *CNN.com*, 9 September 2004 (<http://www.CNN.com/2004/WORLD/meast/09/09/zawahiri.tape/index.html>); Andrew Hammond, “Qaeda’s Zawahiri Appears in New Tape on Al Jazeera,” *Reuters*, 9 September 2004; “Al-Zawahiri tape on eve of 11 September claims control over Afghanistan”, *al-Sharq al-Awsat* [in Arabic], 10 September 2004 (<http://www.asharqalawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issue=9418&article=254661>); James Risen, “In Tape, Top Aide To Bin Laden Vows New Strikes at U.S.”, *New York Times*, 10 September 2004

⁷⁶ “American intelligence confirms authenticity of al-Zawahiri tape”, *al-Sharq al-Awsat* [in Arabic], 11 September 2004 (<http://www.asharqalawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issue=9419&article=254835>)

⁷⁷ “Extracts: Zawahiri’s message,” *BBC News*, 10 September 2004 (http://news.BBC.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3643326.stm)

“East and south Afghanistan have become an open arena for the *mujahidin*. The enemy are limited to their capitals. The Americans are hiding in their trenches and refuse to come out to face the *mujahidin*, as the *mujahidin* shell and fire on them, and cut roads off around them. Their defence is only to bomb by air, wasting US money as they kick up dust. As for the situation in Kabul, the Americans and the peacekeeping forces suffer from the *mujahidin*’s shelling and expect the martyrdom operations at any time, with God’s help.

As for Muslim Iraq, the *mujahidin* in it have turned America’s plan upside down after the interim government’s weakness became clear. America’s defeat in Iraq and Afghanistan has become a matter of time, God willing. The Americans in both countries are between two fires; if they continue, they will bleed until death, and if they withdraw, they will lose everything.”

2.18 Al-Zawahiri audiotape calling for united Muslim resistance, 1 October 2004

On Friday 1 October 2004, the Arab TV station *al-Jazeera* aired portions of an alleged new audiotape by Ayman al-Zawahiri.⁷⁸ The statement called for a united Muslims resistance against western aggression in the Islamic world, and asserted that Palestine remains the focus of Muslim resistance. The speaker mentioned several countries by name, and specifically called for attacks on America, Britain, Australia, France, Norway, Poland, South Korea and Japan. The CIA later said they were “highly confident” that the voice was that of al-Zawahiri.⁷⁹ There were no immediate clues as to when the tape had been recorded, except a reference to the Israeli assassination of Hamas leader Abd al-Aziz al-Rantisi on 17 April 2004. The speaker made an interesting and unusual reference to the possibility of his own death.

The following is an edited version of *CNN*’s translation of the excerpts aired by *al-Jazeera*.⁸⁰

“Defending Palestine is a duty for all Muslims. You should never give up Palestine even if the whole world let it down. In Palestine we don’t face the Jews only, but the anti-Muslim world coalition led by America the Crusader and the Zionist. We do know

⁷⁸ “al-Zawahiri attacks America and calls for united resistance”, *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 1 October 2004 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=95103>); “al-Zawahiri calls on Muslims to resist under a united leadership”, *aljazeera.net*, 1 October 2004 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=95109>); “‘New al-Qaeda tape’ is released”, *BBCNews.com*, 2 October 2004 (http://news.BBC.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/3707550.stm); “Al-Jazeera airs purported al Qaeda tape”, *CNN.com*, 2 October 2004 (<http://www.CNN.com/2004/WORLD/meast/10/01/zawahiri.tape/index.html>); “Al-Zawahiri calls for continued resistance in Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan in new audiotape attributed to him”, *al-Sharq al-Awsat* [in Arabic], 2 October 2004 (<http://www.asharqalawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issue=9440&article=258314>); Douglas Jehl, “New Qaeda Audiotape Urges Muslims to ‘Carry On the Fight’”, *New York Times*, 2 October 2004

⁷⁹ “Al-Jazeera airs purported al Qaeda tape”, *CNN.com*, 2 October 2004 (<http://www.CNN.com/2004/WORLD/meast/10/01/zawahiri.tape/index.html>)

⁸⁰ “Voice seems to be al Qaeda leader calling for uprising,” *CNN.com*, 1 October 2004 (www.CNN.com/2004/WORLD/meast/10/01/zawahiri.transcript/index.html)

who killed Ahmad Yasin and Rantissi, it wasn't Israel alone that killed them. The U.S., Europe and our (Arab) leaders supported them in their act.

This is the century of the Islamic resistance after the governments have weakened and kneeled down before the invading crusader. Let's learn a lesson from Chechnya, Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine where the authority has vanished or was removed from power but the resistance remained. The governments in Chechnya and Afghanistan were transformed into resistance leadership.

We shouldn't wait for the American, English, French, Jewish, Hungarian, Polish and South Korean forces to invade Egypt, the Arabian Peninsula, Yemen and Algeria and then start the resistance after the occupier had already invaded us. We should start now. The interests of America, Britain, Australia, France, Norway, Poland, South Korea and Japan are everywhere. All of them participated in the invasion of Afghanistan, Iraq and Chechnya, they also facilitated a *raison d'être* for Israel.

We should not wait anymore than we have already or else we will be devoured one country at a time as they have occupied us in the last two centuries. The Islamic world has entered the period of occupation and division. The resistance foiled the crusaders' and Jews' plans and put them in an embarrassing defensive and they're looking for a way out. If the *mujahidin* acted like cowards in Iraq, Afghanistan, Chechnya and Palestine, the enemy would have taken control of those countries.

The people of experience and wisdom should gather forces to create a leadership for the resistance to face the crusaders' campaign as the *mujahidin* had done in Afghanistan and Chechnya against the will of the occupier and the agent government. Oh young men of Islam, here is our message to you, if we are killed or captured, you should carry on the fight."

2.19 Bin Ladin videotape addressing the American people before US elections, 29 October 2004

On Friday 29 October 2004, the Arabic news network *al-Jazeera* aired a segment of a videotape apparently featuring Usama bin Ladin.⁸¹ Arabic transcripts of the speech appeared on Islamist Internet sites shortly afterwards.⁸² The CIA later concluded "with a high degree of confidence" that the tape was authentic.⁸³

⁸¹ "Bin Ladin attacks Bush administration and discloses the reasons for the September attacks", *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 29 October 2004 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=97067>); "Bin Ladin addresses new letter to Americans", *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 30 October 2004 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/channel/archive/archive?ArchiveId=104833>);

⁸² An Arabic transcript is available at <http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=3074> (accessed 16 May 2005)

⁸³ Douglas Jehl and David Johnston, "In Video Message, Bin Laden Issues Warning to U.S.", *The New York Times*, 30 October, 2004

On the video, Bin Ladin was standing up in front of a desk against a brown background, unarmed, wearing a golden cloak and white headdress, a posture which many commentators described as statesmanlike (see figure 2.3).



Figure 2.3 Still picture of videotape allegedly featuring Usama bin Ladin, aired on al-Jazeera on 29 October 2004

Bin Ladin addressed his statement directly to the American people, and set out to explain the reasons for al-Qaida's terrorist campaign against the US. In a more explanatory than threatening language, he outlined his thinking about the struggle with America since the early 1980s until the present day. The statement, which was written in a clear and simple rhetorical style with elements of sarcasm and humour, said Muslims were fighting simply because they want to preserve their own security, not because they hate freedom. He referred to the upcoming elections, saying they were of no importance and that ordinary Americans had to take their security in their own hands.

The pictures attracted an extraordinary amount of global media attention, not least because the tape – if authentic – would represent the first dateable recording of Usama bin Ladin since late 2001. The timing of the videotape – a few days before the US presidential elections (scheduled for 2 November 2004) – also raised media attention about the statement. Bin Ladin's appearance and the text of his statement became the object of a vast number of commentaries and analyses in the international press.⁸⁴ One issue of debate was the question of the extent to

⁸⁴ "Bin Laden: 'Your security is in your own hands'", *CNN.com*, 29 October 2004; "Al-Qaida leader in new language free of religious vocabulary addresses the Americans", *al-Sharq al-Awsat* [in Arabic], 30 October 2005; "Bin Ladin enters on the eve of the American elections and accuses Bush of stupidity, of fooling Americans and of non-vigilance", *al-Sharq al-Awsat* [in Arabic], 30 October 2004; Bin Laden video threatens America", *BBCNews online*, 30 October 2004; Douglas Jehl and David Johnston, "In Video Message, Bin Laden Issues Warning to U.S.", *New York Times*, 30 October 2004; Dana Priest and Walter Pincus, "Bin Laden Warns U.S. Voters", *Washington Post*, 30 October 2004; Josh Meyer, "Bin Laden, on Tape, Reveals Sept. 11 Motive", *LA Times*, 30 October 2004; Suzanne Goldenberg, "Bin Laden warning to America", *Guardian*, 30 October 2004; Ewen MacAskill, "Intervention that substitutes for a bombing", *Guardian*, 30 October 2004; Salah Nasrawi,

which the Bin Ladin appearance influenced the outcome of the US elections. John Kerry later blamed bin Ladin for his defeat in the elections.⁸⁵

The following is an edited version of *al-Jazeera's* translation of the entire statement:⁸⁶

“Praise be to God who created the creation for his worship and commanded them to be just and permitted the wronged one to retaliate against the oppressor in kind. Peace be upon he who follows the guidance.

People of America, this talk of mine is for you and concerns the ideal way to prevent another Manhattan, and deals with the war and its causes and results.

Before I begin, I say to you that security is an indispensable pillar of human life and that free men do not forfeit their security, contrary to Bush's claim that we hate freedom. If so, then let him explain to us why we don't strike at, for example, Sweden? And we know that freedom-haters don't possess defiant spirits like those of the 19 - may God have mercy on them.

No, we fight because we are free men who don't sleep under oppression. We want to restore freedom to our [Muslim] nation, just as you lay waste to our nation. So shall we lay waste to yours.

No one except a dumb thief plays with the security of others and then makes himself believe he will be secure. Whereas thinking people, when disaster strikes, make it their priority to look for its causes, in order to prevent it happening again. But I am amazed at you. Even though we are in the fourth year after the events of 11 September, Bush is still engaged in distortion, deception and hiding from you the real causes. And thus, the reasons are still there for a repeat of what occurred. So I shall talk to you about the story behind those events and shall tell you truthfully about the moments in which the decision was taken, for you to consider.

“Experts: Bin Laden Courts Backers in Tape”, *Associated Press*, 30 October 2004; “Appearance of Bin Ladin casts shadow over American election campaign”, *al-Sharq al-Awsat* [in Arabic], 31 October 2004; “Bin Ladin tape unifies Americans and Washington received it from Qatar prior to diffusion”, *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, [in Arabic], 31 October 2004; Jason Burke, “Bin Laden, master of propaganda”, *Observer*, 31 October 2004; Josh Meyer, “Bin Laden, in Tape, May Have Sights on New Role”, *LA Times*, 31 October 2004; “Bin Laden's surprise”, *Guardian*, 1 November 2004; Declan Walsh and Richard Norton-Taylor, “Bin Laden tape: a scoop and a mystery”, *Guardian*, 1 November 2004; Faye Bowers and Owais Tohid, “Osama bin Laden casts himself as Muslim elder statesman”, *Christian Science Monitor*, 1 November 2004; Walter Pincus, “Bin Laden Tape Was Attempt to Show Potency, Official Says”, *Washington Post*, 31 October 2004; John Mintz, “Bin Laden Lauds Costs Of War to U.S.”, *Washington Post*, 2 November 2004; Donna Bryson, “Bin Laden's Economy Threat Is Timely”, *Associated Press*, 2 November 2004; Bryan Bender, “Bin Laden's words echo US politics”, *Boston Globe*, 2 November 2004

⁸⁵ “Kerry blames defeat on Bin Laden”, *BBCNews.com*, 31 January 2005
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/4222647.stm>

⁸⁶ “Full transcript of bin Ladin's speech,” *aljazeera.net*, 30 October 2004,
<http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/79C6AF22-98FB-4A1C-B21F-2BC36E87F61F.htm>). An alternative English translation is available from the *Middle East Media Research Institute* at
<http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP81104> .

I say to you, God knows that it had never occurred to us to strike the towers. But after it became unbearable and we witnessed the oppression and tyranny of the American-Israeli coalition against our people in Palestine and Lebanon, it came to my mind.

The events that affected my soul in a direct way started in 1982 when America permitted the Israelis to invade Lebanon and the American Sixth Fleet helped them in that. This bombardment began and many were killed and injured and others were terrorized and displaced. I couldn't forget those moving scenes, blood and severed limbs, women and children sprawled everywhere. Houses destroyed along with their occupants and high rises demolished over their residents, rockets raining down on our home without mercy. The situation was like a crocodile meeting a helpless child, powerless except for his screams. Does the crocodile understand a conversation that doesn't include a weapon? And the whole world saw and heard but it didn't respond.

In those difficult moments many hard-to-describe ideas bubbled in my soul, but in the end they produced an intense feeling of rejection of tyranny, and gave birth to a strong resolve to punish the oppressors. And as I looked at those demolished towers in Lebanon, it entered my mind that we should punish the oppressor in kind and that we should destroy towers in America in order that they taste some of what we tasted and so that they be deterred from killing our women and children. And that day, it was confirmed to me that oppression and the intentional killing of innocent women and children is a deliberate American policy.

Destruction is freedom and democracy, while resistance is terrorism and intolerance. This means the oppressing and embargoing to death of millions as Bush Sr. did in Iraq in the greatest mass slaughter of children mankind has ever known, and it means the throwing of millions of pounds of bombs and explosives at millions of children - also in Iraq - as Bush Jr. did, in order to remove an old agent and replace him with a new puppet to assist in the pilfering of Iraq's oil and other outrages.

So with these images and their like as their background, the events of 11 September came as a reply to those great wrongs, should a man be blamed for defending his sanctuary? Is defending oneself and punishing the aggressor in kind, objectionable terrorism? If it is such, then it is unavoidable for us.

This is the message which I sought to communicate to you in word and deed, repeatedly, for years before 11 September. And you can read this, if you wish, in my interview with Scott in Time Magazine in 1996, or with Peter Arnett on CNN in 1997, or my meeting with John Weiner in 1998.

You can observe it practically, if you wish, in Kenya and Tanzania and in Aden. And you can read it in my interview with 'Abd al-Bari 'Atwan, as well as my interviews with Robert Fisk. The latter is one of your compatriots and co-religionists and I consider him to be neutral.

So are the pretenders of freedom at the White House and the channels controlled by them able to run an interview with him? So that he may relay to the American people what he has understood from us to be the reasons for our fight against you? If you were to avoid these reasons, you will have taken the correct path that will lead America to the security that it was in before 11 September.

This concerned the causes of the war. As for its results, they have been, by the grace of God, positive and enormous, and have, by all standards, exceeded all expectations. This is due to many factors, chief among them, that we have not found it difficult to deal with the Bush administration in light of the resemblance it bears to the regimes in our countries, half of which are ruled by the military and the other half which are ruled by the sons of kings and presidents. Our experience with them is lengthy, and both types are replete with those who are characterised by pride, arrogance, greed and misappropriation of wealth. This resemblance began after the visits of Bush Sr to the region. At a time when some of our compatriots were dazzled by America and hoping that these visits would have an effect on our countries, all of a sudden he was affected by those monarchies and military regimes, and became envious of their remaining decades in their positions, to embezzle the public wealth of the nation without supervision or accounting. So he took dictatorship and suppression of freedoms to his son and they named it the Patriot Act, under the pretence of fighting terrorism. In addition, Bush sanctioned the installing of sons as state governors, and didn't forget to import expertise in election fraud from the region's presidents to Florida to be made use of in moments of difficulty.

All that we have mentioned has made it easy for us to provoke and bait this administration. All that we have to do is to send two *mujahidin* to the furthest point east to raise a piece of cloth on which is written al-Qaida, in order to make the generals race there to cause America to suffer human, economic, and political losses without their achieving for it anything of note other than some benefits for their private companies.

This is in addition to our having experience in using guerrilla warfare and the war of attrition to fight tyrannical superpowers, as we, alongside the *mujahidin*, bled Russia for 10 years, until it went bankrupt and was forced to withdraw in defeat. All praise is due to God. So we are continuing this policy in bleeding America to the point of bankruptcy. God willing, and nothing is too great for God.

That being said, those who say that al-Qaida has won against the administration in the White House or that the administration has lost in this war have not been precise, because when one scrutinises the results, one cannot say that al-Qaida is the sole factor in achieving those spectacular gains. Rather, the policy of the White House that demands the opening of war fronts to keep busy their various corporations - whether they be working in the field of arms or oil or reconstruction - has helped al-Qaida to achieve these enormous results. And so it has appeared to some analysts and diplomats that the White House and us are playing as one team towards the economic goals of the United States, even if the intentions differ. And it was to these sorts of notions and their like that the British diplomat and others were referring in their lectures at the Royal Institute of International Affairs.

For example, al-Qaida spent \$500,000 on the event, while America, in the incident and its aftermath, lost - according to the lowest estimate - more than \$500 billion. Meaning that every dollar of al-Qaida defeated a million dollars by the permission of God, besides the loss of a huge number of jobs. As for the size of the economic deficit, it has reached record astronomical numbers estimated to total more than a trillion dollars. And even more dangerous and bitter for America is that the *mujahidin* recently forced

Bush to resort to emergency funds to continue the fight in Afghanistan and Iraq, which is evidence of the success of the bleed-until-bankruptcy plan - with God's permission.

It is true that this shows that al-Qaida has gained, but on the other hand, it shows that the Bush administration has also gained, something of which anyone who looks at the size of the contracts acquired by the shady Bush administration-linked mega-corporations, like Halliburton and its kind, will be convinced. And it all shows that the real loser is... you. It is the American people and their economy.

And for the record, we had agreed with the Commander-General Muhammad 'Atta, God have mercy on him, that all the operations should be carried out within 20 minutes, before Bush and his administration notice. It never occurred to us that the commander-in-chief of the American armed forces would abandon 50,000 of his citizens in the twin towers to face those great horrors alone, the time when they most needed him. But because it seemed to him that occupying himself by talking to the little girl about the goat and its butting was more important than occupying himself with the planes and their butting of the skyscrapers, we were given three times the period required to execute the operations - all praise is due to God.

And it's no secret to you that the thinkers and perceptive ones from among the Americans warned Bush before the war and told him: 'All that you want for securing America and removing the weapons of mass destruction - assuming they exist - is available to you, and the nations of the world are with you in the inspections, and it is in the interest of America that it not be thrust into an unjustified war with an unknown outcome.' But the darkness of the black gold blurred his vision and insight, and he gave priority to private interests over the public interests of America.

So the war went ahead, the death toll rose, the American economy bled, and Bush became embroiled in the swamps of Iraq that threaten his future. He fits the saying 'like the naughty she-goat who used her hoof to dig up a knife from under the earth'.

So I say to you, over 15,000 of our people have been killed and tens of thousands injured, while more than a thousand of you have been killed and more than 10,000 injured. And Bush's hands are stained with the blood of all those killed from both sides, all for the sake of oil and keeping their private companies in business. Be aware that it is the nation who punishes the weak man when he causes the killing of one of its citizens for money, while letting the powerful one get off, when he causes the killing of more than 1000 of its sons, also for money.

And the same goes for your allies in Palestine. They terrorize the women and children, and kill and capture the men as they lie sleeping with their families on the mattresses, that you may recall that for every action, there is a reaction.

Finally, it behoves you to reflect on the last wills and testaments of the thousands who left you on the 11th as they gestured in despair. They are important testaments, which should be studied and researched. Among the most important of what I read in them was some prose in their gestures before the collapse, where they say: 'How mistaken we were to have allowed the White House to implement its aggressive foreign policies against the weak without supervision.' It is as if they were telling you, the people of America: 'Hold to account those who have caused us to be killed, and happy is he who

learns from others' mistakes.' And among that which I read in their gestures is a verse of poetry. 'Injustice chases its people, and how unhealthy the bed of tyranny.' As has been said: 'An ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure.' And know that: 'It is better to return to the truth than persist in error.' And that the wise man doesn't squander his security, wealth and children for the sake of the liar in the White House.

In conclusion, I tell you in truth, that your security is not in the hands of Kerry, nor Bush, nor al-Qaida. No. Your security is in your own hands. And every state that doesn't play with our security has automatically guaranteed its own security. And God is our Guardian and Helper, while you have no Guardian or Helper. All peace be upon he who follows the Guidance."

2.20 Al-Zawahiri videotape denouncing US elections as irrelevant, 29 November 2004

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.⁸⁷ *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 (see figure 2.4). The imagery was very similar to that of al-Zawahiri's appearance on 9 September 2004 (see above).



Figure 2.4 Still picture from videotape allegedly featuring Ayman al-Zawahiri, aired on *al-Jazeera*, 29 November 2004

⁸⁷ "al-Zawahiri attacks Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Pakistan; threatens America", *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 29 November 2004 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=99242>); "al-Zawahiri affirms the continuation of the fight against the United States", *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 29 November 2004 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=99434>); "al-Zawahiri threatens Washington and warns of repetition of Baghdad scenario", *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic] 29 November 2004 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=99447>); "Al-Zawahiri to Americans: Your elections mean nothing to us and we will persevere in fighting you until the last hour", *al-Sharq al-Awsat* [in Arabic], 30 November 2004 (<http://www.asharqalawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issue=9499&article=268473>)

The video seemed to have been recorded before the US elections on 2 November 2004, because al-Zawahiri refers to the elections as “upcoming”.⁸⁸ Officials from the CIA said they believed “with a high degree of confidence” that the recording was authentic.⁸⁹

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.⁹⁰

The following is an edited version of *BBC Monitoring*’s translation of the quotes aired by *al-Jazeera*.⁹¹

“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

⁸⁸ “New al-Zawahiri tape recorded before American elections”, *al-Sharq al-Awsat* [in Arabic], 1 December 2004 (<http://www.asharqalawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issue=9500&article=268660>)

⁸⁹ “Al-Zawahiri Vows to Keep Fighting U.S.”, FoxNews.com, 29 November 2004 (<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,139885,00.html>)

⁹⁰ Craig Whitlock, “Bin Laden Aide Warns U.S. to Alter Policies”, *Washington Post*, 30 November 2004; “Al-Qaida will ‘continue to attack’”, *Guardian.co.uk*, 29 November 2004; “Al-Qaeda deputy in new tape”, *BBCNews.com*, 29 November 2004

⁹¹ “Al-Zawahiri warns other Arab ‘regimes’ to expect Iraq’s fate”, text of an announcer-read report over video by Qatari *Al-Jazeera* satellite TV on 29 November, from *BBCMonitoring.com*

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."

2.21 Bin Ladin audiotape, "Message to the Muslims in the land of the two sanctities especially and to Muslims elsewhere more generally", 16 December 2004.

On Wednesday 15 December 2004, islamist websites posted a 74-minute audiotape purportedly recorded by Usama bin Ladin.⁹² A complete Arabic transcript of the message was posted on Islamist Internet forums shortly afterwards, under the title "Message to the Muslims in the land of the two sanctities especially and to Muslims elsewhere more generally".⁹³ The CIA concluded with a "high degree of confidence" that the voice was bin Ladin's.⁹⁴

⁹² See posting on islamist webforum *al-Qala'a* (<http://www.qal3ati.net/vb/showthread.php?t=118752>) last accessed on 9 May 2005. The recording itself was downloadable from <http://www.powow.com/kho33/Index.htm> on 9 May 2005; See also "Bin Ladin condemns Saudi government", *aljazeera.net*, 16 December 2004 (<http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/B58D9404-C8FA-4499-8578-61130175A33D.htm>); Neil MacFarquhar, "A Taped Voice, Said to Be bin Laden's, Criticizes Saudis", *New York Times*, 17 December 2004; James Sturcke, "New 'Bin Laden' tape posted on website", *Guardian.co.uk*, 16 December 2004; Brian Whitaker, "Bin Laden tape put online", *Guardian*, 17 December 2004; "'Bin Laden' tape urges oil attack," *BBCNews.com*, 16 December 2004; Greg Miller, "Bin Laden Urges Strikes on U.S., Allies in Mideast", *LA Times*, 17 December 2004; Craig Whitlock and Susan B. Glasser, "On Tape, Bin Laden Tries New Approach", *Washington Post*, 17 December 2004

⁹³ See posting on islamist webforum *al-Qala'a* (<http://www.qal3ati.net/vb/showthread.php?t=118874>) last accessed on 9 May 2005. It is also available on the PRISM website http://www.e-prism.org/images/OBL_text_of_audiotape_-_Dec_04.pdf

⁹⁴ Greg Miller, "Bin Laden Urges Strikes on U.S., Allies in Mideast", *LA Times*, 17 December 2004

The statement praised the recent attack by militants on the US consulate in Jidda (Saudi Arabia) on 6 December and called on Muslims to attack oil supplies in the Gulf region.

It is worth noting that the tape referred to an event less than ten days before (the Jidda operation), making this statement one of the fastest-produced messages ever to come from Bin Ladin. At the same time, it is one of the longest statements to emerge from the al-Qaida leadership since 9/11.

The substantial issues which caught the most media attention in the statement was first of all bin Ladin's focus on the situation in Saudi Arabia, a topic he had not addressed in such depth for several years. Second, Bin Ladin's call for terrorist strikes against oil facilities were also interpreted by nervous financial markets as a dangerous sign of looming strikes against energy infrastructure in the region.

The current author has not translated the text of the statement. The following are edited excerpts from the original videotape as translated by the *Middle East Media Research Institute*:⁹⁵

“To the Muslims of Saudi Arabia in particular, and to the Muslims in other countries in general:

This is a message concerning the disagreement and conflict between the rulers of Riyadh and the people of this country, and how to resolve it. There has been much talk in Saudi Arabia about the need to have security and safety and about the inviolability of the blood of Muslims and those who have been granted safe passage, and about the importance of [maintaining] harmonious relations and social cohesion, and the dangers of divisiveness and conflict. It has been claimed that the *mujahidin* are responsible for that which has befallen Saudi Arabia. However, the self-evident truth is that the responsibility falls on the shoulders of the regime, which has neglected the conditions necessary for guaranteeing security, life, harmonious relations, and social cohesion.

It did this by disobeying God and committing grave sins which expose the land to God's warning and punishment. God told us the stories of the disobedient and their punishment so that we might take heed. God said: ‘God made an example of a city, which used to be safe and peaceful. Its provisions used to be supplied in abundance from every quarter. But they denied God's favors, so God brought upon them hunger and fear because of what they did [Qur'an 16:112].’ And God said: ‘Those who acted as tyrants in the land and increased corruption in it, your Lord unleashed a scourge upon them. Your Lord is always watching [Qur'an 89:11-14].’

Similarly, all who help this regime and fawn upon it, as well as those who abstain from denouncing evil – they too are responsible [...] The acts of disobedience [against God] committed by the regime are very grave. They are worse than merely grave offenses and mortal sins; they are so serious that those who commit such things are no longer Muslims. It is worse than acting iniquitously with the people and depriving them of

⁹⁵ MEMRI Special Dispatch 838 (<http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP83804>)

their rights, humiliating them, insulting their intelligence and sentiments, and embezzling the funds of the Islamic nation. Each day, millions of people suffer from poverty and deprivation, while millions of riyals flow into the accounts of the heads of the [Saudi royal] family who wield power. In addition to all this, services are being scaled back, they are stealing lands, they forcibly impose themselves as ‘partners’ in businesses without giving any compensation, and so forth. The regime has gone beyond all this and has reached actions that clearly remove one from Islam.

[The regime] has allied itself with infidel America and helped it [in its war] against Muslims, and has made itself a counterpart to God by legislating to people both what is permitted and what is forbidden, instead of [leaving this to] God [...]

That which I just mentioned is one of the important causes of disagreement between the Muslims and the rulers of Riyadh. The solution to this matter is simple and well known in God’s religion, provided that the ruler honestly wants reform, and [indeed] if he wants it at all. As for us, God knows that we want reform and strive for it as much as we can. We left our country only because of our love for reform, for we didn’t lack any worldly goods, praise and thanks to God [...]

The prosperity of this [Islamic] nation will come through that which brought it prosperity in its beginnings. The Arabian Peninsula [before Islam] was [swept by] crashing waves of aggression and killing, and was flooded with barbaric paganism. But when God sent our Prophet Muhammad and revealed the Qur’an, and the people joined him in accepting Islam, then their condition improved and they prospered, and God made them mighty after their having been downtrodden [...]

The solution to the conflict between the ruler and his subjects is the policy [proposed] by the first caliph [Abu Bakr] to the second caliph [‘Umar], may God’s favor be on them both – namely: ‘Be upright, and your subjects will behave properly.’ These are the words of the Rightly Guided Caliphs [...] If a ruler properly observes God’s law, the subjects will behave properly, and they will be under obligation, by God’s command, to listen and obey him. If, however, the ruler becomes an apostate and abandons God’s law, it is incumbent upon the subjects, by God’s command, to rebel. Obedience to him is not absolute, but rather is conditional upon his probity [...]

Thus, if we want to arrive at a proper solution – theoretically and practically – to this conflict [between the ruler and his subjects], we must know its roots and dimensions. For this conflict is partly a local conflict, but in other respects it is a conflict between world heresy – and with it today’s apostates – under the leadership of America on the one hand, and on the other, the Islamic nation with the brigades of *mujahidin* in its vanguard. This oppressive [regime] in the region, which at present represses every movement for reform and imposes upon the peoples policies that contradict both their religion and their worldly interest, is the very same family which helped the Crusaders against the Muslims a century ago. It is doing this on behalf of America and its allies, and this constitutes a continuation of the previous Crusaders’ wars against the Islamic world.

When we look at the domestic policies of our country, we can clearly discern the extent of the Crusader-Zionist control over it. As for American interference in domestic affairs, there is no end to what one can say about it. It is impossible to appoint the king

or his viceroy without America's consent. This is based on agreements between previous kings and the American government. The farcical situation of the present government in Saudi Arabia is [maintained] with America's consent, in order to prevent the deterioration of the current situation and the deepening of discord among the princes, especially in these most recent difficult years. History has never witnessed anything like the prevailing condition of the government in Saudi Arabia. It may occur that upon the ruler's death, someone may rule the people in his name, as in the case of *Shajarat al-Durr*. However, that the whole land be governed in the name of a king who for a decade already has no idea what is going on – this is unheard of.

According to Islamic law, he has lost his authority, not only due to his having committed actions which remove one from Islam, but also because of his feebleness of mind and his having lost the mental capacity needed for even the smallest of tasks, let alone for administering the country and the people. His brothers should not charge him with that which he is unable to do. They insist on his staying [on the throne] only because they refuse to see his brother 'Abdallah become king, for then their powers would be reduced, and he would wield exclusive power without them. For his part, he cannot get around them, since they have control of affairs, especially in the ministries of the defense and the interior, as well as in intelligence.

What is more important is that they are in control of the royal chancery, which enables them to issue a royal edict in the name of the nominal ruler to remove him [i.e. 'Abdallah] and to appoint someone else. This sharp controversy within the royal family, in addition to their oppressing the people, enables America to go far in blackmailing the competing princes into meeting its demands, and particularly Prince 'Abdallah, since 'Abdallah knows well that if he does not comply with America's orders then he is destined, in the best of circumstances, to be deposed by his brothers, just as they had previously deposed their brother, King Saud. He also knows that his competitors have previous experience, and they are ready to do worse than depose him, if necessary.

Whoever wants a recent real-life example for the role of America in deciding to depose someone should look at the case of Prince Hassan Ibn Talal of Jordan. After he had been viceroy for a number of decades, his brother Hussein returned from America a few days before his death determined to depose his brother, and [indeed] he deposed him. He [Hassan] acquiesced, and became a mere political footnote. It is this [fate] that Prince 'Abdallah fears [would befall him] should he disobey his protector - America. Thus, it is no secret that those who make decisions about important things are in America.

The proof of the depth of the Crusaders' control over our country is that their agents carry out the changes imposed on them by those who appointed them - even in our school curricula - with the intention of disfiguring the identity of the Islamic nation and westernizing its children. This is an old plan, which began decades ago, with regard to the curricula of al-Azhar in Egypt.

America has also asked the other agent- [Arab] states to change their curricula so as to dry up what it [America] calls: 'The fountainheads of the [Islamic] awakening.'

America demanded from Yemen that it close its scholarly [Islamic] institutes more than two decades ago; likewise, America required the rulers of Riyadh to change the religious curricula, and this was actually done in deference to its [America's] wishes. All this happened more than 15 years before the attacks on New York and Washington [...] This Crusader intervention in the changing of the curricula is absolutely the most dangerous intervention in our affairs, because it is, in short, a change in the religion, while the religion is a whole, which is indivisible [...]

It is evident that the outcome of changing the religious curricula is damaging both to religion and to material interests. As for [the damage to] religion, you already know that it is blatant apostasy, and as for material interests, the [altered curricula] will eventually produce educated slaves in our country, who will be loyal to America, sell the interests of the country and smile in the face of the Americans, while they conquer the land and defile the [Muslims'] honor, under the pretext of liberty, equality, and the laws of the United Nations. This is one example of the American intervention in domestic policy.

As for intervention in foreign policy, the ruling families defer to America and play their role in its treacheries. [The late Jordanian] King Hussein continued in the treacherous course set by his grandfather, 'Abdallah, son of Sharif Hussayn, and his father too, against Palestine. And his [i.e. Hussein's] son, 'Abdallah II, follows this same course. Muhammad VI of Morocco follows the same line of treachery that was followed by his father and his grandfather before him - they continue to implement the Crusader conspiracies. The scope of this support does not permit a complete depiction of it, and so I will only mention some of the most important cases: The government of Riyadh joined a world alliance with the Crusader heresy under the leadership of Bush against Islam and its people, as has happened in Afghanistan, and likewise the conspiracies in Iraq, which have begun and not yet ended. They opened their bases to American forces in order to invade Iraq, which helped them [the Americans] and made it easier for them to conquer Iraq... And now, they have shown us a new chapter in the series of conspiracies with America, which they call 'the initiative of sending Arab and Muslim forces for peacekeeping in Iraq' [...] With this initiative, they seek to legitimize the American occupation [...]

What makes this matter an even worse tragedy for the people is the fact that many of them had believed, when Prince 'Abdallah ibn 'Abd Al-'Aziz assumed the management of the country, that he would save it from the mire of religious disobedience, corruption in the administration, finance, media, etc, as well as from subservience to America. However, while people were expecting him to do good, he showed them his evil nature [...] Indeed, Saddam is a thief and an apostate, but the solution should never have been to transfer Iraq from the indigenous thief to the foreign thief. Helping the infidel to rob Muslims' land and to gain control over them is an act that removes one from Islam... Prince Talal ibn 'Abd Al-'Aziz publicly revealed that his father was receiving money from the English [...]

Here, intelligent people must stop to reflect upon the behavior of these rulers, for the dimension of the fault is immense and Muslims cannot accept such people as their rulers.

Those intelligent people who seek reform, and want to achieve it through these [rulers, should ask themselves]: How can they [i.e. these rulers] carry out reform while swimming in a stormy sea of reprehensible qualities? It is impossible, for they are bound to drown, and no intelligent person should agree to have someone with such qualities as a partner in any action [...]

Twenty years ago, I gave good advice [for reform] to the government, through senior ulema - but things have not changed. Then, fifteen years ago, I gave my advice directly to the deputy interior minister, and told him about the grave sins from which the state should desist and the danger of continuing in them, but to no avail [...] What I told him about their sins - they know that these things are prohibited in God's religion, but they do not want anyone to denounce them for a simple reason: because it is not prohibited by the religion of kingly rule [...]

Whoever is given the gift of true sight by God, and reflects upon the acts of the regime, will clearly see this truth in both domestic and foreign affairs, namely, that people obey the king's orders over God's orders, so that what the king declares permissible, becomes permissible, and what he declares forbidden, becomes forbidden. In their view, he has the sovereign right to permit something one year, and to prohibit it another. For example: it is well known that usury is strictly forbidden, for God said: *God has permitted trading and made usury unlawful* [Qur'an, 2:275]. However, the regime issued decrees and legislations, which make it [i.e. usury] lawful, and support it, and set penalties for whoever wants to oppose it or avoids paying what they deceitfully call 'profit.' It is well known, however, that to take usury is a grave sin and it is one of the acts that removes one from Islam.

The second example is allying one's self with the infidels. For example: the Jordanian regime is a paganinfidel regime. Nevertheless, the rulers of Riyadh were allied with King Hussein and if a [Saudi] preacher or writer described him [i.e. Hussayn] as an agent of the Jews, he would be subject to penalty on the part of the Riyadh regime, through laws that were legislated specifically for this purpose. However, when King Hussayn entered an alliance with Saddam, when he [the latter] invaded Kuwait, King Fahd washed his hands of his former ally, and the Riyadh newspapers filled up with documents and pictures proving that Hussayn Ibn Talal was an agent of the Jews - which was true, for he was indeed that. On the other hand, the Jordanian newspapers filled with documents and pictures proving that the rulers of Riyadh were agents of the English, and subsequently, of America, which is true, for they are indeed that.

Therefore, despite our grave misfortune caused by the rulers of the region, who are agents [of foreign powers], we suffer greater misfortune because of some of the leaders of the Muslim world, who insist on describing these tyrants as legitimate rulers. Some people, therefore, believe that they are the lifeboat, whereas in fact they are the drowning boat [...] The honest people in these [Islamic] associations should purge the Islamic activities of them [the tyrants] [...]

Such is also the case with 'Abd al-Nasir, Sadat, Qaddhafi, and Saddam. 'Abd al-Nasir was in conflict with them [i.e. the Saudi regime], so they declared him an infidel from the pulpit of the holy mosque of Mecca, and indeed he was one. However, when he made peace with them, he became a Muslim again. The same with Qaddafi: when he reviled them for three decades, he was an infidel, but when this heretic made peace

with them, he became a Muslim, and they let him enter the sacred Ka‘ba. And Sadat, when he signed the capitulation initiative with the Jews, the rulers of Riyadh, along with the rest of the Arab countries, accused him of treason and of being a foreign agent, which indeed he was, and their papers cursed and reviled him vehemently. Then, when Prince ‘Abdallah acted in the same treacherous manner as a foreign agent in the Beirut initiative, the hypocrites praised him and supported him. The false *‘ulama* and mercenary writers turn wherever the ruler turns, and they fall in with him wherever he falls in for the sake of money, and [yet] they still claim religious knowledge and wisdom and guidance and uprightness.

From all this it becomes clear that the ruler believes in another religion, but he trades with the religion of Islam and deceives people with it [...] The conflict is a conflict between two ways, and a deep struggle between two beliefs: a conflict between the divine, perfect way, submitting full authority to God in all matters [...] and the grossly secular way [...]

After this has become clear, then the solution to improve the conditions is, as has been made clear by [Islamic] law, to depose the ruler; and if he resists and refuses to go, it is obligatory to start an armed uprising against him and to depose him. This is the dictate of [Islamic] law, which preserves both the religion and the earthly interests of the people [...] How can any intelligent person, while seeing the apostate ruler and his troops armed to the teeth, claim that he [i.e. the ruler] desires reform and peaceful solution? [...] And we are not talking here about a ruler guilty of some depravity and debauchery, but rather, about apostasy and serving as an agent to infidels. Just as there is no difference between Bremer, the former American ruler in Baghdad, and ‘Allawi, the present ruler, with regard to carrying out American policies in Iraq, so there is no difference between Bremer and the rest of the rulers of the region in carrying out America’s policies [...] The doctrine of rebelling against an apostate ruler is not a doctrine that I invented, but rather, it is a doctrine held by the consensus of all the great religious scholars. Such is the dictate of religious law in a situation such as ours. Therefore, it is obligatory for all Muslims to take action for reform, taking into consideration the dimension of the conflict and the fact that these regimes are nothing but a part of the system of global heresy.

Reform should be [carried out] according to the law of God, otherwise it is a deviation from the law of God and a waste of time and effort [...]

Those [clerics] who are opposed to the people of the land conducting armed dialogue with the governments in order to regain their rights – those [clerics] practice gross deception [...] Their approach is extremely dangerous for two reasons: first [...] because they let their capricious ideas compete with God’s law, which is a grave sin, as is well known [...] Second, because they participate in stopping people from following God’s course and they mislead them about their religion, by preventing them from taking their rights in the ways prescribed by God. This pushes the hypocrites and the ignorant to consider adopting the course of the Northern Alliance [in Afghanistan] and of others like them, such as ‘Allawi and his followers. This is absolutely forbidden."

Before ending, let me respond to some of the accusations of the regime [...] They have accused the *mujahidin* of following the Kharijite sect, but they know that we have absolutely nothing to do with that school [of thought]. Both our messages and our

actual behavior attest to this [...] We do not declare [Muslim] people collectively to be infidels and do not consider the killing of Muslims to be permissible. If some Muslims are killed during the operations of the *mujahidin*, we pray for God's mercy upon them. This is to be considered accidental manslaughter, and we ask God to forgive us for it, and we bear responsibility for it [...]

But I say to the ruler of Riyadh: if you wish, I'll tell you about the murder of Muslims [...] and I shall tell you about the one who declared Muslims collectively to be unbelievers and considered it permissible to kill Muslims - it is your father, 'Abd al-'Aziz, who went to war and helped the English against the Ottoman state and their [i.e. the Ottomans'] deputy, Ibn al-Rashid, in Ha'il [...] You yourselves rebelled with arms against your brother King Saud [...] and your clerics did not call you and your father Kharijites. [Reference to the slaughter of other Muslims by King 'Abd Al-'Aziz Aal Sa'ud in Ta'if, when he fought against the supporters of Sharif Hussein of Mecca in 1924] [...]

Is any Muslim ignorant of the fact that assisting infidels against Muslims is prohibited, or that legalizing the taking of interest is prohibited? This is obviously well known in religion, just as one knows that drinking wine and promiscuity are prohibited [...]

You permit that which God prohibits and you prohibit that which God allows, and you issue certificates of absolution to whomever you want, and you accuse the young people [who oppose you] of holding erroneous ideas and being a corrupt gang. But who [in fact] are those who hold erroneous ideas? Are they the ones who follow the order of the Prophet [stating] that it is obligatory to banish the Jews and Christians from the Arabian Peninsula, or those who scoff at the traditions of the Prophet? [...] Are we those who hold erroneous ideas, or is it those who betrayed the Islamic nation and abandoned Muhammad's [Arabian] peninsula to the Jews and the Christians, enabling them to take control of it and giving them military bases in it? That is in addition to betraying Iraq, [bearing in mind that] it is forbidden to betray even an infidel [...]

Who are those who have erroneous ideas and who are a corrupt gang? Are they those who defend the Muslims and their honor and property in Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan, Kashmir, and Chechnya, or are they those who joined the global alliance of heresy against the Muslims, in addition to robbing the public funds of the [Muslim] nation? [...]

[Here Bin Ladin criticizes the Saudi government for wasting money on an arms deal instead of spending the funds on the unemployed, and for seizing private property and wasting public funds on the building of extravagant palaces. He also criticizes King Fahd (then Crown Prince) for violating the sanctity of the Ka'ba in Mecca when he violently quashed a Wahhabi fundamentalist revolt in November 1979.]

Who are those who have erroneous ideas and who are a corrupt gang? Are they the *mujahidin*, or are they those who cooperated with America in murdering more than one million children within a few years, during their wicked embargo on Iraq, in what was the biggest massacre of children known to humanity? [...]

It is extremely incredible and preposterous that the [Saudi] regime accuses the [Islamist] youth of the sins of which the regime itself is guilty, as when they claim that Zionism stands behind the *mujahidin*. However, both Muslims and infidels, all over the world, know that the *Jihad* youth are Zionism's worst enemy, yet the regime accuses us of their own [sins][...] Weren't you [Crown Prince 'Abdallah] the author of the Beirut initiative, in which you granted recognition to the Zionists and their conquest of Palestine? How have you lost your mind and your honor, you, the commander of the National Guard, to the extent that you lance such false and vile accusations against the *mujahidin*? [...]

I ask all the Muslims to curse the Zionists and their agents, and I ask of you [Crown Prince 'Abdallah], if you are sincere, that you and those who obey you pronounce the following supplication in the mosques of Mecca and Medina and in all the other mosques [in Saudi Arabia]: 'O God, turn against the American-Zionist coalition, their allies, and their agents. O God, destroy them and break them; remove them from power and disperse them and scatter them; make their wives widows and turn them against one another. Seek out their weak spots just as they seek out the *mujahidin*'s weak spots. Shame them before all humanity. Rid us of them however you wish' [...]

We ask God to give His grace to the *mujahidin* who stormed the American consulate in Jeddah. How can they [i.e. the Americans] expect to enjoy security while they bring death and destruction upon our people in Palestine and in Iraq. They do not deserve to be secure anywhere in the world. As for their presence in Saudi Arabia – or rather in all of the Arabian Peninsula – it is prohibited by Islamic law [...] And I say to our brethren and our people [...] continue in your path, and do not fear difficulties. Do not relent in purifying and cleansing the Arabian Peninsula of polytheists, heretics, and apostates [...]

You, the *mujahidin*: There is now a rare and golden opportunity to make America bleed in Iraq, both economically and in terms of human losses and morale. Don't miss out on this opportunity, lest you regret it. One of the main causes for our enemies' gaining hegemony over our country is their stealing our oil; therefore, you should make every effort in your power to stop the greatest theft in history of the natural resources of both present and future generations, which is being carried out through collaboration between foreigners and [native] agents [...] Focus your operations on it [oil production], especially in Iraq and the Gulf area, since this [lack of oil] will cause them to die off [on their own].

In conclusion, I address a brief message to the rulers of Riyadh, and another to those who wield influence. I say to them [i.e. the rulers of Riyadh]: leadership is a contract between the sovereign and his subjects, and both have rights and obligations that derive from the contract. There are also things which nullify it, one of which is when the sovereign betrays his religion and nation - and this is what you did [...]

It is no secret to you now that the [Saudi] people have awakened from their apathy ... and the Muslims in Saudi Arabia now insist in reclaiming their stolen rights, no matter what it takes. Therefore, you have to choose between paths. The first is to return the trust to its owners in a peaceful manner and to let the people of the country choose a Muslim ruler so that he might rule them according to God's Book and His Prophet's tradition. The second is to refuse to return the people's rights [...] and to recruit some

of them with money from the public money of the [Islamic] nation to beat up and kill their own brothers and cousins who reject your authority. You should know, however [...] that when peoples rise up to demand their rights they can not be stopped by security apparatuses. You should bear in mind the fate of the Shah of Iran, despite the reputation and the power and the experience of his security apparatus, and likewise the fate of Ceausescu in Romania [...]

You know that we in the al-Qaida organization are not fighting you over worldly affairs; what offends us rather is that you commit acts which remove you from Islam - among them, ruling by [laws] other than those which God has revealed, and making alliances with the infidels.

I now address the influential people among the honest *'ulama*, the leaders, the dignitaries and notables, and the businessmen. The message is: take action before it's too late [...] Do everything you can to defuse the crisis, as you know that the *mujahidin* in Saudi Arabia have not yet launched the war against the regime - for had they launched it in fact, the top priority would have been to get rid of the local leaders of heresy – namely the rulers of Riyadh. However, what is currently going on is merely an extension of the war against the Crusader-American coalition, which is fighting us everywhere, and whom we fight everywhere, including within Saudi Arabia. We strive to expel them from it [i.e. Saudi Arabia], God willing. You, the people of influence: fear God, for your own sake and for the sake of your nation. Let those of you who can do so emigrate from the country, thus freeing themselves from the imaginary shackles and the psychological pressure that the regime has put on them [...]"

2.22 Bin Ladin audiotope, "Letter to the Sons of the Two Rivers", 27 December 2004

On Monday 27 December 2004, the Arabic TV station *al-Jazeera* aired 2 minutes of excerpts of what it said was a new audiotaped recording from Usama bin Ladin.⁹⁶ The following day, Islamist websites posted what seemed to be the original tape, which was more than one hour long and carried the title "Letter to the Sons of the Two Rivers" [sic].⁹⁷ Arabic transcripts of the entire speech later appeared on radical Islamist websites.⁹⁸ Some of these transcripts presented the statement under a different title, "Letter to the Muslims in Iraq in Particular and to the Islamic Nation in General".⁹⁹ The CIA later confirmed with "moderate confidence" that

⁹⁶ "Bin Ladin acknowledges al-Zarqawi and calls for a boycott of elections in Iraq", *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 27 December 2004 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=101846>); "Bin Ladin praises al-Zarqawi and acknowledges his leadership of al-Qaida in Iraq", *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 27 December 2004 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=101852>); An audiofile with the passage played on al-Jazeera is available at http://www.aljazeera.net/mritems/streams/2004/12/27/1_517667_1_13.wma

⁹⁷ See <http://www.qal3ati.net/vb/showthread.php?t=119322> (accessed 24 May 2005) or <https://www.22lajnah22.co.uk/sound/albumdisplay?albumid=48> (accessed 24 May 2005).

⁹⁸ See for example <http://www.qal3ati.net/vb/showthread.php?t=120156> (accessed 24 May 2005)

⁹⁹ Dr Brynjar Lia provided this author with a copy of a downloaded PDF file with the Arabic transcript of the statement, this time entitled "Letter to the Muslims in Iraq in Particular and to the Islamic Nation in General". The address of the Internet site from which this transcript was downloaded has not been recorded. The document

the voice on the tape was bin Ladin's.¹⁰⁰ The poor quality of the recording allegedly made it difficult to reach a more certain conclusion.

The speaker on the tape formally declared the Iraq-based Jordanian militant Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi as the leader of al-Qaida in Iraq. He also declared the new Iraqi constitution illegitimate and warned that anyone who participates in the Iraqi elections scheduled for 30 January 2005 would be considered an infidel. In the tape posted on the Internet, it also emerged that bin Ladin told Muslims to step up suicide bombings, plant more land mines and target oil and agricultural facilities in Iraq, where he said al Qaida's weekly expenses amounted to 200,000 euros. He also told Muslims they must help Palestinians waging an uprising against Israeli occupation, and he called the Palestinian presidential candidate Mahmud Abbas an apostate.¹⁰¹

Commentators and analysts focused on Bin Ladin's interest in the Iraqi elections, but they also paid attention to bin Ladin's appointment of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi as the leader of al-Qaida in Iraq.¹⁰² Until then, the relationship between the two leaders had not been clear.¹⁰³ Many observers interpreted the declaration as an indication of the rise to prominence of al-Zarqawi in what one might call "the global jihad movement", with some even saying that bin Ladin was grooming al-Zarqawi as his successor.¹⁰⁴ This statement is also one of the few Bin Ladin statements in a long time to have been commented directly by US president George Bush, who said bin Ladin's statement was at odds with what the Iraqi people wants.¹⁰⁵

The following is an edited version of *BBC*'s translation of the excerpts showed by *al-Jazeera*:¹⁰⁶

"I believe that the *mujahid amir*, dignified brother Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi, and the groups affiliated with him are good and from the group that fights according to the orders of God. God sufficeth them. We were pleased with their daring operations against the Americans and [Iyad] 'Allawi's renegade government. We were also

seems to have been edited and published by the *al-Sahab Production Group*, a name associated with the publication of many other al-Qaida films, tapes and books.

¹⁰⁰ "American intelligence believe Bin Ladin tape is authentic", *aljazeera.net* [in Arabic], 28 December 2004 (<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=101860>)

¹⁰¹ "Web: Bin Laden Says Fighting in Iraq Muslims' Duty", *Reuters*, 28 December 2004

¹⁰² "Bin Laden Calls for Iraq Vote Boycott", *Associated Press*, 27 December 2004; "Tape Opposing Iraqi Vote Attributed to bin Laden", *Associated Press*, 28 December 2004; John Solomon, "Analysts See Shift in Bin Laden's Rhetoric", *Associated Press*, 28 December 2004

¹⁰³ Don Van Natta Jr., "Who Is Abu Musab al-Zarqawi?", *New York Times*, 10 October 2004

¹⁰⁴ Alexis Debat, "The New Head of Jihad Inc.?", *ABCNews.com*, 28 March 2005

¹⁰⁵ David E. Sanger, "Bush Takes Rare Step of Debating bin Laden", *New York Times*, 30 December 2004

¹⁰⁶ "'Bin Laden' tape: Key excerpts," *BBCNews.com*, 27 December 2004

pleased by their response to the orders of God and the prophet, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, with regard to unity and adhering to the covenant of God.

We in the al-Qaida organisation warmly welcome their union with us. This is a great step toward rendering successful the efforts of the *mujahidin* to establish the state of right and annihilate the state of injustice. We hope that God will accept and bless this step.

It should be known that the *mujahid* brother Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi is the *amir* of the al-Qaida organisation in the Land of the Two Rivers. The brothers in the group there should heed his orders and obey him in all that which is good.

As is known, the constitution which US occupier [Paul] Bremer imposed is a man-made, secular constitution. He insisted that Islam should not be the sole source of legislation. Therefore, supposing that the source of 90% of the laws is the Islamic *Shari'a* and the source of 10% is man-made legislation, this constitution, according to Islam, is an infidel constitution.

Based on that, whoever participates, knowingly and willingly, in the elections we have just described, becomes a non-believer. Strength is derived only from God. One should exercise caution against the impostors who speak in the name of Islamic parties and groups, urging people to participate in this defiant apostasy.”

The following is an edited version of extracts from the original videotape as translated by the Middle East Media Research Institute:¹⁰⁷

“The conflict with the West is a fateful war between unbelief and Islam, between the army of Muhammad, the army of belief, and the people of the cross [...]

The important, huge, and dangerous issue today in the entire world is this Third World War, started by the Crusader-Zionist coalition against the Islamic nation. [...]

What is the difference between the massacre by the tyrant Saddam [Hussein] at Halabja and the massacre by Bush at Falluja? If Saddam killed there [at Halabja] a few thousand of our Kurdish brothers in the name of the odious nationalism, the pharaoh of this era [i.e. Bush] killed only at Falluja a few thousand, and wounded and crippled twice as many, in addition to expelling and terrifying hundreds of thousands – and all this in the name of the bloodthirsty Zionist Crusade. [...]

[The UN] is an organization of infidel [countries] that shapes the nature of the relations between the lords of the veto, headed by America, and the slaves of the General Assembly, and then speaks mendaciously and distortingly of justice, equality, and freedom. [...]

The *Jihad* in Palestine and in Iraq is a personal duty incumbent upon the residents of the two countries [alone] – [but] if they are unable to carry it out, [this duty] is

¹⁰⁷ MEMRI Special dispatch 837 (<http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP83704>)

incumbent upon [the residents of the] adjacent [countries], and so on and so forth, until the circle includes all the Muslim countries [...]

When there is blatant helplessness in Palestine and Iraq, *Jihad* [becomes] a personal duty incumbent upon those around them, such as the residents of Saudi Arabia, Syria, Jordan, Turkey, Iran, and Kuwait, and if [they are also] unable to carry it out, the duty is incumbent upon those around them [...] Refraining from personal *Jihad* is the most salient trait of the hypocrites. [...]

Aiding America, or the ‘Allawi government which is apostate, or the Karzai government, or the Mahmud ‘Abbas government which is apostate, or the other apostate governments in their war against the Muslims, is the greatest apostasy of all, and amounts to abandonment of the Muslim community. [...]

[This category] includes owners and employees of companies that transfer petroleum, weapons, supplies, or other commodities. Anyone who aids them in any way is an apostate and he must be fought [...]

The Iraqi who wages *Jihad* against the infidel Americans or against the apostate ‘Allawi government is our brother and ally – whether he is Persian, Kurdish, or Turkmen. [In contrast], the Iraqi who joins this apostate government and fights the *Jihad* warriors and those resisting the [foreign] occupation is considered an apostate and an infidel, even if he belongs to the [ancient] Arab tribes of Rabi‘a or Mudar. [...]

Personnel of the [Iraqi] military, security apparatuses, and national guard [...] their blood is permitted. They are apostates who should not be prayed over upon their deaths. They cannot inherit, and they must not be inherited from [after their deaths]. Their wives are divorced from them, and they must not be buried in Muslim cemeteries. [...]

Muslims must beware of these kinds of elections. They must unite around the *Jihad* warriors and those who resist the occupiers. Anyone who participates in these elections [...] has committed apostasy against God. [...]

[The Iraqi constitution] is a *Jahiliyya* constitution that is made by man. The elections are ordered by America, under their airplanes, bombs, and tanks.[...]

The land [of Palestine] is under occupation, the constitution of the land is a *Jahili* constitution made by man [...] and the candidate Mahmud Abbas is a Bahai who was brought in [...] under the Oslo Accords. [...]

The warrior commander [and] honored comrade Abu Mus‘ab al-Zarqawi and the groups who joined him are the best of the community that is fighting for the sake of the word of God. Their courageous operations against the Americans and against the apostate ‘Allawi government have gladdened us [...]

We in the al-Qaida organization very much welcome their union with us. This is a tremendous step on the path to the unification of the efforts fighting for the establishment of a State of Truth and for the uprooting of the State of the Lie [...]

Know that the warrior comrade Abu Mus‘ab al-Zarqawi is the commander of the al-Qaida organization in the land of the Tigris and the Euphrates, and the comrades in the organization there must obey him. [...]

The expenses of the al-Qaida organization in Iraq reach €200,000 per week. [...]

I call upon you to attack reinforcement lines and oil pipelines, to sow powerful mines [...] and to assassinate the owners of companies aiding the needs of the enemy, whether in Riyadh, Kuwait, Jordan, Turkey, or other [countries]. [...]"

3 UNCONFIRMED DOCUMENTS

3.1 Bin Ladin preface to letter calling for unity of Muslims, 19 January 2003

On Sunday 19 January 2003, the London-based Arabic newspaper *al-Sharq al-Awsat* published an article containing extracts from a previously unknown letter allegedly written in part by Usama bin Ladin.¹⁰⁸ The 26-page letter was entitled “Islamic work between proponents of union and advocates of conflict” (*al-‘amal al-islami bayna dawa’i al-ijtima’ wa du at al-niza’*). Bin Ladin himself was said to have written the introduction and to have signed the letter. The newspaper received the statement on 18 January by mail from an Islamic source in London with close links to the “Islamic Research and Study Centre” (*markaz al-dirasat wa’l-buhuth al-islamiyya*).¹⁰⁹ The same London-based sources said the letter had been written “just a few weeks previously”. According to the *Associated Press*, the statement was not immediately published on radical islamist websites, as normally happens with such statements.¹¹⁰ Indeed, in the archive of the radical islamist discussion forum *al-Qal’a*, one finds the first reference to the letter on 21 January, in a posting which quotes an article from *CNN* in Arabic.¹¹¹

Because the document itself has not been made publicly available, it is difficult to assess the authenticity of the text and of bin Ladin’s alleged authorship of the introduction. No western security officials commented on the authenticity of the letter.¹¹² It is nevertheless not impossible that Bin Ladin has participated in its publication. However, the name of the main author is not specified at any point in the newspaper article, and it is extremely difficult to

¹⁰⁸ Muhammad al-Shafi’i, “New letter from Usama bin Ladin justifies the errors of ‘al-Qaida’, attacks ‘secularist movements’, and calls for the unity of ‘islamist factions’”, *al-Sharq al-Awsat* [in Arabic], 19 January 2003 (<http://www.asharqalawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issue=8818&article=147803>)

¹⁰⁹ A website under this name operated between 2001 and 2003 and was considered by most commentators as al-Qaida’s quasi-official mouthpiece.

¹¹⁰ Maggie Michael, “Report: bin Laden Urges Islamic Unity,” *Associated Press*, 19 January 2003

¹¹¹ See <http://www.qal3ati.net/vb/showthread.php?t=72144>

¹¹² “Bin Laden ‘in jihad call’ – paper”, *CNN.com*, 20 January 2003 (<http://www.CNN.com/2003/WORLD/europe/01/20/uk.binladen.jihad/index.html>)

determine without any further evidence. Most articles posted on the website of the “Islamic Research and Study Centre” between 2001 and 2003 had no named author. In recent years the names of some of the website’s most prominent writers have been disclosed, notably the Saudi militant Yusuf al-Ayiri. However, the main author of “Islamic work between proponents of union and advocates of conflict” remains unknown.

It has not been possible to retrieve the full text of the original letter, so we can only produce a translation of the quotations which appear in the *al-Sharq al-Awsat* article:¹¹³

“Bin Ladin says [...]: ‘What calls for astonishment and causes perplexion is that which any Muslim can observe today, namely the vast number of differences and divisions between Muslims generally and between those working for Islam especially, to the extent that this dangerous phenomenon (i.e. the disagreements) has almost become the only thing on which the different islamist factions in the field agree.’

Bin Ladin adds [...]: ‘The importance of the letter lies not only in its content, but also in its origin, for the letter is published from within the depth of the *jihadist* current, inside the blessed Islamic awakening. It (the letter) is an expression of a broad section within this current, which has been and still is described as one of the strongest islamist currents in terms of its self-confidence on disputed issues.’

He clarifies: ‘If a feeling of the danger of division and difference and of the need for unity and agreement has led this party, which is so important in the matter, to propose it (the letter) in this inclusive and unifying framework, then it should lead the rest of the parties to deal favourably with this initiative from the outset.’

The leader of ‘al-Qaida’ says: ‘The letter which we present today is part of praiseworthy efforts which fill an important gap in this area. The letter has brought out the most important evidence from the Book, the Sunna and the sayings of the scholars of the Islamic nation, on the necessity of unity and consensus, on the rejection of division and conflict, and on the focus on the evil and harm of differences of opinion.’ [...]

Bin Ladin’s letter says: ‘Despite what Islam and its people are suffering at the hands of their enemies, be they secularist movements, tyrannic governments and infidel nations, and despite the wounds from which the Islamic nation is suffering, particularly the desecration and occupation of its sanctities, and [despite] what has befallen it [i.e. Islam] in terms of occupation of territory and violation of its honour at the hands of the world alliance of Jews and Crusaders; despite all this and all that, Muslims are still drowning in furious debates and heated arguments, and in questions and issues which are not considered principles of religion nor points of consensus, and on which no conflict is appropriate.’

¹¹³ Translation by Thomas Hegghammer. It is worth noting that the newspaper article paraphrases some points and themes contained in the letter. These paraphrases are not included here. It must also be added that the article is written in such a way that it is not always clear which quotes are taken from bin ladin’s introduction and which quotes appear in the main body of the letter (which is not written by bin Ladin).

The letter addresses secularists, saying: ‘Evil tongues are often pointed at the proselytists and scholars and students of religion who have proudly raised their heads in thruth, at a time when the heads of the soft people incline to the storm of falsehood, and when belief in Truth is softening and fragmenting against enticement and intimidation. The evil tongues which are pointed to the scholars are often the very same which praise and glorify the behaviour of the enemies of Islam and Muslims, from among the tyrants and others who have declared war on God and fought His allies and allied with His enemies.’

[...]

The letter adds: ‘The most important thing is not is one’s errors but in a person’s surplus of good deeds and piety. A person’s standing is not reduced by an accidental error, which no fallible person may avoid.’. [...]

‘The situation which Muslims are living today justifies the mobilization of anyone who belongs to this religion, and the application of his energies and efforts in the battle which Islam is waging against the Crusader alliance which has bared its teeth and disclosed its real aims in its fight against Islam and Muslims, and which no longer contents itself with what its agents in the region do.’”

3.2 Bin Ladin web statement, "Letter to the people of Kuwait", 5 April 2003

On 5 April 2003, a statement allegedly written by Usama bin Ladin was posted on the Arabic-language islamist website “Word of Truth” (*Kalimat al-Haqq*).¹¹⁴ The statement took the form of an address to the people of Kuwait.

The statement is no longer available in the Arabic original on the “Word of Truth” website, but an English translation, allegedly made by the www.jihadunspun.com website, circulated on the Internet.¹¹⁵ The following is an edited version of the English translation:

“May God’s peace and blessings be upon you. Brothers in Kuwait, may God relieve the Muslim nation from this plight. God knows that I am doing my best to choose the words of my message so that it is not misunderstood.

Let me first remind you about God saying in the holy Qur’an: *O you who believe do not choose disbelievers for friendship in place of believers. Would you give God a clear warrant against you?* (Qur’an 4: 144)

O you who believe do not take the Jews and the Christians for friendship; they are friends for one another. He among you who take them for friendship is one of them. God does not guide wrongdoing folk. You see those in whose hearts is a disease race towards them (Jews and Christians) saying we fear lest a change of fortune befall us.

¹¹⁴ The website is located at www.rightword.net.

¹¹⁵ “Message From Osama Bin Laden To The People Of Kuwait,” Apr 08, 2003, *Jihadonline.com* posted 9 April 2003 (www.jihadonline.com/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=12&mode=thread&order=0&hold=0)

And it may happen that God will bring the victory or a commandment from his presence. Then they (friends of Jews and Christians) will regret their secret thoughts. Then the believers will say are these who swore by God their most binding oath that they were surely with you? Their works have failed, and they have become the losers. (Qur'an 5: 51-53).

I will also remind you of the Prophet's narration: 'A Muslim is the brother of his Muslim colleague; He does not oppress him nor abandon him. He who assists his brother to achieve his need, God will assist him in his need.' On the authority of 'Aisha: 'The prophet of God (Peace and blessings upon him) did not revenge himself unless there was a violation of God's orders.' On the authority of Abu Huraira: 'It is enough for any Muslim of sins if he degrades his Muslim brother; a Muslim has to protect his brother's blood, wealth and honor.'

I want you to know that I and all your Muslim brothers love you, and we do not hide any bad feeling against you, but we only have an ardent request to you. I and the Muslims beg you not to be a bridge for the criminals and killers; do not be a means through which your Muslim brothers get slaughtered; do not be a path for murdering Islam. They do not kill Saddam; they are killing your brothers, our brothers. They are not only killing the Iraqis, but also they are targeting our Islam which is their prominent enemy and their horrible nightmare.

Have you thought about the destiny of the Muslim nation if their criminal plan succeeds? Can you imagine what will happen to our Islamic and Arab identity if they achieve their goals? What are we going to leave for our sons, our grandsons and the future Muslim generations? What are we going to leave for them except money? Read your history, and you will find that money was never a way to unify the nation neither did the authority and the greed; when we attempted to seek unity without our religion we separate. What can money do for a generation that lost his religion and identity? What can technology or superficial civilizations do for a lost generation, without future or roots?

We beg you brothers - we call you in the name of God to preserve Islam; do not devastate this religion but be a fortress for Islam, and do not be a path for the enemies to destroy our religion. Finally, do not forget to pray for your brothers in the wounded Iraq. May God heal the breasts of those who are believers.

Your brother, Usama Bin Ladin"

3.3 Bin Ladin web statement, "Letter to the Pakistani People", 18 November 2004

Around 17 November 2004, an Islamist Internet site posted a statement purportedly from Usama bin Ladin.¹¹⁶ The statement, described as a "Letter from shaykh Usama bin Ladin to the Pakistani people", praised the Taliban leader Mulla 'Umar and called on Muslims in Pakistan and Afghanistan to resist the "Jewish-Crusader incursion".

¹¹⁶ *Jamestown's Terrorism Monitor*, 18 November 2004

It was not possible to confirm the authenticity of the statement. Further evidence is needed before one can assume that the text was written by Usama bin Ladin.

It was not clear when the text had been written, but it appeared to make reference to recent shootouts in Karachi, possibly one which took place on 10 November 2004.

The following is an edited version of a translation made by the Jamestown foundation:¹¹⁷

“To our Muslim brothers in Pakistan, Peace and God’s mercy and blessings be upon you.

It is with regret that I have learned of the killing of some of our brothers. The Muslims in Karachi express their rejection of the aggression by American Crusader forces and their allies in the Muslim lands of Pakistan and Afghanistan. We ask God to accept them as martyrs and unite them with the Prophets, the righteous, the martyrs and the best of companions, and that he grants their families patience and solace, and blesses them with sons and wealth, and rewards them; and Islam is the best reward.

It is no wonder that the Muslim community in Pakistan defends its Islam, as Pakistan is considered the first line of defense for Islam in this region, as Afghanistan was the first defense line for itself and Pakistan from the Russian invasion for more than twenty years. Therefore, we hope that these brothers will be the first martyrs in the battle of Islam in this era against the new Judeo-Crusader incursion, led by the senior crusader, Bush, under the flag of the cross. This battle will be considered one of the eternal battles of Islam.

We call on our Muslim brothers in Pakistan, with all that is in their ability, to defend Pakistan and Afghanistan from the ‘He who does not join the war expedition, or equip, or looks well after a warrior’s family when he is away, God will strike him with a sudden calamity before the Day of Resurrection’, narrated by Abu Dawud. O brothers, I bring you the good news that we are steadfast on the way of *Jihad* for the sake of God, in imitation of His Prophet, and shoulder to shoulder with the true-believing and heroic Afghan people under the command of the mujahid, empowered through his faith and Commander of the Faithful, Mulla Muhammad ‘Umar. We ask God for His support against the powers of unbelief and tyranny, and to destroy this new Judeo-Crusader force on the lands of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

If God helps you, none can overcome you: If He forsakes you, who is there, after that, that can help you? in God, then, let believers put their trust. (Qur’an 3:160)

Your brother in Islam, Usama bin Muhammad bin Ladin”

¹¹⁷ *Jamestown’s Terrorism Monitor*, 18 November 2004

4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This report has presented an overview of the statements issued by Usama bin Ladin and Ayman al-Zawahiri during 2003 and 2004. The material presented here shows that the two al-Qaida leaders have issued a total of at least 22 documents in a period of 24 months. This is a remarkable production in quantitative terms considering the fact that bin Ladin and al-Zawahiri are two of the most sought-after individuals on the planet, and that the US military and intelligence machinery has had their capture as one of its highest priorities since the autumn of 2001.

The documents vary in length, and some of them are very long. The messages also vary in topic, tone and style. Some of the messages are short and brutal threats of upcoming attacks on the “Crusader enemy”. Others are carefully constructed appeals to Muslims’ bad conscience and frustration over key political issues such as Iraq and Palestine. Yet other statements address the Americans and Europeans in clear and sensible language, combining wit, sarcasm and a good understanding of the issues that divide America from Europe and the political left from the political right.

Thus the corpus of texts presented in this report leave little doubt that the al-Qaida leaders are still masters of propaganda, despite the changes of circumstances after the US-led invasion of Afghanistan. When the texts of this report are added to those presented in the previous FFI report documenting bin Ladin and Zawahiri statements between 1990 and 2002, the picture that emerges is one of a leadership duo that is both media-savvy and productive.

The purpose of this report was not to provide textual analysis of the Bin Ladin/al-Zawahiri statements, but to provide a relatively reliable research tool that can stimulate more in-depth research in the field of radical Islamist ideology. On the specific topic of Bin Ladin and al-Zawahiri’s ideological production, several important academic tasks emerge from this report.

First of all, many texts by Bin Ladin and al-Zawahiri remain untranslated. More translation work is needed in order to make all of the Arabic texts available to a non Arabic-speaking audience. Second, more research is needed on the information strategy of Bin Ladin and al-Zawahiri and on the role of their communiqués in the new “post-al-Qaida world”. To what extent does the release of statements influence terrorist operations? Is there any substance to the oft-stated credo that a Bin Ladin statement is usually followed by a terrorist attack? The third and most important area of research is that of in-depth textual analysis of the bin Ladin/al-Zawahiri literature. Which issues and political developments interest them? How have their political message or religious arguments evolved over the years? Can we identify phases in the rhetoric and communication strategy of bin Ladin and al-Zawahiri? Does the claim that Bin Ladin’s messages grew more political (as opposed to religious) from mid-2004 hold water?¹¹⁸ Is sarcasm really a new element in Bin Ladin’s speeches?¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ John Solomon, “Analysts See Shift in Bin Laden’s Rhetoric”, *Associated Press*, 28 December 2004; Don Van Natta Jr., “Sizing Up the New Toned-Down Bin Laden”, *New York Times*, 19 December 2004; “Al-Qaida leader

These and many other important questions need to be investigated thoroughly and in a timeframe that includes bin Ladin's and al-Zawahiri's pre 9/11 ideological production. The key challenge lies in taking the words of these two ideologues seriously without overinterpreting individual messages or sentences. It is the view of this author that these texts must be studied as serious political and ideological treatises. While they are probably not very good tools for predicting the next terrorist attack, they are central to understanding the ideological basis for the current terrorism threat.

in new language free of religious vocabulary addresses the Americans", *al-Sharq al-Awsat* [in Arabic], 30 October 2004 (<http://www.asharqalawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issue=9468&article=263092>); Bakr Oweid, "Bin Ladin speech is old in content, different in wording; the question is: are there any new thoughts?", *al-Sharq al-Awsat* [in Arabic], 6 January 2004 (<http://www.asharqalawsat.com/leader.asp?section=3&issue=9170&article=211218>)

¹¹⁹ Don Van Natta Jr., "Sizing Up the New Toned-Down Bin Laden", *New York Times*, 19 December 2004