

A close-up portrait of Osama bin Laden, wearing a white turban and a dark beard, looking directly at the camera. The image is framed by a red border at the top and bottom.

# THE DEATH OF OSAMA BIN LADEN

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## AUTHOR'S NOTES:

2003 - This fictional memoir is by an Al-Qaeda fighter and details his personal involvement in a Jihad, holy war, against the western powers. The story is told in 2007, as the narrator remembers his 20 years of conflict.

Osama bin Laden is involved throughout the story and, while the period from mid-2003 to 2007 is entirely speculative, chapters detailing the formation and development of Al-Qaeda are accurate and based on extensive research.

Quotations from The Qur'an are sourced from 'The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an', an explanatory translation by Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall, published by the Islamic Cultural Centre, London NW8 7RG.

Proclamations and declarations by Al-Qaeda leaders in quotation marks are real.

For clarity, dates are given in the western calendar.

# HIGHLY CLASSIFIED

**NOT FOR RELEASE**

INTELLIGENCE F72:  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE;  
NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY.  
OBL/0998/7750.2

TRANSLATED TEXT OF SPEECH FOUND ON TAPES  
ORIGINAL LANGUAGE: ARABIC  
LOCATION: NUBIAN DESERT, EGYPT  
DATE: 20/08/2007

## PROLOGUE

### The Opening

“In the name of Allah, the beneficent, the Merciful.

1. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds,
2. The Beneficent, the Merciful.
3. Owner of the Day of Judgment,
4. Thee alone we worship;  
Thee alone we ask for help.
5. Show us the straight path,
6. The path of those whom Thou hast favoured;
7. Not the path of those who earn Thine anger nor of those who go astray.”

Al-Qur'an. Surah 1. Al-Fatihah, The Opening. Vv 1-7.

Egypt, 2007

My name is Muhammad. I smell my martyrdom. An American bullet is lodged in my back and I have no hope of treatment. Though my wound is severe and I am in pain, I am happy. I leave a world in chaos. My work here is done. As I remember my life, I am proud of my deeds. I have helped to kill millions, but I know that the One True God will welcome me into heaven, as I have spilt blood only in His Name. I am a soldier of Allah and a compatriot of the Martyr Osama bin Laden, may God bless him. I have fought a war of justice over evil and victory is at hand. I will go to heaven soon, in glory, to meet my friend Osama, where we will spend an infinity in peace and happiness with Allah. Judgment is at hand for the Christians and the Jews. Allah is most vengeful and He will make the ground shake beneath the Crusaders' feet. With my friend and brother, and thousands more brothers, I have helped to propagate a Jihad around the globe. Only now do the true believers see that victory in Allah's name is not just possible, but it is our destiny. I had little choice in my life of Jihad. The Holy Qur'an teaches all Muslims that their religion must be defended against the infidels and disbelievers. It was this core belief that led me to Afghanistan 20 years ago, where I first met Osama. Then my destiny was set for me.

Osama and I will be remembered in history as the holy warriors who tore down the Twin Towers of capitalism and Christianity. We will always be spoken of by believers as the warriors of Allah who exploded an atomic bomb in Washington, the den of the imperialist snakes. I am proud, but I am also sad. I have only yesterday buried Osama under rocks, here in a cave in the Nubian Desert. His burial mound lies beside me now. I cried many tears for that glorious son of Islam.

The infidels are drawing closer to my position, but it is too late for them now. I have fought against the enemies of Islam for most of my life. There were many battlefields in the Holy War against the Christians and the Jews, but I did not think it would end here for me. There are many thousands more who will take my place. We will never lose, because Allah is with us and Allah is the Most Great.

My life has been shaped by war and conflict this past 20 years. For two decades I have fought bravely with my brother martyr, Osama. First the Russians felt the might of our Muslim anger in Afghanistan. Then we might have quietly faded away, but the Saud ruling family made its infamous mistake. In seeking protection from Saddam Hussein, they invited the American military into the birthplace of the Prophet and lit the fuse that has destroyed the old ways. As the American military flooded into Saudi Arabia, the Land of the Two Holy Places, we returned to Afghanistan and began

training the thousands of Muslim warriors who fought the campaigns to liberate Islam in Bosnia, Chechnya, Algeria, Palestine, Iraq and many other bloody places. Those same battle-hardened warriors liberated the Land of the Two Holy Places.

The glorious martyrdom attacks of the Day of Vengeance on September 11, 2001 were followed by many more hammer blows against our enemies. Washington has since been destroyed and the Crusaders feel panic and confusion. Our inspired leader is dead; but he died in glory as a martyr. I will pass the hours until dawn by recounting my experiences, in the hope that they will inspire the next generation of martyrs. Allahu-Akbar. Allah is the most great. The Glorious Qur'an gives me comfort as I remember my life.

In the morning, my phone will have access to a satellite, through which I can tell my Al-Qaeda brothers of our glorious leader's martyrdom. But I am unsure of their reaction to this terrible news. I don't know if this secret should die with me. Allah will surely give me guidance as I ponder this most grave decision. Is this really the end for me? Life is for Allah alone. First, let me tell you how I came to lie dying in this Egyptian cave, with the body of my dear friend beside me.

## 1. OUR FIRST JIHAD

"A similitude of the Garden which is promised unto those who keep their duty to Allah: Underneath it rivers flow; its food is everlasting, and its shade; this is the reward of those who keep their duty, while the reward of disbelievers is the Fire."

Surah 13. Ar-Rad, The Thunder. V 35.

Afghanistan, 1988

I was face down in a smoking shell crater, my hands pressed to my ears, while fire and thunder rained down all around me. Pressure shock waves shook my bones. A deafening roar came closer and I peered up from my hole to look for the source of the noise. No more than 25 meters away, a Soviet Hind helicopter gunship screamed past, sweeping the ground with its nose-mounted cannon which lashed fire all around the plain. Was this hell?

I peered in the direction from which it had come. Another helicopter approached, this time firing its unguided rockets in a pattern that mercifully stopped short of my hole. On a road 100 meters from me, there were two Soviet tanks and two armoured personnel carriers and some trucks. Flames leapt from the tanks and bodies were scattered on the ground all about, some on fire. Some of the Russian soldiers were still alive and fired at a position off to my left, where the Hind was also concentrating its attention. Dusk was falling in the valley that stretched beyond.

Both helicopters circled round to bring their armaments to bear on what I knew must be the position taken by my comrades. I had lost my AK during the ambush, after the helicopters surprised us; my mind was disorientated from the explosive concussions and my eyes and ears were bleeding. A picture came to my mind of an anti-aircraft missile. I remembered that I had been carrying a Stinger on my back before we ambushed the Russian armoured patrol. Then I knew that I was in Afghanistan and we were winning a war against one of the world's superpowers.

I carefully crept forward out of my hole and began feeling the ground in the gathering gloom. Smoke from the burning vehicles was adding to the approaching nightfall and I knew that time was short for the helicopters, which did not have night-flying capabilities. A dull glint caught my eye. I crawled a short distance on my stomach. It was my Stinger round. The round consisted of a launch tube with a missile inside. To make it operable, I had to find the separate grip stock and a battery coolant unit. I saw a body a few meters from me. It was my Stinger team colleague. His head had been blown off by the helicopter. He was just 17 years old. I would mourn him later.

He had carried the grip stock and three batteries in a backpack and, fortunately, they were undamaged. I had been well-trained in using the Stinger and within seconds I had fitted the grip to the launch tube and inserted a heavy cylindrical battery. The battery coolant unit is vital as it supplies power to the missile until it launches and also supplies argon gas to cool the heat detector in the missile's nose. My weapon was ready for firing. The first Hind had completed its circuit and was now coming straight for me. Its cannon blazed and rockets leapt from its wing pylons, turning the area around me to smoking ruin. Shrapnel and rocks flew at me and I felt pain lash my body. Though my body pulsed with adrenalin and fear, I was ready to die as a martyr, fighting in the name of Allah. This readiness caused me great elation. If this helicopter killed me, I would go directly to heaven, where Allah would meet me and give me eternal life and happiness. Only later would I come to appreciate how much of an advantage this gave us over our foes. Heaven for us was guaranteed, the Christians and Jews were unsure whether they would go to hell or to their heaven. Truly a man must fear death if eternal

damnation might await him? But I would not let this helicopter kill me. I was determined to destroy it and save my comrades.

I looked through the sight and put the Hind into the central range ring. I was ready to fire when a Russian soldier opened up on me with his Kalashnikov. A round pierced my side and I fell to the ground in agony. I looked towards my enemy in time to see a rocket-propelled grenade slam into his position, blasting him to pieces. I glanced towards my brothers and saw my commander, Osama bin Laden. He was reloading his RPG launcher and gave me a thumbs-up and a big smile. Ignoring my pain, I retrieved my Stinger launcher and reacquired my target. With the Hind back in my sights, I pushed the safety actuator forward and down. This activated the missile's seeker, which gave a low tone. I then depressed the uncaging switch and heard the high-pitched whine which signalled that my missile had locked on. I kept my bearing on the helicopter as it passed directly over my head. With its exhaust ports in my sights, I squeezed the trigger. My missile shot forward from its launch tube. Lancing fire and thunder, it roared after the gunship. Within a second, it hit its target and a mighty explosion tore the gunship asunder. It fell to the ground and secondary explosions from its own munitions finished the job that my CIA-supplied missile had started. There would be no survivors from its two man crew.

I quickly removed the used launch tube, grabbed another BCU and looked around for a new missile round. As I glanced towards our ambush target, I could see the other gunship turn away and flee. The surviving Russians from the burning convoy fought on, knowing that they stood no chance, but knowing too that we did not take prisoners. I had to find a gun, so I laid down the Stinger and left my hole. As my eyes combed the ground near where I had found my headless colleague, shadowy figures emerged from the smoke and dust beyond. One of the shadows came towards me and a man, with God in his eyes, the beard of a Believer and an assault rifle held easily in his hands, called to me.

- May Allah forever aim through your eyes, brother. Come, let's finish these infidels off, he shouted joyously.

It was Osama, my commander in MAK, the Muslim organisation which had brought me from Saudi Arabia to fight the disbelievers who had invaded the land of our Muslim brothers. I had met Osama just a few months before, at a Stinger training camp run by our American allies. Then I joined Osama's unit. With the Stinger, I brought down many enemy helicopters; truly this marvellous device would bring us victory over the hated Russians.

- I have no gun, I answered.

He took an American-made automatic handgun from his waistband and threw it to me as Russian bullets hit the ground all around us. I cocked the gun and ran forward with my five brothers. There were only four Russians still alive. They crouched behind rocks and fired wildly in our direction, still in total shock from the severity of our assault. We had detonated two 1,000 pound landmines when the tank had reached target position. Then we fired RPGs at the APCs and used a heavy machine gun to kill anyone who tried to escape. We had killed 16 already. The survivors' faces were blackened and tear-streaked. They shouted at each other in panic. RPG rounds and mortar bombs slammed into their positions as our AKs spat lead in controlled bursts. After a few minutes, the Russian fire stopped and we carefully approached the smoking convoy. All were dead, save one, a badly wounded sergeant. His right arm was blown off at the elbow and his eyes were wide with fear. Osama ordered that he be treated and returned to our base for questioning. He would be killed after he told us what he knew but, for now, a tourniquet was applied to his upper arm, stopping his arterial bleeding. He was given a morphine injection to lessen his pain, but the terror remained in his eyes. Osama turned to me.

- You have been shot, he said, gesturing to my side.



I looked down and saw the gaping bullet wound on my left side, just above my belt. The pain was now starting to fight its way through my body's adrenaline surges.

- Yes, but I lived to see this great victory, I replied, looking into the eyes of my leader.

- God is great, now rest, he answered as he took a morphine injection from my first-aid pack and stuck it into my thigh, then dressed my wound.

- God is great.

I sat on a rock while my comrades checked the area for further survivors and useful munitions. No more Russians were alive and a number of AKs were retrieved, along with a quantity of ammunition. We returned to our ambush site to search for the missing Stinger round. We found it and covered our dead comrade with rocks. Osama recited a few words from the Qur'an and we moved on. We walked a kilometer to our jeeps, which were concealed behind large rocks. Osama wrote in his notebook. The smoke from the destroyed convoy could still be seen against the sunset as darkness fell over the valley. We loaded the jeeps and began the drive to Jalalabad. Our prisoner begged for mercy but, as we spoke no Russian, his pleadings fell on deaf ears. After a while, he became quiet. A comrade checked his pulse and found that he had died. His body was kicked from the moving jeep as we drove through the night. I passed out from the morphine, every bump on the rocky road sending darts of pain across my abdomen.

I woke early the next day in a Mujahideen field hospital near Jalalabad. Our Mujahideen forces encircled the city and its only means of resupply was by Russian airlifts. My torso was bandaged tight and a saline drip was fixed to my arm. I tried to sit up, but pain shot through my body and I collapsed back onto my bed in agony. A Pakistani medic came to me and asked how I was feeling. He gave me some more morphine. Morphine is such a magical reliever of pain, it was truly fortuitous that Afghanistan was the best place in the world to grow the opium poppy.

Osama came to see me in the afternoon. He was accompanied by an American commando, who waited at the entrance to the tent.

- I must take a journey with my American friend, he said in English, though he cast a curse on the man in Arabic.

- Where are you going? Can you trust him? I asked, continuing the conversation in Arabic.

- The Americans are a necessary evil. We need their help now, but they will eventually come to regret it. Allah needs us to make sacrifices. I will return in a few days. Take these notebooks and study them when you can. The Russians are almost finished, but our work here is not. Guard them with your life. Here are some books you might also enjoy, he said, handing me three paperbacks.

I later learned that he was going to an intelligence briefing with other Mujahideen leaders, Pakistani intelligence officers and American special forces to plan the final destruction of the Russian invaders. He was also given a large amount of cash by the Americans, to assist with the running of his unit. As the pain ebbed from my body and waves of pulsating pleasure enveloped me, I fell into a deep slumber, gripping the notebooks tightly.

The next day, I awoke feeling much better. I was able to sit up in my bed and began to read. The paperbacks included 'Catch-22' by Joseph Heller, which I thoroughly enjoyed. But I put it aside to concentrate on Osama's notebooks. Osama was a major player in a coalition to control the global supply of opium, the base ingredient for heroin. The plot brought all the key players in the region together. Income from the opium trade, which amounted to many hundreds of millions of dollars per year, was used to fund the war against the Russians. Much of the income found its way into the pockets of Afghan warlords and migrant workers. Osama's notes led me to his conclusion; that the Americans



would try to suppress the opium trade once the war was won and their aims had been achieved. The Mujahideen role in the opium business mainly involved organising workers to tend the crops and giving security to plantations and opium convoys. Many of the opium cultivation areas were known only to us. We would ensure it stayed that way. The Americans were happy to facilitate our supply of heroin to the bleak cities of Europe so they could keep their spending on the war to a minimum. Defeat of the 'Evil Empire' on the battlefield was the Christians' sole objective in Afghanistan and there were no rules.

Few expected that Islam would become their target after the Soviets and no Muslim expected that we would see American armies occupying the homeland of the Prophet and that Saudi Arabia and Iraq would become regional military bases for the Crusaders. As the Afghanistan war drew to a close, we fully expected to stay on in Afghanistan and concentrate on the opium trade, while studying the Qur'an with some of the great Islamic scholars and Imams in the region. Osama had spoken of going to war against Israel after Afghanistan, but defeating the Russians was still our main focus.

I studied Osama's notes. I learned about the opium cultivation methods used in Afghanistan, the crop cycle and the network of warlords, civil servants and diplomats that was used to export the raw opium. He was examining the best approach to develop heroin processing labs. These would allow us to refine the opium into a drug that is worth 10 times as much. An excellent long-term strategy, I agreed. When Osama returned, two weeks later, my injury was healed. A 7.62mm round had gone through my side, without damaging any vital organs. He was very happy and gave me joyous news. The Soviets had signed a peace deal and would begin withdrawing their forces from Afghanistan within weeks. Word spread around the camp and everyone's mood was lifted greatly. He told me to rest for another two days and then we would go to Pakistan for some comfort as a reward after our months of bloody combat.

I lay on my bunk, a wide smile fixed to my face. We had defeated the largest army in the world. Allah was truly with the Mujahideen, the Soldiers of God. Afghanistan had long been in the Soviets' sphere of influence. After the fall of the Shah of Iran, the Americans lost valuable listening posts and a military partner very close to the Soviet Union. When Deputy President Hafizullah Amin murdered Afghan President Taraki in 1979, he did so with American assistance. The Soviets, fearing that America would move into Afghanistan to make up for the loss of Iran, reacted. In December, 1979, barely three months after he assumed control of Afghanistan, Amin was murdered by Soviet Spetsnaz commandos and four armoured divisions rolled in from the north. Karmal, leader of the Afghanistan Marxist party, was installed as president and the war of Islamic resistance began. The embryonic Mujahideen met in Peshawar and Pakistan's President Zia agreed arrangements to supply the Soldiers of God with the funding and military supplies that flowed in from the Islamic world and the west. For almost 10 years, we fought the Soviets at close quarters, where their artillery and air power were useless. Now they knew defeat, no Godless Marxist-Leninist ideology could withstand the might of Islam.

Osama came for me and we travelled by jeep to the mountains on the border with Pakistan, off the road to Peshawar. These high lands would yet become my home. We inspected poppy fields and met our Mujahideen brothers in many temporary bases. We stayed for a few days in a comfortable hut at the end of a long, lush poppy valley. We were hidden from the barren plains as paradise must be from disbelievers. Osama marked his chosen locations for the laboratories on a map he carried and drew a sketch of the valley.

I had a clear grasp of how opium was cultivated and its economic importance to the poor Afghans that made up 99 percent of the population. We decided to travel on with an opium shipment which was headed for Peshawar in Pakistan.

We set off at sunset, using well-travelled mountain paths and avoiding all roads and villages. There were 12 mules in our caravan, each laden with two large baskets of raw opium. The caravan was protected by six Mujahideen fighters, each armed with an AK, knives and Rocket Propelled Grenades. The Mujahideen were fearsome men, having fought in some of the bloodiest battles against the Russians. They came from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria and Egypt. They were my brothers and I felt safe with them, though we were in the most lawless place on earth. We had little to fear from the Russians here, they were concentrated towards Kabul, but there were risks from bandits and Pakistani police. Occasionally, desperate bandits and border police would work together to try and steal Mujahideen opium. They rarely succeeded, but they were indeed devious.

We travelled on mountain ponies, who were sure-footed and had great endurance. The mountains were impressive, with towering peaks as far as the eye could see. It was cold at altitude and the scarcer oxygen meant that it was no easy trip. We crossed into Pakistan at the highest point on our journey, the trail covered in snow and the mules slipping often but proving their worth many times over. The border was marked with an Arabic inscription painted onto a boulder beside the trail. It read: "One day, there shall be no borders between Muslim lands; we shall be one nation under Allah".

One of the scouts returned from the trail ahead as we paused for water and dates. He seemed agitated and addressed Osama.

- I sense trouble ahead, commander. I fear there may be an ambush on the next ridge. We have been ambushed there before.

Osama ordered three of the Mujahideen to take the mules back the trail to the nearest defensible position. The other three fighters, Osama and myself decided on our plan. The only way past the threatening position would have meant backtracking for a day to an alternative, lower trail. We decided instead to confront our problem, which was Osama's general tendency, I am proud to say.

We slowly made our way forward to the point where we would be exposed to anyone on the ridge and halted. It was decided that myself and Osama would travel on the trail, as fighters walking to Pakistan for rest. Pakistan was our key ally in the war against the Russians, so if it was a police patrol we should have nothing to fear. The Mujahideen would work their way around the side of the ridge to get behind our possible ambushers. If fighting broke out, our enemy would be caught in a crossfire, with AKs letting loose at their backs. I waited for 15 minutes with Osama until our comrades got into position.

- Keep your AK on your shoulder and follow my lead, said Osama.

We continued on foot along the trail, which led to the summit of the ridge. There, we found a tent with a smouldering fire outside and a pot of water boiling. As we approached the tent to investigate, a voice called out.

- Raise your arms and do not move, unless you wish to die in this pitiful place.

We raised our arms and two men came from behind a rock off to our left. They were typical, uniformed Pakistani police, scruffy and untrustworthy. Each carried an AK. They approached us and took our rifles and daggers.

- On your knees, one commanded, then began to interrogate us. - Who are you and why do you choose to enter Pakistan by this route?

- We are Mujahideen, come from Jalalabad. We travel to Peshawar for some rest. We have grown tired from fighting Russians, as the Pakistani government would have us do, answered Osama. - And we have no money.

One of the policemen stuck his AK into Osama's back. He ordered us to lie flat with our hands

behind our heads. I became fearful that we would be robbed and killed. As the two Pakistanis discussed what to do with us, they were cut down by volleys of bullets from our comrades who had flanked their position. Ordering us to lie on the ground was the policemen's final mistake, for they gave our comrades a clear line of fire. When the shooting had stopped, we got up and went to the men. One was clearly dead, his head blown apart by bullets, but the other was still alive. He had been shot in the stomach, groin and shoulder. He would die soon, but first we would interrogate him. Our comrades came to us. Osama sent one to scout ahead and one back to our caravan, with orders for it to continue forward to us with care.

- Water, please, in the name of Allah, give me a drink, pleaded the dying Pakistani.
- You have a stomach wound, answered Osama. You should not drink.
- You do not mean to kill me?
- That is not what I said. Do you want to die quickly, or not?
- I pray that you send me to heaven.
- Then tell me why you were here.
- We have no orders, we are simply to monitor travellers entering Pakistan over the mountains.
- So why did you treat us with such disrespect?
- My comrade thought you might have US dollars. We planned to rob you.
- And let us go?
- We would have killed you.
- Have you killed any Mujahideen?
- Two days ago, two Mujahideen came through here. We robbed and killed them. I pray to Allah for forgiveness. I have a wife and four small children. My pay is not enough to feed and clothe them all.
- Where are the bodies?
- Buried under stones about 200 meters back the way you came. Beside a large, red rock. We made sure to put them in Afghanistan.
- I hope that Allah will forgive you, because I cannot.

Osama stepped back from the man, raised his AK and shot him once in the forehead. His head burst open like a melon. The sound of the gunshot echoed around the mountains for many seconds.

- Throw their bodies into the ravine, Osama commanded. - If these men are missed, it will be presumed that they are deserters.

We dragged the bodies back into Afghanistan and found where the policemen had buried their victims, our comrades. We carefully removed the stones that covered their heads. The smell was terrible. The men's beards and faces were covered with matted blood and their mouths and eyes were open, frozen in the panic of imminent death. One of our Mujahideen comrades recognised one of the dead men.

- It is my friend, he said bitterly. He fought bravely and left Jalalabad for Peshawar a few days ago. His wife had given birth to his first son and our brother was to return to Jordan to see him. This is a sad sight.

- We will contact his wife and let her know of our brother's bravery, said Osama. - We will also find out who his comrade was and make contact with his family. We will find a way to make sure that no Mujahideen's brave acts or heroic deaths go unnoticed. It is only just that we do this.

In that moment, the seed of Al-Qaeda was planted. The rest of our journey was, thankfully, uneventful and four days later we were on a low hill overlooking Peshawar. Our comrades continued north, into the Khyber pass, with their opium-laden mules. The frontier town of Landi Kotal, famous

for its trade in drugs and guns, would be the destination for our opium. Once a fair price had been agreed with traders, the money would be spent on guns or brought to one of the Mujahideen's private bankers in Peshawar. Osama and I continued directly to Peshawar, as the caravan would have little need of our arms now that we were in Pakistan proper and stealth was its best weapon. I looked forward to relaxing and rebuilding my strength in Peshawar. Osama was fired with enthusiasm for establishing Al-Qaeda, the base of operations, for our brave fighters. A phantom base for a phantom guerrilla army.

We approached the outskirts of Peshawar from the west, with the imposing Balahisar Fort appearing to gaze at us and the other travellers on the road from the Khyber Pass. We would raise very little interest, just two dusty men on ponies, but we took the precaution of concealing our weapons in our saddlebags, keeping our automatic pistols tucked inside our robes. As we passed into the fort's shadow, Osama reminded me that it had been built by the Mughals in the sixteenth century. It now housed Peshawar's government offices and would, one day, be a target for us. We stayed in Old Peshawar and travelled to Chowk Yaadgar, the place of remembrance, a large public square which had been the focus of rallies against the British occupiers, and later, the Indian enemy.

- We will find a discrete inn, where we can rest without raising suspicion, said Osama.

We found a good, family-run establishment with stables. We put our ponies in for food and a wash and cleansed ourselves of the dust and dirt from our trek over the mountains. We then went to the nearest mosque, as we had not prayed in clean surroundings since leaving Jalalabad.

- Having fed our souls, now we must change some money and feed our bodies, smiled Osama.

We returned to Chowk Yaadgar and strolled across to the money changers on the west side of the square. The setting sun cast long shadows across the square and the bankers squatted in the coolness of evening's fall. Rows of men, mostly fat and wealthy looking, sat on hand-knotted carpets, their safes behind them, calculators and armed guards at close hand. Osama selected a money changer with whom he had an acquaintance.

- Blessings of Allah be with you, proclaimed the money changer loudly. How may I be of assistance, brothers?

- We would like to change some US dollars, replied Osama quietly.

The man's eyes lit up at the mention of US dollars.

- You know that I must report large exchanges of this type to the police?

- We require a true Muslim banker. We will accept an exchange rate that favours you.

- As a businessman, I will gladly accept your kind offer, brave Mujahideen. How much did you wish to exchange?

- 4,000 dollars.

- That is indeed a fine sum. I will trade you at the normal rate, but increase my commission to 10 percent from 8. Does this meet with your approval?

- That would be acceptable to us, but I must caution you before you take our money. If the authorities hear of our business, you will be killed. Do you understand?

The money changer's face paled. He swallowed and looked Osama straight in the eye.

- By the Grace of Allah and all that is holy, I will tell nobody of this transaction, my brothers.

- Good. There will be much more money to follow. We can make you rich, but that depends on your discretion. Now, let us do business.

In a matter of seconds, the money changer had calculated how many Pakistani rupees we would receive. After commission, it was almost 30,000 rupees. This would be enough to get Al-Qaeda up and running, paid for by the Americans. He counted out the rupees from his safe and put the money in a

finely woven waist pouch. Osama tied the pouch around his waist, while the banker counted the dollars. The deal was done. We shook hands and, as night fell, went in search of some food.

As we crossed the square, I suddenly felt great relief. It came upon me like a wave. We had left the war behind us and were surrounded by our own people, true Muslims, every one of whom supported our war against the Soviets. The inscription we had seen in the mountains was true, Allah united us and would help us to raise Islam to its destined position as the world's leading faith. As my mind relaxed, I became aware of the scents of flowers wafting on the warm air. Peshawar is famous for centuries as a place of gardens and blossoms. The scents blended with the irresistible smell of food and we made our way to a restaurant whose sign proudly proclaimed the finest chappli kebabs in Pakistan. We found a quiet table and were soon waited upon by the owner. He brought us chapplis, which are plates of naan bread with a spicy burger of beef mixed with corn flour, tomato and chilies, with eggs on top. We ate the chapplis ravenously and washed them down with steaming hot green tea.

When our hunger was satisfied, the owner offered us a smoke of his hooka pipes. We were so happy to be in Peshawar, we accepted his offer. As the cool tobacco smoke entered my lungs, the nagging pain from my bullet wound faded away. Soon after, I was in a reverie. The sights, the sounds and the smells all around me carried me to a place I had not known, a plateau of peace and contentment. In the 20 years since, I have not known such peace.

Soon, Osama began chattering with great enthusiasm about our organisation and how we would operate. MAK had brought us to Afghanistan, but it was controlled by the Pakistanis and Saudis, with too much influence from the Americans. We would create a new body, one with Islamic purity at its core and respect for its members more important than any geopolitical power games. We decided to use our money to purchase a guest house here in Peshawar. This would become our transit point for fighters going to, and coming from, Afghanistan. We would also use it as an administrative centre. Every fighter who joined our cause would have his personal details, including next-of-kin, kept here. Any fighter who gave his life in the service of Jihad would be mourned properly and his family would know of his braveness. Later, when Osama was given more of his family's fortune, all Al-Qaeda martyrs would go to heaven knowing their families would be looked after financially.

We had used Peshawari inns as transit posts for much of the war in Afghanistan. But the Americans and Pakistanis knew where they were. This would be the first inn known only to Al-Qaeda.

The next morning, after prayers, we sought out an inn suitable for our needs. After a few hours, we discovered the perfect place. It was beside Chowk Yadgar, Peshawar's bird market and looked a fine building. The sign outside read 'Singing Bird Guest House'. It had a heavy, carved wooden door and ornamental balconies outside each window. We had brought our baggage and horses with us so that we could book into a potential acquisition as travellers and assess it in secrecy. The entrance hallway was wide and airy and the man seated at the desk welcomed us with truth.

- May Allah be thanked for bringing you to us, he said. Where have you come from?
- We have travelled far and are in need of some rest, answered Osama.
- You don't have the dusty appearance of two who have travelled far, ventured the innkeeper, though he did not have an interrogative tone to his voice.
- We arrived late last night and stayed in the first inn we found, answered Osama.
- Well I thank you for coming to me today. I have not had good business these past years. With the war, nobody wants to travel to Kabul. At least peace is now in the air.
- Would it be possible for us to get a large room to share? One with a good view of the square?
- But of course. May I take your names for the register of guests?



We gave false names and the man showed us to our room. It was perfect. Soft, clean beds, good washing facilities and an excellent view of the square. We could observe many comings and goings without being seen ourselves. And always birdsong in the background, beautiful, uplifting birdsong.

The inn had 16 bedrooms, a dining area, an ample kitchen and a good-sized office. It was secure, with buildings to either side and a fence to the rear. It could only be entered by the front door. That evening, we had dinner with the innkeeper, who was a widower and whose children had long since grown up and left him. Osama enquired as to his trustworthiness. Osama had a gift of asking someone unknown to him a direct question. He could judge a man by his answer and could tell whether or not he could be trusted. He believed the innkeeper was trustworthy and asked him directly if he would sell the inn to us, for use as a Mujahideen safe house.

- But I have no need of money, answered the innkeeper, what would I do with myself without my beloved inn?

- You would run it for us and be paid for your work. We would visit here only occasionally. We need someone reliable to look after our fighters. Someone we can trust. We will hire an administrator from the locality to maintain our records.

- What about the police? They don't miss a thing around here. There are informers everywhere.

- The Pakistani Government works with us in the war. We have contacts, even here in Peshawar. If there is trouble, we can deal with it, but discretion will be our main priority. We will ensure that you have Mujahideen protection at all times. Because we will officially own the property, you will be safe if there is ever trouble that we cannot control.

The innkeeper thought our proposal over for a long while, asking many questions. We answered each question honestly and patiently. In the end, he agreed on a price of 25,000 rupees, with a salary of 100 rupees per month. As Al-Qaeda fighters would not be expected to pay for their lodgings here, a figure of 500 rupees per month was agreed as sufficient to pay for all the running costs of a full guest house. Two days later, when the deeds were drawn up, Osama gave our partner 29,000 rupees. That would be enough to run the guest house for six months. Al-Qaeda was born.

## 2. Allah's Call

"And fight them until persecution is no more, and religion is all for Allah."

Surah 8. Al-Anfal, Spoils of War. V 39.

Pakistan, 1989

The Holy War in which we will soon be victorious, by the grace of Allah, has its roots in the roots of Islam. Was Muhammad, the One True Prophet, not poisoned by a Jewess? Have the Jews and the Christians not stolen their beliefs from the teachings of Abraham, whose teachings are the fundamentals of Islam? Have they not corrupted the One Truth? Have the Christians and the Jews not tried, from the time of the Crusades, and ever since, to control the lands that are the birthplace of Islam?

Islam has a long memory and Islam seeks justice. There can be no balance or harmony in the world of men until Allah is recognised, on every continent, as the One True God. After many centuries of struggle, it is with the guidance of Osama Bin Laden, may Allah bless him, that we shall finally and completely liberate the Holy Lands and make the teachings of the Prophet resound throughout the world. This is a good time to be a Muslim. This is a good time to believe in the One True God. The disbelievers and the hypocrites shall find no mercy. Though we are faced with many powerful enemies, the justice of centuries is at hand. Allah is the most great.

We rested in Peshawar for many months, drawing up exhaustive lists of our fighters and manuals of the combat experience we had obtained in Afghanistan. Many of our comrades came to stay with us. Each had the same look in his eyes; tired from fighting, hardened by the bloody battles he had helped to win and burning with love for Islam and its new-found power. We spent many days and nights recounting our experience on the battlefields and sharing knowledge about our weapons and tactics and those of our enemies. We scouted an ideal training camp in the nearby mountains and began to plan.

On February 14, 1989, the so-called 'Seven Party alliance of Afghan Mujahideen' met in Peshawar and announced the formation of the Afghan Interim Government. The faction leaders would share power, but Osama and other field commanders were excluded. The Afghan tribal warlords thought to take the land for themselves. But all had changed with the arrival of Muslims from around the world to help in their struggle against the Soviets. We stayed on the sidelines and watched the drama unfolding. Osama was sure that the new system would not work and that such false alliances would not serve the good people of Afghanistan. Battle resumed and a call to arms was issued to all Mujahideen to liberate Jalalabad, which was still under siege. We decided not to participate. The battle raged for six months, claiming thousands of lives on both sides. Jalalabad would not fall for another three years, when Kabul itself also fell to the fracturing Mujahideen forces.

As the Soviets withdrew in defeat, we returned together to Osama's home city of Jiddah. We had war in our blood, having fought many fierce battles against the Russians and learned how, when a man is fighting for the One True God, a holy warrior cannot be defeated. Many fighters passed through our guest house and all saw Osama as their leader. The men we left behind in Peshawar were of the finest and ran the base and the guesthouses with zeal. On the day of victory in Afghanistan, Osama had over 200 battle-hardened soldiers at his command. A loose network was built up, between Afghanistan, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Our brothers could travel at will and know that a friendly welcome would await them.

Osama turned to the Glorious Qur'an and became deeply involved in prayer and analysis of the



True Words of Allah. I, too, studied the Qur'an and emulated the man who had emerged as a natural leader in Afghanistan. As his battle fatigue eased, Osama became more withdrawn, spending many long days and nights in meditation. Once, he travelled to a cave in the barren desert and stayed there, without food, for 30 days, in adoration of the Prophet Muhammad. On his return, his eyes were filled with a great light and a clarity of belief that I had not seen in him before.

- We must return to Salafism, he said.

We enrolled in Jiddah's leading Salafy school the next day, after morning prayers. For some months, we studied Salafism daily and its teachings seemed to give Osama great vigour. Salafy is the belief that all those who do not adhere literally to the teachings of the Qur'an are enemies of Islam, and that all good Muslims must wage war on the enemies of Islam; we had followed these teachings in helping our brothers in Afghanistan and Allah had protected us and given us success.

We studied, prayed and meditated and soon we were five in Jiddah, each of us had the liberation of Islam as our guiding ideal and each of us saw Osama as our natural leader. We were supported financially at this time by two of Osama's uncles. Osama's family was very wealthy from its key role in the construction of the modern infrastructure of Saudi Arabia and their close ties to the Saud ruling family. The bin Ladens had actually rebuilt shrines in the Two Holy Places, Mecca and Medina, as well as much of Jiddah and Riyadh. Osama would inherit hundreds of millions of dollars when his father died, but for now we relied on the generosity of his family. A key belief of all Muslims is to financially support the less well-off in society. Osama's uncles were greatly impressed by our Islamic ways and our sacrifices in Afghanistan and gave us enough money to live in a comfortable house and eat well.

Islam teaches that one can only find peace in one's life by submitting to Almighty God - Allah - in heart, soul and deed. The name Islam comes from an Arabic root word meaning "peace" and "submission."

Islam consists of five articles of faith, of belief. Belief in one God; belief in angels; belief in the revealed books; belief in the prophets; and belief in the Day of Judgment. To these was added, during the early development of the dogma, the belief in God's predetermination of good and evil. The underlying profession of the faith, Shahada, is: "There is no God but God, and Muhammad is the prophet of God."

All Muslims are enjoined to practice the Five Pillars of Islam: to recite the profession of faith at least once in one's lifetime; to observe the five daily public and collective prayers; to pay the zakat purification tax for the support of the poor; to fast from daybreak to sunset during the entirety of the month of Ramadan; and to perform, if physically and financially possible, the Hajj, pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca.

When you believe that Allah is the only God and Muhammad is his messenger, then the Qur'an assumes a mystical significance. These are the true words of Muhammad, so they are the True Words of Allah. Many men have tried to change or dilute the words of Muhammad. They are traitors of Islam. We are Sunni Muslims, the followers of Muhammad. Others choose different ways. Shia Muslims prefer to follow the teachings of Muhammad's son-in-law, Ali. They are mistaken. Other sects within Islam choose to idolise different prophets or holy men. They are all mistaken. The only true Islam is Sunni, the acceptance that Muhammad, and none other, speaks for Allah. Salafy is a distillation of Sunni, which aspires to an even purer adherence to Islam, the Qur'an and the Shari'ah laws. We submit ourselves completely to Allah and scrupulously observe the prohibitions of Salafy: No other object for worship

than God; Holy men or women must not be used to win favours from God; No other name than the names of Allah may enter a Prayer; No smoking of tobacco; No shaving of beard; No abusive language; Rosaries are forbidden; Mosques must be built without minarets and all forms of ornaments. We found peace by applying these principles to our lives on top of the basic precepts of Islam. Allah rewarded us with the gift of clarity.

We will unify all the branches of Islam by returning to its purest form, before the divisions took hold. By the Grace of God, Salafy has its roots in our Arabian homeland. Infidels and disbelievers call our faith Wahhabi, which, in itself, shows how little they understand us. Salafy was established in the 18th century by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab. To call our faith after a man is clearly entirely contrary to our belief, is it not? Salafy was adopted by the Saud family in 1744 and its rise has been tied to them ever since. We call ourselves al-Muwahhidun, the Unitarians and only by breaking our faith's links with the corrupt Sauds will we give ourselves the ability to unify all Islam.

Osama became mesmerised by the potential power of a unified Islam and the purity of Salafy belief changed him. His strength of belief brought Osama into direct conflict with the ruling House of Saud. He saw that theirs was an evil family, who squandered our country's vast wealth on luxuries and western trappings of success. As each day went by, his hatred of the royals grew. Osama began to speak out against the ruling families and he found a ready audience. The corruption and waste in Saudi Arabia was, at that time, truly disgusting. Little has changed.

As Osama became more outspoken in his views, the Sauds began to keep an eye on him. Agents were posted all over Jiddah, observing the bin Laden family homes and often following Osama. They could not openly attack us however, as the Sauds owed a great deal to the generosity of Osama's father during the times of turbulent oil prices in the 1970s. Without bin Laden support, the Sauds would have been bankrupted.

They watched as we grew stronger. Al-Qaeda was still unknown to the Saudi forces, but we strengthened it every day. Our faith gave us the will to build our organisation and Osama's family wealth gave us the resources to begin stockpiling weapons and equipment. Our path forward was still unclear, but we had faith that Allah would point the way for us.

### 3. THE FINAL INSULT

"They think to beguile Allah and those who believe, and they beguile none save themselves but they perceive not.

"In their hearts is a disease, and Allah increaseth their disease. A painful doom is theirs because they lie.

"And when it is said unto them: make not mischief in the earth, they say: We are peacemakers only.

"Verily, they are indeed the mischief-makers. But they perceive not."

Surah 2. Al-Baqarah, The Cow. Vv 9-12.

Saudi Arabia, 1990

In the middle of the fateful year of 1990, the Kuwaiti Emirate was invaded by a fellow Muslim country, Iraq. This caused great turmoil in our minds and we spent many evenings discussing what the proper Muslim response should be. On one hand, the rulers of Iraq were Sunni Muslims, our root branch of Islam. Also, the dictator of Iraq, Saddam Hussein had previously waged war against the lesser Shia Muslim nation, Iran. We understood that Iraq had a long-standing claim on Kuwait; the Kuwaiti territory was part of Iraq on many ancient maps and was a British protectorate from 1914 to 1961. The Al-Sabah ruling family took control of Kuwait in 1961 and paid many bribes to Iraq in order to maintain its position. The Kuwaiti royals had also been very supportive of the Saudi royals and had produced so much oil that the value of Iraq's exports was reduced. On the other hand, Hussein and his Ba'athists had tarnished Islam by trying to combine it with Marxist ideology, Hussein was but an evil military dictator, such a perfect bedfellow for the Americans before he stepped out of line.

During this period of confusion and reflection, the future course of world events was decided and our path was made clear for us. One bright Friday afternoon, a few days after the invasion, I was walking home from the mosque with Osama, when we were attracted by a large crowd of men who had gathered in front of an electrical retailer's shop window. They were shouting and arguing excitedly.

- What is happening, brothers? I asked.

- The Godless Americans are coming here, here to the birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad and his Holy Shrines!

The television screens showed images of George Bush the Elder, the president of America. Via Arabic subtitles he was telling the world that the United States' army would come to protect Saudi Arabia and then liberate Kuwait. Other screens showed other channels, with images of American military planes already landing on our sacred soil. Osama threw his hands up to heaven in disbelief, but could find no words to express his outrage. There was pain in his eyes and he cried, as did every man among us. This was the greatest insult to Allah in the history of Islam. We returned home and watched our small tv and listened to the state-run radio news. It was a nightmare and our only solace was found in prayer.

Americans had always been in Saudi Arabia, of course; the oil industry needed their technical expertise and, as the biggest export market for Saudi oil, the Saud family courted the Americans. Their presence was discrete, however; mostly they stayed inside special compounds and generally did not mix with true Muslims. The American military in Saudi Arabia was an entirely different prospect. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, which was helped by our success in Afghanistan, the American military was the single biggest power in the world. Their mighty army, navy and air force was backed up by enough nuclear weapons to destroy the planet many times over. They could not be faced up to by any conventional armed force. Their arrival in Saudi Arabia, the home of the birthplace of the Prophet

Muhammad and the birthplace of Islam was intolerable to us. They had invaded by stealth, with the connivance of the Saud ruling family. We were incensed. Outraged as never before.

We each had our own reason for hating the Americans. My earliest memory is of a terrible day in 1957, when I was 7 years old. Ibn Saud, the founder of Saudi Arabia had died in 1953, bewildered at the changes in his kingdom since the discovery of oil just a few years before. After his death, the oil industry expanded dramatically, with no thought for the consequences of westernising our culture. With childish curiosity, I went with my sisters to look at the new oil pipeline being built, while our father searched for work in Riyadh and our mother washed floors in the oil workers' apartments. We were Saudi all right, but we were of the majority of families that didn't control the country with an iron fist. The rich families were eager to embrace the American oil companies as long as they could start hoarding their millions in double-quick time. The Americans and other foreigners were quite happy to deal with the ruling family and their key supporters, as long as the country remained stable. Being a child, I understood nothing of this revolution that was occurring near my tiny home. I just knew that there would be lots of big machines, mysterious foreigners and new noises and smells.

We sat near the site and watched, enjoying the free entertainment. A little later, two American workers came to us. They were wearing sunglasses and jeans. They smoked Marlboro cigarettes and offered us chewing gum and Coca-Cola. We enjoyed their company until they assaulted my eldest sister, Sala. They each grabbed one of her wrists, told my other sister and I to stay quiet or they'd hurt us, pulled Sala behind some bushes and sexually assaulted her. They gave her back to us after a few minutes that felt like an eternity. They threw 20 American dollars at Sala and advised her not to say anything. We barely understood English and didn't know what they were saying. Sala just cried. When we got home and explained what had happened, our mother cried.

When my father came home and heard what had happened, he screamed with rage at what had been done to his daughter. He ran to the local police station and came home a few hours later. His head was bleeding and his face was cut many times. He had been told to forget about the rape of his daughter or he would be killed. As I lay in bed that night, too terrified to sleep, I listened to my parents crying together in sorrow, I came to hate the Americans. I had no real idea of what had befallen Sala. Only in later years did I come to understand the evil that had been perpetrated on her. Under Shari'a, the assault had made her unclean; she could never marry. I thought of Sala, as the Americans came in their thousands to bases north and west of Riyadh.

Anti-American feelings were growing in Jiddah. Being so close to Mecca, people there seemed to have even more fervour in their beliefs and we witnessed American flags being burned on the streets almost every day. The Saud family had decreed that no Americans would be allowed near Mecca, so we were able to concentrate on our praying and meditation without the fear of seeing or smelling any disbelievers. Whispers of the New Crusaders began to grow louder. Many feared that protecting the Sauds was just a smokescreen to take over the Saudi oil industry and conquer the Land of the Two Holy Places.

As the American military build-up continued, we began to formulate our response. One night, we stayed up well past the rising moon to discuss our options.

- The disbelievers now control the land of the Prophet, said Osama.
- Then we must rid the world of all disbelievers.
- How shall we do this? asked Osama.
- You can show us the way.
- Will you come with me on a journey? A journey of hardship and trials? A journey that will

unite all Muslims under One True God? A journey that will see the Jews pushed into the sea? A journey that will see America burn? A journey that will return the land of the Prophet Muhammad to his believers? A journey that will see Islam take its rightful place as the One True Religion in all the world?

- We will.

- Will you each take an oath that if you share our secrets with any disbeliever, you will be punished by death and punished by Allah?

- We will.

- So it begins.

Osama then outlined the plans he had been contemplating ever since we had left Afghanistan. It now became clear to me that he had known that waging a Holy War, a Jihad, against the disbelievers of the world was his True Calling, but the arrival of American soldiers and weapons of war in the land of the Holiest Shrines of Islam wiped any doubt from his mind. He was ready to lead a Jihad, a Jihad on such a scale as had never before been seen.

Osama's plan had three key elements. The first was the organisation of a loose structure which would allow units to attack the enemy wherever and whenever opportunities presented themselves. We would unite with Islamic revolutionary forces all over the world. This would allow for the transfer of arms, intelligence, funds and people to where they could be most beneficial. This structure would not be physical and so could not be attacked by tanks or missiles. Our success in Afghanistan was derived from intelligence, communications and teamwork, all united under Islam. These attributes would continue to serve us well. Al-Qaeda would be a spirit, a phantom enemy which no disbeliever could penetrate or resist.

The second element was the reunification of true believers everywhere. Muslims constitute one fifth of the world's population, stretching from Africa, through the Middle East and Asia and into the Far East. We control over half the world's oil supplies yet we have many of the poorest people on earth in our number. The great injustices which have been foisted upon us by the Jews and Christians, in league with our own corrupt rulers, can only be overcome if every Muslim embraces the Qur'an as a blueprint for change. If all Muslims unite to fight our oppressors, we cannot be stopped. One billion Muslims with their blood boiling for justice and revenge would truly be an unstoppable force.

The third element would be the planning of long-term, strategic hammer blows against our hated enemies. These would be operations that would require years of planning and huge investments in personnel, money and resources. There would be up to six of these major operations in development at any time and we would work on the assumption that the majority would not be implemented successfully. But, with the help and grace of Allah, the blows that would be successful would shake our enemies to their foundations and bring them to their knees.

In the weeks that followed, we approached our task with great hope and energy. The creation of a basic network system for the propagation of our battle against the infidels was the first step. Osama, who had been trained well by the CIA while he fought the Russians in Afghanistan, told us about the idea of cells. Cells are made of small groups of soldiers, who are active within a defined area. The cell is given its orders by one or two outside the cell and it knows of no other cell's activities, unless it is involved in the delivery of a combined hammer blow. If a cell is infiltrated by the enemy, it can offer no intelligence on the wider organisation, even under torture. The efficiency of this system would soon be proven when some of our members were tortured to death by the Saudi security forces. The CIA used cells in its activities against the Soviet Union for decades and they were convinced that this structure was most resistant to outside interference and disruption. The CIA was indeed a powerful



enemy, but we had a great advantage over it, our language was spoken or understood by very few among its many thousands of communications experts and cryptographers. The CIA was formed to combat a conventional enemy, they would find an unconventional foe difficult to penetrate. Osama's inside experience of our enemy's intelligence systems gave us yet another decisive advantage.

Commands and intelligence would be delivered to cells by satellite phone and email whenever possible. Physical contact with commanders outside the cell would only be used as a last resort. Changing code words were created for every member of Al-Qaeda to memorise and these would be used whenever personal contact between cells was required. Osama understood the power of modern communications systems and made sure to harness this power for our own ends from the very beginning of our struggle. Our language and our Holy Qur'an would be the basis of codes which no infidel could break.

Osama developed a broad target list which would be the standing orders for every cell. In compiling this list, he worked out a range of basic skills which would be necessary for every Soldier of God. These were: 1, use of the Kalashnikov assault rifle, marksmanship and maintenance; 2, explosives, manufacturing and detonating; 3, communications, local and international; 4, field craft, navigation, first aid and survival in any terrain or city; 5, assassination, ambush, hand-to-hand combat; 6, Salafy and the Holy Qur'an.

Osama repeatedly stressed that knowing your enemy was the most important thing if you want to destroy him. We spent many nights learning about the history of America, its anti-colonial war, independence, the Civil War, the first two World Wars, Vietnam. We also learned, in detail, about the functioning of the USA and its security apparatus. We joke among ourselves that Al-Qaeda members know more about the CIA than the average American citizen.

We used books, the internet and our own individual experiences with the Americans to build a broad picture of what makes them tick and what can destroy them. We also had many spies observing the American military build-up in Saudi Arabia at that time. We understood and knew how to operate all America's basic military weapons and we numbered among us many fighters who had experience of combat aircraft, missile systems and marine warfare. America's allies also entered our syllabus. We studied Israel closely and learned how its military might is dependent on American hardware and funds and how the two countries co-operated many times to crush their Muslim opponents. Britain and Australia and America's Muslim allies were each known to us in great detail. We had time. Above all else, we had time.

It was decided that we would make a training manual covering all these basic skills and histories. The manual would be distributed on laptop computers, with limited numbers of hard copies made when required. It would later be maintained on an encrypted internet server, to be accessed by Al-Qaeda soldiers worldwide. The codes would change daily (based on the Muslim calendar and the Qur'an) and the manual would be hidden within a seemingly innocuous website for a Yemeni honey farm. I do not know who was responsible for creating and maintaining our internet communications system, but they truly used their God-given talents. May Allah bless them.

We would analyse the basic skills by day, typing up the information, scanning pictures and saving them on our laptop computer. By night, we would go far into the desert and practice shooting and bomb-making in a cave at the end of a deep ravine, which could only be reached by camel. One night, we were met by a police patrol as we returned to Jiddah after marksmanship training. The police drew their weapons, thinking we were smugglers. Osama and I dismounted from our camels and, as the police searched our saddlebags, we cut both their throats with our desert knives. We left the bodies

where they fell and took their guns, as well as ammunition, petrol and water supplies from their jeep. We continued on our way, burying the guns a hundred meters off the trail. It would appear as though the police had been killed by Bedouin smugglers. We never went back to that training cave again.

When we reached our house, we had a meeting. Osama decided that we would leave Saudi Arabia and travel to our brothers in Afghanistan. A puppet government left behind by the Russians was still in place and our Islamic brothers were fighting to remove it. We would assist them in the creation of a true Islamic state and use its nurturing powers to create training camps for our Jihad.

- We will train 10,000 of our brothers in the art of Jihad, said Osama. - We will make an Army of Allah which will sweep forth upon the earth and crush the infidels. Come, let us prepare for our journey.

As we made ready through the night, Osama finalised the standing orders for the first active cell we would leave behind us in Saudi Arabia. One of our group of five would lead it and work to create new cells in the surrounding countries of Yemen, Egypt, Sudan, Palestine, Oman, Lebanon and Syria. Mar Bin Saul, who would have the glory of striking the first blows against the disbelievers, had three good Muslims ready to take the oath and begin the glorious struggle. Osama decided that we would leave him all our weapons and explosives, as we could not risk travelling while armed.

- Use them well, brother. For every drop of Jew and Christian blood you spill, you will find a lake of milk and honey in heaven, he said.

- Thank you for your faith in me, brother, replied Mar. - With the help of Allah, I will lead the struggle here and send you many willing recruits.

- Get your men now, but hurry, the sun will rise within the hour.

Mar slipped off into the night and returned quickly with three men I had not seen before. Two were in their early twenties and one looked a seasoned desert fighter of about forty years. Osama greeted each one in turn and then, one at a time, had them recite the Oath of Al-Qaeda.

- Now sit and you will learn your standing orders.

We all sat on the floor. There was a sense of expectation among us all, as none of us knew what our standing orders would be. Osama began to recite a verse, a verse which would become a prayer for all in Al-Qaeda, a prayer which would give each and every one of us a focus in the hard years that lay ahead and give us joy in our struggle.

- In the name of Allah and His Prophet Muhammad, I take on His Holy Struggle,  
I will fight the Christian and the Jew with all my strength and resourcefulness,  
I will attack his armies, his governments, his commerce and his citizens,  
I will give my own life when Allah deems it necessary to complete my mission,  
I will never shirk from action against the enemies of Islam, my work is God's Work and God will give me guidance, courage and reward in heaven. This is my Jihad and I testify that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet.

ALLAHU-AKBAR!

ALLAHU-AKBAR!

ALLAHU-AKBAR!

Osama recited the verse again and we all joined in. We kept repeating the verse until each one of us had it memorised perfectly. The sun was now rising on a new world, a world with its first active Al-Qaeda cell which, from that day on, would act on its standing orders at every opportunity. The new Jihad had truly begun. It was the day that Christians know as Christmas and the Morning Star shone like a jewel in the azure sky. We turned to face Mecca and dropped to our knees in prayer. I do not lie



when I say that every man among us wept tears of joy as he prayed.

#### 4. BUILDING AL-QAEDA

"When the heaven is cleft asunder,

"When the planets are dispersed,

"When the seas are poured forth,

"And the sepulchres are overturned,

"A soul will know what it hath sent before and what left behind."

Surah 82. Al-Infitar, The Cleaving. Vv 1-5.

Afghanistan, 1991

In early January, 1991, the US deadline for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait was closing in fast. We decided to travel to Afghanistan by going through Iran, as we heard from our brothers in Peshawar that the entire North West Frontier was under surveillance by Pakistani secret service. Osama believed that the Saud family had put a bounty on his head. Osama had been under virtual house arrest in Jiddah and had to beg, through his family, for permission to go to Pakistan. When the permission was finally granted, Pakistani security levels increased.

- They wish to deliver me to my death, joked Osama.

- Will they not see us board a plane for Iran? I asked.

- Not if someone who looks like me travels to Pakistan, he answered.

Later that same day, the four of us boarded a flight from Jiddah to Mashhad, in north-eastern Iran. Osama was dressed as a cleric, with heavy glasses and his hair and beard dyed grey and forged papers. A cousin, who looked almost exactly like him when dressed in the robes that Osama typically wore, took a flight direct to Pakistan. We hoped that he would distract our police observers and also that he could alter his appearance sufficiently before getting assassinated in Pakistan. He succeeded on both counts.

Our route was a busy one, as there was a constant stream of devout Muslims travelling from Iran to Mecca. The traffic was especially busy during the time of the Hajj, when Muslims gather in their hundreds of thousands at Mecca, but there was always ample opportunity to conceal our travel. We would use this route many times, to move people from Saudi Arabia to Afghanistan. Peshawar, our Pakistani heartland, was at the far side of Afghanistan and Kandahar, our Afghan home base, was a long drive from Iran, but we didn't mind the extra travel for security. As I have said, we had time.

We had excellent forged identities, including fake passports. We were Salafy teachers, visiting Salafy schools in Iran. This cover would also be beneficial in Afghanistan. As the Salafy schools spread throughout the Islamic world, funded by the Saudi government, it was the ideal cover. Indeed, Salafy schools would soon be found in almost every country on earth, including the countries of our most hated enemies. We would be welcomed by any Salafy disciple and even hypocrite Muslims would respect us.

The flight was crowded with Iranian Shia Muslims, joyous at having been to Mecca and also workers returning to their homes on leave. We spent most of the flight praying or studying the Glorious Qur'an. On arrival in Mashhad, Osama informed us that we would spend a couple of days there, with the aim of creating a safe house and forming a cell. He understood the importance of the city in our future work.

We stayed at a Sunni inn that first night and, next morning, the innkeeper told his son to guide us to the nearest Salafy school. We knew we would find assistance there. As the young man led us

through Mashhad's dusty streets, he asked many questions. These mainly concerned Mecca and the homeland of the Prophet. Then he changed the subject to the presence of Americans in Saudi Arabia. There was real anger in his voice when he asked how this could be happening.

- Forgive my disrespect, but does the Saud family not know of how the Qur'an says "And when it is said unto them: make not mischief in the earth, they say: We are peacemakers only. Verily, they are indeed the mischief-makers. But they perceive not."

- You are a good student of the Glorious Qur'an, young man, said Osama.

- Yes, master. It truly is the word of God.

- And what do you think should be done about the Americans?

- I would give my life if I could kill one American soldier and help to free the birthplace of the Prophet.

- Do you really mean this?

- As Allah is my witness, I mean it, master.

Osama bade us all to stop. He looked straight into our guide's eyes.

- Then you shall help to liberate the Prophet's homeland. Take us somewhere where we can talk in total privacy.

He brought us to a tea house which had private rooms. The entrance was decorated with a hanging bead curtain. Inside was a cluster of small, low tables with cushions on the tiled floor. A pair of large water boilers stood gleaming behind the counter and the sweet smell of fine teas filled the air. Prints of Persian princes and their ladies enjoying tea covered the white plaster walls. The private rooms lay at the end of a short hallway. Inside was a round table with four cushions on the floor around it. With one of us standing guard at the door, the others could talk without fear of being overheard. Osama first explained that what he was about to say would mean the young man's death if he ever repeated it to anyone, even his own father, but it was about the glory of Allah and how it would be made greater throughout the world.

He gladly accepted this, seeming to sense where the conversation was going. Osama had him take the Oath of Al-Qaeda and learn the Standing Orders. When he was satisfied that the first member of our first Iranian cell fully understood the path he was now on, Osama explained his mission, which would be to find and maintain a safe house and develop a cell of four members.

- My own father hates the Americans more than any man in Mashhad. He fought against the Iraqis in the great war and was poisoned by gas which Saddam made with the help of the Americans. He has a bad cough now, but his mind and spirit are as sharp as ever they were. He will want to join Al-Qaeda and his inn would be the perfect safe house, as it can contain any number of strangers without ever attracting attention.

- Are you sure of his dedication to Allah and the Prophet?

- It is from my father that I learned the Qur'an. As it should be.

- As indeed it should.

The innkeeper, Hud, was every bit the believer that we needed. By the end of the day, we had our safe house and a cell of two good men in Mashhad.

We bought a jeep from one of Hud's friends for a good price. When we had gathered enough provisions and water for our journey, we set off. The road to Afghanistan was quiet and we passed over the border without any trouble. Inside Afghanistan, the way was open for us. We drove to Herat, a cross-roads city in the north west of the country. The puppet government of Afghanistan was confined to a small area around the capital, Kabul. The remainder of the land was in the hands of tribal leaders,

most of whom were uniting to battle the hated communists, so we felt safe.

When we reached the outskirts of Herat, Osama told us that we would find an inn and then seek out an arms dealer, as it was important for us to be armed in a land where our brothers were at war.

- We will travel on to Kandahar, where the Islamic army is based, and there we will find our roles in this war for Allah, but we must have the means of self-protection before then. I have a friend in Herat who will help us, he said.

We drove to an inn outside the city centre and put our supplies and belongings in our rooms for safekeeping.

- By the Grace of Allah, I trust you to protect our belongings, said Osama to the innkeeper. His expression made it clear that we were not to be trifled with, or robbed, as happens to most travellers in those parts.

- As God is great, I will protect your belongings, said the innkeeper, with fear in his eyes. He understood that we were no innocent tourists or merchants.

- We must beware too of spies, said Osama. If any tell the government police of our presence, we will cut their heads off. Will you tell them that, asked Osama.

- This too I will take to my heart, said the innkeeper.

Osama kept the computer with our training manual in a satchel on his person at all times. With that, we set off through the dirty alleys of Herat. When we were out of sight of the inn, Osama told me to double back after a few minutes to check on our room. The others waited for me as I returned to the inn, where I found the innkeeper talking to a man in black garb outside the door. I did not allow myself to be seen and hurried back to my friends.

- The innkeeper was talking to a man in black, I said.

- As I suspected, said Osama.

At length, we came to a house with bars on its door and windows. Osama knocked and, after a time, a small hatch opened in the door.

- Who knocks at the door of Muhammad? came a voice.

- It is I, Osama Bin Laden and I seek your help.

Locks and bolts were unsecured and the door immediately opened.

- Come swiftly, brothers. There are spies about.

We entered the house, which was cool and welcoming after the dusty heat of the streets.

Osama's friend made us mint tea and offered us bread and fruit, which we accepted graciously. Osama explained our mission and our host took the Al-Qaeda oath and recited the Standing Orders after hearing them just once. This truly was a man to be reckoned with. Osama told him that we needed weapons for self-protection until we made contact with the Islamic forces in Kandahar. Muhammad then brought us to a small electrical repair shop not far from his home. We entered to find an old man behind a counter, repairing an iron with a screwdriver and soldering set. He looked up from his work to greet us and, on seeing our friend, greeted us again in the name of Allah. Muhammad whispered in his ear, even though there was nobody else in the shop but our group. The old man raised the counter and beckoned us through to a back room. The room contained electrical repair equipment, wires and spare parts. At the far end of the room was a small door, secured with a padlock. He unlocked the door and gestured us to enter. We had to crouch low to get through the door and into the dark room. When we had all entered, the man switched on a fluorescent light. As it flickered on, we glimpsed an array of arms hanging from brackets on the wall and laid out on benches. When the light was fully on, I could

scarcely believe my eyes. Not since I had fought in Afghanistan two years previously had I seen so many weapons.

We each got a Kalashnikov rifle with six magazines. We also took four hand grenades and a 9mm automatic pistol with three full magazines per man. Osama drew a bundle of money from inside his robe and asked the dealer for his fair price. When he was paid in US dollars, he offered us free flak jackets as a thank you for the business.

- As God is good, he said, I pray that these jackets may protect you from harm.

- We thank you for your kindness and trust that you will tell nobody that we were here, said Osama.

- As God is my witness, none shall know of this transaction.

Osama ordered us to load and cock our weapons and, concealing them under our robes, we left the shop. Muhammad carried the flak jackets in a large canvas bag. As we moved down the street towards the inn, Osama told me to look out for the spy I had seen earlier at the inn. I spotted him at a street corner two blocks from the inn and alerted Osama and my comrades to him. We continued on towards the inn, making sure not to look at the spy. As we turned the last corner before the inn, Osama told me to wait and bring the spy to our room. I lay in wait as the others entered the inn. The spy turned the corner and was shocked to see me, with my Kalashnikov pointing at his head from under my robe.

- Stay quiet and move to the inn, I barked, rapping the gun barrel off the side of his skull.

When we entered the inn, there was nobody at the reception desk and the lobby area was empty. I ordered the spy to go up the stairs and directed him to our room. Osama was waiting at the door. When we entered, the innkeeper was sitting on a chair, blood gushing from a gash on his forehead where, I guessed, he had been struck with a rifle butt. The spy was told to sit in another chair beside him.

- On whose behalf do you spy on us? asked Osama.

The two men glanced at each other and decided that truthfulness would be the best way to keep living.

- The government forces pay us to monitor movements of strangers in Herat, blurted the innkeeper. They fear an Islamic army gathering to oust them from power.

- And are you not Muslims?

- In the name of Allah we are. But there is no business to be had. The bribes from the government agents help us to feed our families.

- Have you alerted the government to our presence?

- As Allah is my witness, I have not, said the innkeeper.

- I have told nobody, said the spy.

- Where are the government forces active now? asked Osama.

- To my knowledge, there are some government patrols and checkpoints on the road from here to Kandahar and most forces are concentrated in the area south of Kabul, said the spy.

- Is Kandahar in the hands of our Islamic brothers?

- To the best of my knowledge, the government forces have no control over Kandahar, said the spy.

- I hear that an Islamic leader named Mullah Omar is building a strong army in Kandahar. He plans to recapture Kabul, offered the innkeeper.

- Very well. You will come with us.

Knowing they were going to be brought into the desert outside Herat, to be shot and buried in shallow

graves, the two men began pleading for their lives. One earnestly quoted the Glorious Qur'an in his pleadings.

- Allah is ever Clement, Forgiving... Allah is ever Forgiving, Merciful.

- Even the Glorious Qur'an cannot save you, answered Osama. He was ruthless with spies and police and would kill all before him lest he be captured by the enemy.

There were no other guests staying at the inn. The only visitor we'd had was the young boy who sweeps up for the innkeeper and carries bags when there are bags to be carried. Osama told him that the innkeeper was at the market and to come back tomorrow. Osama made the innkeeper write a letter for the boy, telling him that he was gone to Mecca and to keep running the inn as normal. His hands shook as he scribbled the note.

We put bags on the spies' heads, tied their hands together and waited for nightfall. As darkness fell, we loaded the jeep and put the two spies in the back with the ammunition. A few miles outside Herat, we got off the road, made the spies dig shallow graves for themselves, shot them and buried them. Then we continued our journey to Kandahar.

Huge mountains loomed over us throughout our four day journey. We avoided meeting any government patrols and the monotony of our journey was broken only by recitals of the Qur'an. We also discussed the political situation in Afghanistan and agreed that the country was ripe for conversion to an Islamic state with the Qur'an as its guiding principles. This would be an important step on our quest - the creation of an Islam-dominated planet. We agreed that giving our services to Mullah Omar and the hard line clerics in Kandahar would be our best approach. We would ask his leave to start constructing training camps for our soldiers in the desert, in return for killing his enemies and training his troops.

Dawn was breaking as we drove east into the city, hungry, tired and dusty from our journey.

- Behold! The Morning Star again blesses us, said a comrade, as we passed a burning jeep, two dead Government soldiers on the ground beside it. Vultures were braving the heat and flames to pick casually at the bodies. Our war in Afghanistan had resumed. It would never end.

Almost the day we got to Kandahar and met with Mullah Omar, did Osama leave us. He called a meeting of the Al-Qaeda command committee, which became an ever-changing cluster of men around Osama. At that time, I was a member, with my two comrades and our Supreme Leader was Osama Bin Laden, may God have mercy on him. Until his death, he was like a God to us. I know he would strike me down for saying such a blasphemous utterance, may Allah forgive me, and I can only say this now that he is dead. I will say that he was a Prophet, a true disciple of Muhammad.

We were joined by Mullah Omar and two of his most trusted lieutenants. They became members of Al-Qaeda, reciting the standing orders after Osama. We sat and Osama outlined his plan. Osama would travel immediately to Sudan and organise Al-Qaeda there. I would stay in Afghanistan and build training camps which would soon see plenty of new recruits. I was to develop a basic training system, which would teach all Al-Qaeda members the skills in our manual. I was also to create a set of manuals and training courses for advanced subjects, to include atomic, chemical, biological, assassination and sniper. When I told Osama that I did not know too much about setting off atomic bombs, he told me not to worry, that he would send experts to me.

The two comrades that we had travelled with from Saudi Arabia would assist Mullah Omar with tactics, training and ambushes. Osama turned to Mullah Omar, a short, yet powerful-looking man, dressed entirely in the black of a cleric and with but one eye behind his thick glasses.

- Creating a true Islamic state here in Afghanistan is our first priority, said Osama. - When we



control this country we can train thousands of fighters with impunity. We can foment an Islamic uprising across the planet. I enclose a donation from my family and I present it to you now, Mullah Omar and hope that you can use it to buy many guns and to give us your protection.

Osama passed a briefcase to Mullah Omar. It contained US\$15 million, in cash, drafts and bearer bonds. The money was from his family inheritance, which was worth many millions and would help pay for the evolution of Al-Qaeda into a truly global jihad.

- The Jews and the Christians fight over our Holy Lands once more, he said. For this, Allah will surely punish them. We are but tools in the Hands of Allah. We do his bidding and there is but one way we can smite them from the earth. We must destroy their homelands and kill their children, only then will they question their disrespect. We can and will destroy their war machines, their planes, their allies, but these are no more than flies biting an elephant. We will be like the virus injected by the fly which kills from within. We must now create the seeds of plans that will grow to fruition and poison our enemies in their very hearts.

The reaction in the room was joyous. Never before had Muslims fought the crusaders or the Jews on such terms. We knew that Al-Qaeda was the greatest anti-Jew and anti-American mobilisation of Arabs that the world had seen in decades, but to be struck with the revelation that our objective would be the complete destruction of our enemies, that was a moment of pure joy.

At a signal from Osama, Mullah Omar's fighters, now my comrades, drew their handguns and checked outside the door. They looked all around the room and used a sensor to check for bugging equipment.

- It is secure, said one, who stood by the door, his gun still drawn.

- Good. Now we will talk about the hammer blows that will allow us to conquer our enemy, in the name of Allah. Besides killing every last one of them, what will hurt the Jews the most? asked Osama.

- There is one thing they cannot survive without, said Mullah Omar, and that is American guns and money.

- Excellent, said Osama, that is how we must start to think. Can we bring about an economic collapse in America? Can we destroy their economy so they can no longer give Israel billions in cash and weapons, more than they give to all the starving children of the world?

- Can we attack or discredit their biggest industries? I asked.

- The arms exporters, the oil companies, the computer companies, the airlines. Yes. All these can be made suffer and that will make it more difficult for American money to reach Tel Aviv. A balancing of oil-driven wealth in favour of the Arabs will weaken Israel.

- Isn't tourism the world's biggest industry?

- Tourism is also an important industry for the Jews.

- Attacks on tourists would strike a blow on any economy.

- All it takes is one man with a rifle and grenades.

- Or a bomb.

- Or a bomb on a plane.

- Perfect, concluded Osama. Tourism will be our key economic target for now. Cells will be encouraged to draw up plans to execute such attacks and we will approve and support where we can. Our enemies and the allies of our enemies will suffer when we attack their biggest source of foreign earnings.

- I would like a poison gas attack, proposed Mullah Omar, on, what is it the American's call it?



Disneyland? That would hurt them.

- I agree. They have one in Florida and one in California. The two on the same day, perhaps?

- I propose we activate cells to spy on these facilities. With more intelligence, we can embark on a plan with guaranteed success.

Osama then outlined his desire to attack the symbols of America. Knowing his enemy as he did, he knew how important were the symbols of wealth and power to them. The White House, the Pentagon, New York City, Hollywood. These are the things, then there are people: film stars, singers, politicians. He proposed a plan to knock the Twin Towers in New York, using a truck bomb in the underground car park. This sounded like a wondrous plan to us all, so we agreed that a cell should be set up there, with men well-trained in the manufacture of explosives.

We also agreed that operatives in America should consider ways to kill the American President. The security on him would increase much in the coming years, but we would not commit to an attack unless it had a good chance of success. Similar tactics would be taken with the political leaders of America's allies and apostate Muslims: Israel, Britain, Japan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Germany and many more. We agreed that the corrupt rulers of the Arab Nation must be removed so we can create a World Nation of Islam. Their day will come, but we must become stronger first.

As a final contribution to the discussion on hammer blows, Osama began a discussion of fear.

- What is it that would strike fear into the heart of an Christian or a Jew?

- Fear that his children will be killed?

- Fear that he has no money and no future?

- Fear of death?

- Fear of failure?

- Fear of flying?

- Fear of Allah is one fear they not have. So we will give it to them. It will come to dominate their every waking thought, it will take over their lives. And they will see their lives crumble around them. In the Name of Allah, this will come to pass. We will use atomic bombs to burn their cities to ashes and then we will attack them with knives. It shall be our hammer blow to defeat our enemy. It will take many years and many lives to make this come to pass. We have friends in Pakistan and Russia, we also have some information from Iran and can make contact with the Koreans and the Iraqis. Spies will be used in America and Israel. We will get nuclear bombs and we will learn how to use them. All options will be examined. Money is not an issue.

We greeted this pronouncement with utter joy. I had my own forebodings, which I kept to myself. Would it be justifiable to Allah that we would slay millions of women and children in His Name? I accepted that if was Osama's will then I would do everything in my power to help make it happen. This war would see much bloodshed but, for a change, it would be the blood of the children of the Christians and the Jews. The hammer blows would be the key to our success in making all the world bow before Allah.

Osama left for Sudan the next morning. I got to work with my Afghan comrades building our training camps.

Osama's money ensured that Mullah Omar's anti-Government forces would be armed with better rockets, better artillery and better tanks, and the money to pay for wages, fuel and ammunition. The modern Afghan war is one fought over medium distances with artillery and rockets. The contribution would give Mullah Omar the best personal army in Afghanistan. Combined with the Islamic motivation of his troops, he would be unstoppable. In the end, we persevered and were granted

victory, assisted greatly by the Taliban - Pakistani students of Islam who had flocked to Afghanistan at the call of Mullah Omar. The Taliban were fiercely loyal to Allah and fought with God on their side. None could stand before them, save Massoud the Warlord, hiding in his cave in the northern mountains. His day, too, would come.

Two weeks after Osama left for Sudan, the Americans and British attacked Iraq. Saddam Hussein's attempt's to unite the Arabs by attacking Israel with puny Scud missiles failed. It failed because the Muslims will not unite behind a tyrant who does not pay Allah his just respects. We who are led by the Qur'an, we will unite the Muslims against their common enemy.

My assistant brought me to an abandoned Russian army base a few miles outside Kandahar. It contained three large bunkers, eight cabins, a command post, warehouses, observation towers and a strong perimeter fence. There were useful gun emplacements and a good mast without antennae. It was perfect.

I had a squad of 20 men to help with the clean-up. The base had been unoccupied for three years, but was in good condition. Most looters had stayed away because of the strong minefield around the perimeter, but we had maps of the minefield, which were accurate, so we added some more. Within a few days, the base was clean and we could start bringing equipment in. Mullah Omar's officers supplied everything I needed, while the Mullah toured the provinces, building up support for the Holy War. I had dozens of Kalashnikovs, thousands of rounds of ammunition, knives, grenades, TNT, detonators, mines and pistols. One cabin was set aside for communications training, so we filled it with PCs, printers, modems and satellite phone. It would have its own generator and satellite dish in time.

I analysed our operations manual and planned out a basic training course which would cover all the required elements. I learned the strengths of my team and found good teachers who could manage recruits. We worked out accommodation rotations, cooking, praying and recreation. The firing range at one side of the perimeter was extended. Security details were devised and a 24 hour armed guard was in place. Security would be bolstered by new recruits.

The recruits started arriving two months after Osama had left us. Operation Desert Storm was finished and had succeeded in making many Muslims angry. The continuing presence of American troops in Saudi Arabia, even with Kuwait liberated, caused many of our early recruits to be from Saudi Arabia. They were my brothers and I was proud to welcome them. All our recruits were united in their love for the Qur'an and their hatred of the Christians and Jews. I marvelled at the dedication and belief in our young fighters. Part of me feared what we would unleash upon the world. The months passed quickly. By early 1992, we had trained almost 2,000. As they finished training, they drifted off in twos and threes, with money and contact details, to form cells across the world and obtain combat experience. Dozens from the first groups were sent to America. Many returned to Pakistan, while others went to Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Hundreds more went to fight in Chechnya and Bosnia. All had email and website addresses from which they would receive their orders.

Osama came to Kandahar in the spring of 1992. The new offensive was going well and a sight was had of the end of the conflict in Afghanistan; the Taliban were growing ever stronger. Within a year, we could hope to see an Afghanistan free of oppression.

Osama inspected the training camp and was very impressed. It was almost a kilometer square, with a cluster of administration and sleeping quarters at one end and three fortified bunkers at the other. The open central area was used for drilling and exercising and a rifle range was off to one side, with mountains behind. He called a meeting of Al-Qaeda leadership that evening. He was accompanied by a new Al-Qaeda general, an Egyptian known as the Doctor, who had been building the cell network

across North Africa. We met in one of the camp bunkers, as requested by Osama.

The bunker was large, about 20 meters by 15, and had been used by the Russians for storing heavy munitions. It was well-lit, with overhead fluorescent tubes on skeletal frames, and very secure. A low ramp led down into the entrance, which was protected by a heavy steel sliding door. There were no windows and the air smelled musty. Russian propaganda slogans on the walls had been whitewashed and replaced with lines from the Glorious Qur'an. A dozen metal-framed chairs were ready for us and we sat, with Osama standing to our front.

- The good news, began Osama, is that we are ready to launch our hammer blows against the hated enemy.

We each expressed our delight at this news.

- Our soldiers in America are planning such attacks as we speak here now, he continued. Soon we will have attacks in Africa and the Far East also. The Muslim Brotherhood truly covers the globe. The Americans have no idea who we are or what our plans are. We have the element of surprise. That is a blessing from Allah. Meanwhile, we must build more training camps. As quickly as you can build them, he gestured to me, then I will fill them with fit young men who would gladly die for the cause of Allah and Al-Qaeda. We will now get involved in every conflict in the world which sees our Muslim brothers under the oppression of Christians and Jews. Palestine, the Philippines, Sudan, Egypt. These are all places that need our help. In helping our brothers in their Jihads, we will enlist their help in our Jihad, the greatest Jihad there ever was. We must train a thousand men a month.

- Agreed, I said, bowing my head.

- Then we will be ready to take on the world.

Osama continued the meeting by elaborating on what some of our cells were doing. We were briefed on a planned truck bomb attack in New York and an attack on Egypt's tourist industry. We also learned about the development of cells inside Saudi Arabia and its neighbours, as taking over these countries in the name of Allah would be a key part of our long-term strategy. He then asked us to pray quietly in thanks to Allah for a moment, before revealing why he had asked to meet us in a bunker.

- Allah has helped us in our time of need, he announced. This room will soon be the home of the hammer blow that will crush our enemies. We have gained an important member, someone with the skills and the contacts to give us an atomic bomb. He will travel shortly to inspect our facilities and he will have many requirements of us all. He is from Pakistan and he works in the Pakistani military. He can build us our bomb.

- Will he bring a bomb here? I asked.

- His plans are his alone. I now give him complete freedom to do as he pleases and he is to receive full support from us all. It is my belief that he will assemble the ignition system, then look for fissionable plutonium. The plutonium may have to be gathered slowly, a tiny piece at a time, or we may be lucky and find a seller of quantity. We will always try to buy or steal an operational warhead, but we must work under the assumption that we will make our own atomic weapons. This project will take us many years, but starting it now is a thing to celebrate.

That evening, we went to Mullah Omar's home for a celebratory dinner. It was a well-defended, well-hidden house. Armed guards patrolled outside. Mullah Omar greeted us at the door and invited us into his dining room. Ornate Afghanistani carpets covered the floor and a single, bright light hung from the middle of the ceiling. After the Mullah led us in a prayer of thanks, 12 of us sat on the cushioned floor around a low table. The table was piled high with all sorts of delicacies; roasted lamb and goat, spiced chicken, fragrant rices, dates and bananas. We feasted with pleasure, ate our fill and were

entertained by a puppet show of projected shadows. I slept well that night, dreaming of mushroom clouds soaring over Washington and Tel Aviv.

## 5. OPENING THE AFRICAN FRONT

"By the heaven and the Morning Star.

"Ah, what will tell thee what the Morning Star is!

"The piercing Star!

"Lo! They plot a plot against thee, O Muhammad,

"And I plot a plot against them.

"So give a respite to the disbelievers. Deal thou gently with them for a while."

Surah 86. Al-Tariq, The Morning Star. Vv 1-3, 15-17.

Sudan, 1992

Sudan became our most important base outside Afghanistan. Because of its geographical position, linking Africa with the Middle East, Sudan gave us many opportunities for trade. Osama invested many millions of dollars in a complex network of businesses in Sudan, some with the Government, some private, some secret.

Our arrival in Sudan was auspicious. After an overnight crossing of the Red Sea, we arrived in Port Sudan with the morning star rising at our backs, helping to push us to our destination. It was a pleasure to be on solid ground again. Sudan's ground is as dry as Afghanistan's, but there is a fragrance in the air, a richness that is the essence of Africa.

We were met at the port by a Sudanese Government agent, who drove us to a house in Khartoum, which was made available to us at nominal rent. The Muslim Brotherhood had taken over a country which was ruined by attempts to turn it into the breadbasket of the Arabian peninsula, supplying cheap wheat and sugar in return for oil. The debt and oil crises in the 1970s and 1980s, combined with administrative incompetence and corruption served to bring a rich land to its knees. Islam thrived on such bitter soil and the nation was striving to improve. Though conflict continued with the Christians in the south of the country, Shari'a was law in Sudan and this was a perfect opportunity to show the world what a Muslim nation can achieve.

Osama brought many millions of dollars to Sudan and immediately began investing in numerous projects. Engineers were hired to start planning road, canal and rail infrastructure. Irrigation and agriculture projects were a priority, as were trade and distribution businesses.

Sudan's economic decline had been brought about by international banks, which are mostly controlled by the Americans and the Jews, making their profits. We would use Islamic money, mostly Osama's own inheritance, but much of it from Saudi investors. Some of the money was given to the Sudanese leadership to assist with weapons procurement and training. We would also be supplied with weapons from this investment.

Osama's vast wealth stemmed from his father. Muhammad Awad bin Laden emigrated from South Yemen to Saudi Arabia in 1930, with little to his name but the ragged clothes on his back. He found work as a porter in Jiddah port. Muhammad bin Laden had 50 children and Osama was his seventh son, born in 1957, by which time Muhammad had built a thriving construction business. His major breakthrough came by building Saudi royal palaces for much cheaper than the cheapest bid. By doing a good job for a better price, he found all the doors for large contracts open to him. In the early 1960s, when Crown Prince Faisal was agitating to take over from the ageing King Saud, Muhammad played an important role in convincing King Saud to step down. When Faisal took over as king, the treasury was virtually empty and bin Laden financed the civil servants' wages for six months. This made

him the number one business contact of the ruling royals. King Faisal even made a decree that all construction projects in the kingdom would go to the bin Laden construction company. After the fire at the Al-Aqsa mosque in 1969, bin Laden rebuilt it well and went on the rebuild and expand the mosques of the Two Holy Places, Mecca and Medina.

Osama and his brothers were involved in the family business from a very young age. Their father insisted that they take on responsibilities. he kept the porter's bag he used during his poverty-stricken days in his office and he would show it to his boys and tell them that they had an obligation to remember their past and use these memories to improve the lot of their fellow Muslims. As the company's value expanded, a complex structure was created. There were many hundreds of trading and holding companies. Many were joint ventures with the ruling royals. The complete value of the bin laden business empire is impossible to evaluate, but it is sure that Osama had access to many hundreds of millions of dollars and a similar value in plant and equipment.

Muhammad bin Laden died when Osama was just 13 years old. Married, to a Syrian girl, at 17, Osama was educated well in Jiddah and graduated from King Abdul-Aziz University with a degree in public administration. His involvement with the bin Laden companies grew after graduation and he gained valuable experience in the management of major construction projects. This same experience was brought to Sudan.

Osama had a grand vision for the poor land. His family's construction skills had helped to bring Saudi Arabia from a land of camel traders to modern state with good infrastructure for transport, health and education. Oil revenues drove the projects, which Sudan lacked. But bin Laden money would take its place. The civil war against the Christians in southern Sudan was a constant distraction to its Muslim leaders. Osama offered to send some of our fighters to the front line, as their presence would have assisted any military force. This offer was declined and he was asked instead to focus on building a modern Islamic nation, free of ties to America. Osama invested over 150 million dollars of his family money in projects with the Sudanese government. he only ever got a fraction of this money back. A similar amount was invested in property and trading companies in Sudan by his family members and friends.

While Osama concentrated on the business, I organised a network of training camps, mainly clustered around oases in the Libyan Desert, about 100 miles west of Khartoum. A tributary of the Nile's flowed north from here, giving us a good water supply but the land was otherwise deserted. Sudan threw its borders open to Muslims, who could enter the country without passports or visas. many hundreds would come to escape persecution in Saudi Arabia and other traitor states, where the presence of battle-hardened Mujahideen was viewed with suspicion.

Within weeks of our arrival in Port Sudan, I had my first batch of recruits arrive at our main training camp. There were 20 of them, ranging in age from 17 to 45. They were mainly Sudanese, but also 3 Egyptians and 2 Saudis. They had heart and my task was easy with them. Indeed, I learnt a great deal about desert survival from our Sudanese recruits and our daily weapons training sharpened my handling of the AK. We also trained a number of Somalis in the art of urban guerilla warfare.

After six months in the desert, I was fit and ready for action. Osama called me to Khartoum and I traveled to the city with great expectation. Was our military campaign to finally get started? Would I have a chance to kill Crusaders?

I met Osama at his fortified compound in the centre of Khartoum. He was relaxed and in good humour. Armed guards patrolled in the yard outside as we sat in his bright study and brought each other up to date on events. An young Sudanese servant brought some tea and, as Osama poured me a



cup, the window shattered and a bullet hit the wall behind him. We dived to the floor as more bullets followed the first. We heard shouting outside and more gunfire, as the guards replied to the attack. We crawled towards the door and managed to get to the house's inner courtyard. A guard came to us and gave thanks that Osama was unhurt.

- It's a sniper, he said. - We spotted him on a rooftop across the street. My men are hunting him down now.

- The Saudis? I wondered aloud.

- Most likely, said Osama.

The other guards returned after a few minutes, dragging a man who had been shot in the chest, with blood pouring from his mouth. He was close to death.

- He used an AK with sniper sights. We found these papers on him, said a guard.

The papers identified him as member of Saudi secret police. He had details of Osama's house and travel habits in a notebook.

- He has been watching me for some time, said Osama. He addressed the assassin. - How many are with you?

- Please, by the grace of Allah, take me to a hospital, replied the agent.

As Osama pondered whether to save his life or finish him off, the man died. Osama ordered that his head be sent to the Saudis and instructed that the guard be increased. he gave the young orderly the sorry task of cleaning up the agent's blood. We retired to another room to continue our discussions. My heart still raced at the audacious attempt on Osama's life.

- Can you believe that the Americans are using Yemen, my ancestral homeland, as a staging post for their military? he asked.

- I did not think our Yemeni brothers would become the stooges of America, I replied.

- The infidels must learn that not all Yemenis support their puppet leaders. A hotel has been identified to us, one which is used by high-ranking American agents on their way to Somalia. We will target it. You will lead the mission, as I know you are eager to kill the enemy.

- I am grateful indeed for this opportunity, I replied, and I pray to Allah that I will be successful.

I was overjoyed that our first blow against the Crusaders was to be instigated by me. I took a ferry from Port Sudan and met with two members of a cell in Aden. They were Afghan veterans whom I had helped to train. They were good men. After a few days surveillance of the hotel, we decided that the bomb would be planted in the dining room and timed to go off at 7.15am, when the Americans normally ate breakfast. The bomb was C4 explosive with a timing unit of the type we each knew how to construct. This would not be a martyrdom mission.

My comrades, being Yemeni, were able to get into the hotel dining room as electrical technicians, using a stolen state electrical company van and uniforms. The bomb was placed behind potted plants and set to explode the next morning.

I left Aden immediately and returned to Sudan. The next morning, I heard the news reports and was disappointed to learn that the American soldiers had left the hotel as I was leaving Yemen. Only two Austrian tourists died. Our first attack had only served as a warning to the Yemenis that supporting the Crusaders came with a price. My two comrades were later captured and tortured to death. For this, I felt bad.

A few months after our attack in Yemen, I traveled through Iran to Kandahar to meet Osama and Mullah Omar. Al-Qaeda teams were working on tactics with Mullah Omar's fighters. The war had



settled into a predictable pattern; the tribes fighting against the puppet government had fractured along ethnic lines, with little or no co-ordination between groups of fighters. This gave the government a breathing space, as its dominant tank and helicopter strengths could easily fight off badly planned attacks on Kabul. Mullah Omar's Islamic forces were building in strength however, and had dug in 20 miles south of Kabul.

Osama's tactical discussions centred on finding out as much as possible about the enemy's defences and trying to unite the tribal factions against their common enemy.

- Probably there will be fighting between the tribes once Kabul has fallen, he told me one evening.

- Is there any way we can unite the tribes? I asked.

- Only under Islam can we achieve this. Mullah Omar has proven that the banner of Islam is the best fighting standard. If we can assist him in his battles, the power of Islam will be clear to all the Afghan peoples. This is a difficult time. We must support Mullah Omar, but we will soon attack New York, which will alert our American enemy to our strength and dedication. Therefore we must get as many cells in place before then as we possibly can.

- When will the attack take place? I asked.

- Early next year, before the third month, answered Osama.

- And you want our fighters to play a more active role in the Afghan liberation struggle also?

- Indeed. We will form a brigade of Al-Qaeda soldiers, fighting under Mullah Omar. It will be your responsibility to ensure this comes to pass.

- I can have 500 good men ready to travel to America by the end of this year. With new training camps ready by the end of the year, I can give you 1,000 more fighters by next spring.

By the end of 1992, the Russian puppets were defeated and Afghanistan was finally free. Complex and bloody Afghan power plays saw the Northern warlord, Massoud, installed in government. His rival, Hekmatyar, fought him in a civil war that destroyed what was left of the country and killed tens of thousands of civilians. Osama decreed that our forces should play no part in this bitter struggle, beyond providing logistical and financial support to Mullah Omar. Muslim fighting Muslim was what the Crusaders and Jews had relied on for centuries. It would be four years before our Taliban friends took the country for Allah. But all that mattered to us was that we had complete freedom in southern Afghanistan around Kandahar to resource and train for the escalation of the war on the Christians and the Jews. Allah had seen Afghanistan liberated. We tasted victory.

During the rest of the decade, we traveled regularly between Afghanistan and Sudan. We focused on training new recruits and, as the ferocity and number of our conflicts with the Crusaders grew, the stream of highly-trained fighters from our camps flowed forth with impunity.

## 6. A SLEEPING GIANT AWAKES

"Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth. The similitude of His light is as a niche wherein is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. The glass is as it were a shining star. This lamp is kindled from a blessed tree, an olive neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil would almost glow forth of itself though no fire touched it. Light upon light, Allah guideth unto His light whom He will. And Allah speaketh to mankind in allegories, for Allah is Knower of all things."

Surah 24. An-Nur, Light. V 35.

Afghanistan, 1993

On February 26 1993, we struck our first blow against the Americans on their home soil. A cell of some of our bravest fighters, based in New Jersey, struck at the heart of the American military-economic structure. A rented van, filled with 1,500 pounds of urea nitrate/hydrogen explosive, was detonated in the car park of the World Trade Center in New York. I watched the story unfold on CNN with Osama.

- Will the towers fall? I asked.

- If God is with us, yes, he replied. The building structure was analysed for its weakest points.

Our men knew where would be the best location for the bomb. With God's will, there would have been spaces available there.

As we continued to watch the scenes of panic in Manhattan, with clouds of black smoke pouring from the ground, office workers gasping for breath on the sidewalk and emergency workers in confusion, it became clear that the towers would not fall.

- They shall not fall today, said Osama, but they shall fall. That is my promise to Allah.

- But it is still a successful day?

- We shall lose a fine cell in America and security will be improved so that this kind of attack will be more difficult in the future but, yes, showing the Americans that they are vulnerable and proving to our men that we can strike at will in the Crusaders' home, that makes this a day of victory. God is great.

The daily routine continued. For long months we continued training with no fear of attack. The tribal fighting continued around Kabul, but the south and east of the country were ours. The region where Afghanistan and Pakistan merge is a place that does not welcome foreigners. Pakistan was a province of Afghanistan until the British created an arbitrary border, through the heart of the Pashtun Afghan territory. The long-running conflict between Pakistan and India over Muslim Kashmir is testament to the British lack of respect for religion, history and culture. Pakistan's Islamic beliefs prevented war with Afghanistan and the Pakistanis were instrumental in winning the war against the Russians. Saudi money was used to pay for American weapons and Mujahideen training bases in Pakistan. That was an unholy alliance, but we didn't care; it suited our ambitions. The Pakistanis, through their military intelligence service, ISI, continued to fund and train us. We could have continued to operate in the border area with impunity, but doing so with the approval of the ISI definitely made it easier.

In reality, the border didn't exist for us, this was our land. It is a place of mountains and snow, desert and bullets. We developed a network of training camps throughout the region, with safe houses, arms dumps and escape routes around every camp. We knew the region as though we had been born there and our Afghan brothers were as tough as the landscape. Our long-term planning expected the

Americans to take Afghanistan eventually, following the success of one of our Hammer Blows, so we used what time we had to develop many fall-back positions. South of Kandahar, a road led through Spin Buldak to Quetta in Pakistan. This would be our primary escape route. From Jalalabad, it was a relatively short journey across dangerous mountains to Peshawar. It was here, in a place called Tora-Bora, that we placed a strategic retreat base. This region, known to westerners as the North West Frontier, had seen many invaders perish. Its unforgiving passes and ravines would serve us well.

I traveled with Osama to Tora-Bora as the base was being set up. We traveled in a convoy of jeeps, accompanied by 12 of Osama's personal bodyguard, who came to be known as the Black Martyrs. They wore black headgear and were always heavily armed. They were among the most highly-trained of our troops and each had sworn an oath to Allah to give his life in order to protect our leader. We drove north from Kandahar on the Kabul road. At Jalalabad, we turned east and headed towards the Pakistani border. The road was difficult and, with the mountains looming before us, we stopped in a small village. The village was an Al-Qaeda base, with underground arms storage and hidden radio transmission equipment. The base commander welcomed us and advised that, with night falling, we should rest for the night before leaving for Tora-Bora on mules the next morning.

- I request permission to accompany you, he asked Osama.

- Very well, I wish to question you further about your preparations.

- Please use my cabin to clean the dust from you, so that we can pray to Allah and have some food. Then we will plan our journey. Your men can use my men's quarters.

- The Black Martyrs will stay with me.

We entered the commander's cabin and washed. We then gathered in the central square of the base, where dozens of prayer mats had been arranged, facing south-west towards Mecca. When evening prayers had ended, we ate in the mess hall. The food was plain but nutritious; the commander had slaughtered a fine goat in honour of Osama's presence. Having eaten, we drank tea and discussed Tora-Bora.

- How is the digging coming along? asked Osama.

- Very well, replied the commander. I have 12 men digging every day. They use drilling equipment, shovels and their bare hands when Allah demands it. The tunnel system is more than 50 percent complete. Your plans are ingenious and they are being followed to the millimeter.

The tunnels were designed with many right angles, so that fighter would not have to travel very far into a tunnel to be sheltered from even the most powerful enemy bomb or missile. Chambers were located every 50 meters and these would be filled with weapons, water, food and medical supplies. There would be many different tunnel entrances, each passing through the mountains to emerge in Pakistan. Every tunnel would have more than one exit on the Pakistani side, in case the Pakistanis were waiting there. Each tunnel would also be wired with explosive charges, so our fighters could destroy any pursuing enemies.

- When will the tunnels be complete? asked Osama.

- In approximately six months, my leader.

- God is great.

- God is great.

Next morning, after dawn prayers, we readied the mules with supplies and water and set off. It would take most of the day to reach Tora-Bora. We would camp there that night and return to the base the following day. The journey was hard. We followed smugglers' trails, often no more than the width of a man, hugging the sides of the mountains, with steep drops to the boulder strewn canyon floors

below. The wind whipped through the gorges, driving dust into our eyes. It was a treacherous journey and, as part of our training in later years, every Al-Qaeda fighter would travel to Tora-Bora alone. Strategically, it was perfect. No armoured vehicle could follow this route and the canyons were too dangerous for helicopters. We could only be followed on foot. Osama knew in his heart that we would, some day, travel this trail with Americans and traitorous Afghanis at our heels. I tried to commit every step to memory.

In the middle of the afternoon, the trail opened up to a wide plateau. The plateau was surrounded on all sides by towering mountains. At the foot of mountain ahead of us, we could see some tents and men. I wondered if they could see us.

- Welcome, brothers, called a voice from near us.

One of our fighters, cradling an AK, stepped out from an alcove in the rock ahead of us.

- Thank you for your kind welcome, brother, replied the base commander. I trust we did not catch you unawares.

- Indeed not, he replied. I have been watching your progress this past hour.

I turned around to see that our trail was visible from this spot for many hundreds of meters, yet the steep gradient meant that the plateau ahead was only now in our sightline. Tora-Bora was indeed an excellent defensive position.

Air attacks would be the greatest source of worry for defenders here, but even that threat was reduced. The mountains towered on all sides, making low level strafing or bomb runs impossible. Bombs would have to be guided in from high altitude and helicopter performance would be affected by the thin air. A series of trenches was being built as shelter for defenders. Fanning out from the cave entrance, the trenches were deep enough to shelter a man from everything but a direct hit.

Tora-Bora would prove to be an excellent strategic retreat point when the Americans attacked us after September 11, the Day of Vengeance. It was but one of many bases we built in God's country between Afghanistan and Pakistan. When we had time we used it well, did we not?

I returned to Sudan to continue recruiting and training and Osama joined me soon after.

The Americans' stomach for war would be tested in October of 1993, in Somalia. They were found wanting. 18 American soldiers died in Mogadishu when they tried to capture some of Aidid's top aides. The Somalis we had trained in the use of RPGs and ambush tactics more than repaid Osama's investment. The Americans soon withdrew from Somalia.

In light of this good development, Osama decided that we would do the Hajj pilgrimage together, to ask Allah for continued guidance and assistance. The Hajj had always played a key role in Osama's life, with his being from Jiddah, so close to the Holy Place, Mecca. throughout his childhood, Osama's father had invited Muslim clerics and dignitaries from all over the world to his home for sustenance and talks before and after the Hajj. These enlightened visitors contributed greatly to Osama's strong faith.

He made contact with his family and a small plane flew from Jiddah to an airfield outside Khartoum to pick us up. We flew at low altitude across the Red Sea and landed at a family construction site outside Jiddah. We were driven to one of Osama's cousins houses, where we stayed and prepared for the Hajj. As pilgrims flooded into the area from all over the world, we felt that we could travel with impunity, as long as we stayed vigilant. Most of Osama's family were kept under surveillance by the Saud secret police and all were told to behave normally.

On the day we began our Hajj, we bathed and entered Ihraam, a state of sanctity. We wore seamless, white robes and traveled to the sacred Mosque in Mecca by pilgrim bus. Though we had each

done the hajj previously, we could not help but be awed at the presence of so many purified worshippers. We walked seven times around the Ka'bah, glorifying and praising God with each and every step. 'Labbayka Laa Shareeka Laka Labbayk', we said, over and over: God, I have responded to You, and I proclaim that there is no other god besides You. I have responded to You. Then we walked the kilometer between the knolls of Safa and Marwah seven times, with occasional trotting. This completed the Umrah portion of the pilgrimage.

We then went to Mount Ararat to spend a day of worship, meditation, and glorification of God, from dawn to sunset. After sunset, we went to Muzdalifah where the Night Prayer is observed, and we each picked up 21 pebbles for the symbolic stoning of Satan at Mina. From Muzdalifah, we went to Mina to spend three days. On the first morning at Mina, we offered an animal sacrifice to feed the poor and to commemorate God's intervention to save Ismail and Abraham from Satan's trick. Many vendors stood by with stocks of sacrificial chickens and goats. We each used a chicken. The stoning ceremonies symbolize rejection of Satan's polytheism and were done by throwing seven pebbles at each of three stations, while glorifying God. We then returned to Mecca and did another seven revolutions of the Ka'bah to complete our Hajj.

Many pilgrims nullify their Hajj by making a trip to the Prophet's tomb at Medina. This is nothing else but idolatry to a true Muslim, so we returned straight to Jiddah, feeling stronger in our faith. Osama spent a couple of days seeing to business affairs with his brothers, while I was able to slip away to meet my wife. Since I had first left Saudi Arabia for Afghanistan, I had seen her only for a few days. I missed her and she missed me, but we both accepted that my doing Allah's will was more important than any other need. We met at a small inn outside Mecca, where she stayed as a Hajj pilgrim. I traveled to her by bus. We met at a small mosque near the inn and returned together, holding hands like young lovers. There was a light in her eyes and, when we reached her room, after I identified myself to the innkeeper as her husband, she told me the glorious news. In a few months, my eldest daughter would be wed to one of Osama's fine sons. We rejoiced together that night. With the scents of desert blooms filling the air and my wife beside me in my bed, I could not sleep. I was indeed overjoyed that our family would become as one with Osama's, but I also felt sorrow that I would never be able to enjoy my grandchildren and a normal life. This was the greatest loss to me from my life in Al-Qaeda.

The next morning, I bade my wife farewell and returned to Osama. She cried many tears, as did I. But there could be no other way.



## 7. A WORLD AT WAR

"There was a token for you in two hosts which met: one army fighting in the way of Allah, and another disbelieving, whom they saw as twice their number, clearly, with their very eyes. Thus Allah strengtheneth with his succor whom he will. Lo! herein verily is lesson for those who have eyes." Surah 3. Ali-Imran, The Family of Imran. V 13.

Sudan, 1994

We returned to Sudan soon after our Hajj and continued training our many volunteers. Meanwhile, our war against the Christians erupted with a vengeance in 1994. Many of our fighters were engaged in full-scale combat in Bosnia. They also fought in Chechnya, continuing our war against the Russians. Battles continued to rage around Kabul and we launched attacks in the Philippines.

We all had a sense that our war was indeed gaining momentum and we expected our enemies to counter attack. The Russians launched a massive invasion of Grozny and our brave brothers cut them to pieces. Rocket-propelled-grenades in city streets will make mincemeat of an armoured force and the Russians fled with their tails between their legs.

The conflict in Bosnia was a bloody affair. The Serbs, who represented Christianity, were like nazis in their quest for religious superiority in the crumbling Yugoslavia. Death camps, mass rapes and indiscriminate slaughter hardened many Al-Qaeda soldiers and many of our number died there also, while the western powers stood by and watched.

The Saudis also attacked. Osama's citizenship was officially revoked and he would be instantly arrested if seen entering the pathetic fiefdom. He would return, on his own terms. For now, the Saudis simply proved to us all how much of a threat Osama was to their rotten empire. Like America, Saudi Arabia was not as powerful as it appeared. But it, like America also, had immense financial power. Osama's assets were frozen, which angered him.

- This will cost us millions, he complained.

- Do they know where your wealth is?

- Much of it, yes. I will lose a few million dollars. But most of my wealth is tied up in family enterprises. That cannot be touched. My brothers will see to that. When my father died, then it became complicated. The real wealth is in trusts, shared with my brothers and sisters. Of course, the Saudis themselves are co-owners of much of our business and that also complicates matters. Have no doubt, my family will always protect my interests and, even if the Saudis take all the money that is rightfully mine, my family will share their wealth with me.

Though he put on a brave face, I could see that Osama was hurt by these developments. The sadness of that time was soon overshadowed by the joyous event of the wedding between my daughter and Osama's son.

The ceremony was a lavish affair, held in a garden outside Khartoum. My wife came with all my children. Many of Osama's brothers and sisters also made the journey across the Red Sea in private planes. We gathered in a rented function room, which had beautiful gardens outside. The wedding ceremony had two parts, the nikah and the waleema. The nikah, which is the official binding of the couple, took place at a nearby mosque. I and two of my sons represented my daughter and we traveled to the mosque with the groom and his companions. We met with the Imam. He recited a passage from the Qur'an, the groom paid me the dowry and the Imam asked me three times if I accepted the marriage. Then we signed the papers and the two were wed in the eyes of Allah. We returned to the



waleema, which to some Muslims is not a necessary part of the ceremony, but we decided that all deserved a little light celebration and enjoyment.

My daughter wore an elaborately decorated skirt with a red blouse. She looked resplendent. Her new husband wore a white suit and a large smile. The Imam spoke at length about the importance of family bonds in this time of trial and persecution of Islam. He also spoke of the immense pride that Muslims had in the Al-Qaeda network and made it clear that we were doing Allah's will. He did not speak of fatwahs or bloodshed, it being a joyous affair, but he repeatedly stated that the Christians and Jews were the enemies of Islam and that their dominant position in the world must be continually challenged until it is destroyed.

After the Imam spoke, both families exchanged gifts in the garden. Palm trees sheltered us from the burning sun and the warm wind carried with it the scent of desert blooms. Osama approached me with a great smile, hugged me and then gave me a new paratrooper's AK47 rifle, which was shorter and lighter than my normal weapon. He gave my wife a beautiful gold necklace and a box of jewels. To my daughter, his new daughter-in-law, he gave a small wooden box. In it was a key. He told her that the key would open the door to a house in Jiddah, which was his gift to the couple. I presented Osama with a set of white robes, woven from the finest cotton in Sudan. To his wife I gave a shawl of fine lace and to his sons and daughters I gave gifts of carpets, fine pottery and religious paintings. To my daughter and her proud husband, I gave the dowry which I had received earlier. I had no need of money; Allah saw to all my needs and those of my family. Osama would look after us also. Our families were now tied together by blood as well as faith.

The wedding feast was laid out on tables in the hall when we left the garden to escape the midday sun. There were steaming mountains of pilau rice, curries and fruits. To drink, we had many different fruit teas, sodas, cold milk and water. During the meal, my new son-in-law haggled with my daughters for a glass of milk, as is custom. He also begged for the return of his shoes, which they had taken in play earlier in the day. At the end of the feast, copies of the Qur'an were held over the heads of the happy couple while rice was thrown at their feet. They rested overnight at a hotel in Khartoum before setting off to Jiddah the next day. The wedding was a welcome relief from our war, but it was to be but a brief respite.

After the wedding guests departed, Osama prepared a strategy to counter the Saudis' attack. Firstly, he issued a communique which condemned the Saudi decision to revoke his citizenship. He stated that it was not up to them to decide who was a true citizen of the land of the Two Holy Places and that he did not need to call himself 'Saudi'. Rather, he was a Muslim from Arabia. Then, he made contact with scholars and anti-royal activists in the kingdom, forming a group called the Advice and Reform Committee, ARC. ARC published a series of communiques, containing harsh criticism of the Saudi regime and calling for reform in the increasingly westernised, nepotistic kingdom.

The scene was being set for a major confrontation between Al-Qaeda and the Saudis. Little did they know that those early attacks on Osama would lead to the destruction of the House of Saud.

## 8. WE WHO ANSWER ALLAH'S CALL

"On the day when the earth will be changed to other than the earth, and the heavens also will be changed and they will come forth unto Allah, the One, the almighty,

"Thou wilt see the guilty on that day linked together in chains,

"Their raiment of pitch, and the Fire covering their faces,

"That Allah may repay each soul what it hath earned. Lo! Allah is swift at reckoning.

"This is a clear message for mankind in order that they may be warned thereby, and that they may know that He is only One God, and that men of understanding may take heed."

Surah 14. Ibrahim, Abraham. V 48-52.

Sudan, 1995

Sudan remained our key base, but we continued to operate extensively in Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia. Our cell structure made the organisation almost impenetrable to security forces. Where our men were captured, it was generally due to coincidence or their making mistakes. Saudi Arabia would remain one of Al-Qaeda's main recruiting grounds and was proud to give birth to so many of the Glorious Martyrs of September 11, 2001.

Saudi Arabia was also the site of our first successful attack on American military forces. I had an important part to play in the attack. A cell in Riyadh had assembled a large car bomb from home-made explosives. They lacked a detonator. My job was to bring detonators from Port Sudan to Riyadh and return before the attack was launched.

I traveled with two of my best men in a chartered fishing boat. It was not a dhow or some other fanciful vessel, but a diesel trawler which I knew to have a reliable engine. It was staffed by Sudanese, who were more used to traveling across the Red Sea with hashish, heroine or khat for the migrant workers in Saudi Arabia. They also trafficked in people and were not averse to piracy. They were being paid handsomely to transport us to Saudi Arabia without being detected. They eyed their three human packages with hidden interest. But they knew us to be Mujahideen, so were wary of confrontation. Each of the three of us carried a canvas backpack. Inside each backpack were two coiled, 5 meter lengths of detonating cord. One cord, when positioned correctly, would detonate a 1,500 kilo bomb. We also carried US dollars, knives and fake identification papers.

Darkness had fallen before we slipped out of port and onto the sea. It was a cool, calm November night and the stars were bright. I stayed on the bridge, listening to the radio which was scanning all official frequencies. I heard some chatter from Saudi coastguards and the normal talk from the dozens of vessels that pass through the Suez Canal each day.

The skipper advised me that we would put in to a small port south of Jiddah with a faulty battery, which had knocked out our radio. The crew would get a replacement battery while we slipped away.

They fished for the entirety of the voyage. If we aroused any suspicion a hold full of fish would help our cover story. These men were professionals.

As we approached our destination, the captain took a screwdriver and delicately pierced the battery casing so that acid began leaking and power to our radio was lost. We landed safely as dawn broke before us. A good omen. There was plenty of activity in the port and we were little noticed. On the quay it was easy for us to slip away, the sound of the skipper haggling loudly with an electrical merchant ringing in my ears with the mighty beat of my excited heart.

We split up; each of us would make his own way to our rendezvous safe house in Riyadh. This was how we delivered vital commodities; even if two of us were intercepted, one would still make it through and allow the mission to be completed on schedule.

I took a taxi to Riyadh, having agreed a fair price with the driver. I told him I was tired and pretended to sleep for the journey. My mind was racing as I scanned the road ahead for checkpoints through slitted eyes. I made it safely and arrived at a nondescript, detached house in one of Riyadh's middle class suburbs. I met the cell and handed over my shipment. One of the men took it away immediately to a disused factory where the bomb was being prepared. I washed, ate breakfast and went to pray in the courtyard. Then I left and aimed straight for Sudan. I had 48 hours until the attack and expected to be back in Khartoum within 24.

I traveled to Jiddah by bus, which was fast and efficient. The city gleamed in the evening sunshine as I made my way to the ferry port. The Saud family had begun investing in Jiddah, perhaps to defuse some of Osama's local support. But for every marina and sculpture in the city, there were still a dozen filthy slums, hidden from easy view.

The ferry left a few minutes after I boarded. I was laden down with bags of gifts. There were toy camels, dates and western goods: chocolate, perfume and whisky. In my cover for the return voyage I was a Sudan-based Saudi merchant, returning to my family in Khartoum after negotiating a deal in Riyadh. For every mission taken by an Al-Qaeda member there is a fully-thought out cover story. This is our first line of defence. It is normally sufficient. After all, who knows what a terrorist looks like? He does not always look like something from a Hollywood movie.

Soon after I arrived back at camp, the news broke of an explosion in Riyadh. Our attack was successful with five Americans killed. The target was a Saudi National Guard training centre. This was a cover for CIA assistance to help keep the regime in place. It was an excellent target and hugely symbolic for all Al-Qaeda men; this was our first attack on the Crusaders in the land of the Two Holy Places. There would be many more such attacks and blood would spill on Saudi soil until it became one land under Allah.

The terrible events in Bosnia-Herzegovina helped to show the Muslim world that military action was the only way to protect and nurture Islam. In Srebrenica, 7,000 Muslim civilians were massacred by the Serbs, while they were in a United Nations 'safe area'. The horror and dismay felt among the Muslims cannot be understated; here were thousands of civilians under the protection of the UN, butchered as UN soldiers stood by. You will believe me when I tell you that all Muslims lost hope with the UN that year. Being but a tool of the Americans, with no desire to protect Muslims, the UN was now our enemy and would yet pay many times over.

But, with our successful attack in Riyadh, the year ended on a good note and, with training camps being built in the Yemeni desert, within striking range of the hated Saudis, we were making real progress towards our long-term goal: the liberation of Saudi Arabia. Underground bases were also under construction in Saudi Arabia's barren, southern Empty Quarter. These bases would be vital staging posts in our seizure of the Land of the Two Holy Places. Our biggest loss was the capture of one of our important men: the planner of the first World Trade Center attack and the religious inspiration for our American cells, Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman. Our Brother, Yousef, was arrested in Pakistan. His location and identity were passed on by Shias, who were in the pay of Pakistani intelligence. They would yet pay for their treachery. Our attempt on the life of Egypt's hypocritical dictator, Mubarak, was unsuccessful. But Mubarak will yet go the way of Sadat. We were in the early stages of planning a major attack in Egypt as the Christians celebrated Christmas.

Most Christians don't know that we Muslims greatly respect their Jesus Christ and, in our own ways, we rejoice at his birth also. But to us, Jesus was simply a Prophet, like Muhammad. A very important man in his own right, but still a mere shadow of Allah. And that is the essence of Salafy Islam - all for Allah, all else is but a distraction. Organised religion clouds the issues and promotes the distortion of the Word of God. Consider the Catholic Church, who see Jesus Christ and his Virgin Mother with equal importance to God; that Church is weak now. It held Europe in an iron grip for centuries and we have fought it many times. History has an ebb and flow to it. We are returning to a period of dominance - our enemy church is demoralised by falling church attendances and barbaric, institutionalised child abuse. We are growing stronger. The Purity of Salafy Islam can appeal naturally to all Sunnis and, eventually, unite us with the Shias and all those who still come to Allah's banner. One Pure Church of Islam will unite the world and all for Allah.

I spent many evenings with Osama. We discussed the global nature of our struggle and increased our knowledge of, and contacts with, the Islamic resistance groups that were becoming more active throughout the world. Money began to flow to faraway places such as Indonesia and the Philippines. We sent trainers to help our Muslim brothers and offer advice on targeting options and destabilisation of traitor regimes. Osama's grand vision was beginning to bear fruit.

During those times, I grew to know Osama as a brother. He told me many stories of his early childhood, when his father would bring him into the desert and teach him about Allah and the history of the Muslim nation and how the desert can be a friend to he who understands it and appreciates it. he was brought up with excellent manners and an easy disposition. Rarely have I seen him turn to anger, never more than when the Crusaders returned to the Land of the Two Holy Places, because he was taught that anger makes a man weak and prone to making mistakes. Osama was highly-educated and, when he wasn't studying the Qur'an, always had another book at hand. He is a man who doesn't speak too much, he understands that the skill of commanding a conversation is to remain silent and listen. he has always shown himself to be a simple man with simple tastes. Though our fighters revere him as they would a Prophet, Osama maintains an easy disposition, often cooking for his men and always making himself available to them when they have ideas or worries to share. His charisma radiates out to all who are in his presence and his bravery is legend among our troops.

To say that Islam would not now be as strong as it is without Osama's influence would be an understatement. To him, we owe everything we have gained and, in his memory, the World Muslim Nation will come to know its true strength.

## 9. A NEW JIHAD

"And he who believed said: O my people! Follow me. I will show you the way of right conduct."  
Surah 40. Al-Mumin, The Believer. V 38.

Afghanistan, 1996

The Sudanese came under tremendous pressure from the Saudis and the Americans for harbouring Osama in early 1996. A delegation of high-ranking Sudanese military went to Osama and begged him to leave the country. He agreed, both to help preserve the Muslim brotherhood's rule in the country and because he feared further Saudi assassination attempts. I traveled with Osama to Afghanistan in the spring of 1996. The Sudanese training camps were functioning smoothly and I had my choice of trusted, experienced men to run them. The Sudanese agreed that the camps could continue to operate, as long as Osama let it be known that he was no longer in the country.

When we made it to our main Kandahar base and I took my old room, which was kept aside for me, Osama asked for me to come to a briefing. I quickly washed and prayed before going to his office.

Osama liked to hold briefings in his office, which was a large, low-ceilinged room. Below ground and with no windows, the light came from angular desk lamps and the glowing computer screens. Ornate rugs depicting Muslim victories in battle adorned the walls and a pleasant smell of burning oils cleared the mind. A few high-ranking brothers were also present. Osama called the briefing to order and opened an image of Bill Clinton, the President of the United States, on one of his computers.

- Who is this man? He asked.

- Clinton, our enemy, we replied.

- Correct. And he takes our threat very seriously. We have intercepted high level American communications, which we believe to be genuine. This man, who claims to be a Democrat has instructed the CIA to use any and all means at its disposal to destroy us.

We expressed surprise that the Americans would aim to kill us by any means after only one attack in New York and one in Riyadh.

- If they did not try to kill us all, they would be fools. They know what our ambition is. They are fools to be realising the grave danger they are in so late. Somebody must have talked. Do we have any missing soldiers?

- We lost many men in Bosnia. Some could have been captured by NATO, I suggested.

- I feel they know now what Al-Qaeda means to their ways. Complete destruction. We are now truly at war. They will use torture on us. They will use the most cunning, lethal plans to lure us into the open and then destroy us. We must be on our guard every second of every day. This message is to be passed to every cell in the network: Expect to be attacked. Do it now.

We left the office and got in contact with the next link in our chains. I contacted my number 2 in Sudan. He followed procedure by increasing security at all camps, putting more spies on the streets of Khartoum and passing the message to all recruits and soldiers in the country.

I returned to Osama and found him sitting at his desk. He looked pale and unwell.

- Is something the matter? I asked.

- My rotten kidney gives me trouble. I must travel soon to Karachi for treatment, he answered.

- Do you feel sadness at the death sentence which now hangs over your head?



- I knew that this struggle would lead to martyrdom almost from the start. There can be no other way for all of us. It is victory or death, nothing else is a choice for us.

- We each accept this position gratefully, I replied.

- This is indeed our greatest strength. I pray to Allah that my martyrdom will be glorious and that it will help to bring victory.

- As I hope it will be.

I called for Peshawari green tea and, when it was brought by a trusted boy, clanking in with an ornate tray of cups, spoons and pots, it seemed to cheer us both.

- If they will declare war on Al-Qaeda, then Al-Qaeda will declare war on them, he exclaimed. You will stay with me for a few weeks. We will declare war and then we will wage it, on a scale the world has never seen.

I stayed in Kandahar for 3 months. It was a time of great victory and great joy. The Taliban took control of Kabul and now the whole country was in the control of Sunni Islam. Some of the traitorous warlords, including the devil Mashood, remained in pockets to the far north. But they didn't trouble us. The Taliban, led by the ever-inspiring Mullah Omar, began dismantling all the hurts caused to Afghani society by decades of conflict and foreign influences.

What need have women to work when men can work instead? What need have we of American pop music on radio? What need have we for alcohol and disgusting clothes fit only for prostitutes? The people of Afghanistan embraced the return to good, Islamic values. Afghanistan would finally know peace.

The declaration of war was a difficult document to draft. There was so much that needed to be said, both as a rallying call to Muslims everywhere and a warning to those that would conspire with the enemy against us.

One evening in June, I was sitting in under a date palm in the garden near Osama's office. I was reading a book by Mullah Omar which listed all the atrocities committed against Muslims by Christians and Jews throughout history. It was indeed shocking and made me very angry.

Osama bounded towards me, a great smile on his face and a look of happiness in his eye.

- We've done it! he exclaimed. The attack has been a great success!

- In Dhahran?

- In Dhahran. The Royals are bleeding.

- Allahu-Akbar.

The truck bomb assault on the US military residence was executed perfectly. 19 Americans soldiers poured their life's blood onto Saudi soil. This was a serious blow to our enemy.

- Remember the experience the Americans had in Beirut? One truck bomb killed hundreds of their best soldiers and they fled Lebanon. This attack won't achieve our goal on its own, but it is an excellent battle in the campaign.

We watched television news reports. The commentators appeared genuinely shocked by the scale of American casualties. Not since Somalia had they lost so many.

The atmosphere around camp was jubilant for many days after the Dhahran attack. Everything took on a more disciplined air, however. The news that the Americans would use any means at their disposal to destroy us helped to focus all our minds on the fact that we were at war and could be attacked at any minute. This sense of urgency and awareness became second nature from that time on. Events began to accelerate.

In August, the Declaration of War was ready. Osama had a team of assistants working on



public relations as we approached the publication date. Osama made video recordings, reading the Declaration and extolling all Muslims to liberate the Two Holy Places by killing Americans. The tape would be distributed to all big tv networks, Muslim and western. The text of the Declaration would be distributed by Email to all our cells. This Declaration would be memorised by every Al-Qaeda member. Its words would give us comfort in the hard days to come. The Declaration would also be distributed on printed flyers and interviews with foreign journalists were already being scheduled.

Declaration of War against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places.

Praise be to Allah, we seek His help and ask for his pardon. We take refuge in Allah from our wrongs and bad deeds. Who ever has been guided by Allah will not be misled, and who ever has been misled, he will never be guided. I bear witness that there is no God except Allah, no associates with Him, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and messenger.

{O you who believe! be careful of -your duty to- Allah with the proper care which is due to Him, and do not die unless you are Muslim} (Imraan; 3:102), {O people be careful of -your duty to- your Lord, Who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same -kind- and spread from these two, many men and women; and be careful of -your duty to- Allah , by whom you demand one of another -your rights-, and (be careful) to the ties of kinship; surely Allah ever watches over you} (An-Nisa; 4:1), {O you who believe! be careful- of your duty- to Allah and speak the right word; He will put your deeds into a right state for you, and forgive you your faults; and who ever obeys Allah and his Apostle, he indeed achieve a mighty success} (Al-Ahzab; 33:70-71).

Praise be to Allah, reporting the saying of the prophet Shu'aib: {I desire nothing but reform so far as I am able, and with non but Allah is the direction of my affair to the right and successful path; on him do I rely and to him do I turn} (Hud; 11:88).

Praise be to Allah, saying: {You are the best of the nations raised up for -the benefit of- men; you enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong and believe in Allah} (Aal-Imraan; 3:110). Allah's blessing and salutations on His slave and messenger who said: (The people are close to an all encompassing punishment from Allah if they see the oppressor and fail to restrain him.)

It should not be hidden from you that the people of Islam had suffered from aggression, iniquity and injustice imposed on them by the Zionist-Crusaders alliance and their collaborators; to the extent that the Muslims blood became the cheapest and their wealth as loot in the hands of the enemies. Their blood was spilled in Palestine and Iraq. The horrifying pictures of the massacre of Qana, in Lebanon are still fresh in our memory. Massacres in Tajakestan, Burma, Cashmere, Assam, Philippine, Fatani, Ogadin, Somalia, Erithria, Chechnya and in Bosnia-Herzegovina took place, massacres that send shivers in the body and shake the conscience. All of this and the world watch and hear, and not only didn't respond to these atrocities, but also with a clear conspiracy between the USA and its allies and under the cover of the iniquitous United Nations, the dispossessed people were even prevented from obtaining arms to defend themselves.

The people of Islam awakened and realised that they are the main target for the aggression of the Zionist-Crusaders alliance. All false claims and propaganda about "Human Rights" were hammered down and exposed by the massacres that took place against the Muslims in every part of the world.

The latest and the greatest of these aggressions, incurred by the Muslims since the death of the Prophet (ALLAH'S BLESSING AND SALUTATIONS ON HIM) is the occupation of the land of the two Holy Places -the foundation of the house of Islam, the place of the revelation, the source of the message and the place of the noble Ka'ba, the Qiblah of all Muslims- by the armies of the

American Crusaders and their allies. (We bemoan this and can only say: "No power and power acquiring except through Allah").

Under the present circumstances, and under the banner of the blessed awakening which is sweeping the world in general and the Islamic world in particular, I meet with you today. And after a long absence, imposed on the scholars (Ulama) and callers (Da'ees) of Islam by the iniquitous crusaders movement under the leadership of the USA; who fears that they, the scholars and callers of Islam, will instigate the Ummah of Islam against its enemies as their ancestor scholars -may Allah be pleased with them- like Ibn Taymiyyah and Al'iz Ibn Abdes-Salaam did. And therefore the Zionist-Crusader alliance resorted to killing and arresting the truthful Ulama and the working Da'ees (We are not praising or sanctifying them; Allah sanctify whom He pleased). They killed the Mujahid Sheikh Abdullah Azzaam, and they arrested the Mujahid Sheikh Ahmad Yaseen and the Mujahid Sheikh Omar Abdur Rahman (in America).

By orders from the USA they also arrested a large number of scholars, Da'ees and young people -in the land of the two Holy Places- among them the prominent Sheikh Salman Al-Oud'a and Sheikh Safar Al-Hawali and their brothers; (We bemoan this and can only say: "No power and power acquiring except through Allah"). We, myself and my group, have suffered some of this injustice ourselves; we have been prevented from addressing the Muslims. We have been pursued in Pakistan, Sudan and Afghanistan, hence this long absence on my part. But by the Grace of Allah, a safe base is now available in the high Hindukush mountains in Khurasan ; where -by the Grace of Allah- the largest infidel military force of the world was destroyed. And the myth of the super power was withered in front of the Mujahideen cries of Allahu Akbar (God is greater). Today we work from the same mountains to lift the iniquity that had been imposed on the Ummah by the Zionist-Crusader alliance, particularly after they have occupied the blessed land around Jerusalem, route of the journey of the Prophet (ALLAH'S BLESSING AND SALUTATIONS ON HIM) and the land of the two Holy Places. We ask Allah to bestow us with victory, He is our Patron and He is the Most Capable.

From here, today we begin the work, talking and discussing the ways of correcting what had happened to the Islamic world in general, and the Land of the two Holy Places in particular. We wish to study the means that we could follow to return the situation to its normal path. And to return to the people their own rights, particularly after the large damages and the great aggression on the life and the religion of the people. An injustice that had affected every section and group of the people; the civilians, military and security men, government officials and merchants, the young and the old people as well as schools and university students. Hundreds of thousands of the unemployed graduates, who became the widest section of the society, were also affected.

Injustice had affected the people of the industry and agriculture. It affected the people of the rural and urban areas. And almost every body complained about something. The situation at the land of the two Holy places became like a huge volcano at the verge of eruption that would destroy the Kufr and the corruption and its sources. The explosion at Riyadh and Al-Khobar is a warning of this volcanic eruption emerging as a result of the severe oppression, suffering, excessive iniquity, humiliation and poverty.

People are fully concerned about their every day livings; every body talks about the deterioration of the economy, inflation, ever increasing debts and jails full of prisoners. Government employees with limited income talk about debts of ten thousands and hundred thousands of Saudi Riyals . They complain that the value of the Riyal is greatly and continuously deteriorating among most of the main currencies. Great merchants and contractors speak about hundreds and thousands of

million Riyals owed to them by the government. More than three hundred forty billions of Riyal owed by the government to the people in addition to the daily accumulated interest, let alone the foreign debt. People wonder whether we are the largest oil exporting country?! They even believe that this situation is a curse put on them by Allah for not objecting to the oppressive and illegitimate behaviour and measures of the ruling regime: Ignoring the divine Shari'ah law; depriving people of their legitimate rights; allowing the American to occupy the land of the two Holy Places; imprisonment, unjustly, of the sincere scholars. The honourable Ulamah and scholars as well as merchants, economists and eminent people of the country were all alerted by this disastrous situation.

Quick efforts were made by each group to contain and to correct the situation. All agreed that the country is heading toward a great catastrophe, the depth of which is not known except by Allah. One big merchant commented : "the king is leading the state into 'sixty-six' folded disaster", (We bemoan this and can only say: "No power and power acquiring except through Allah"). Numerous princes share with the people their feelings, privately expressing their concerns and objecting to the corruption, repression and the intimidation taking place in the country. But the competition between influential princes for personal gains and interest had destroyed the country. Through its course of actions the regime has torn off its legitimacy:

(1) Suspension of the Islamic Shari'ah law and exchanging it with man made civil law. The regime entered into a bloody confrontation with the truthful Ulamah and the righteous youths (we sanctify nobody; Allah sanctify Whom He pleaseth).

(2) The inability of the regime to protect the country, and allowing the enemy of the Ummah - the American crusader forces- to occupy the land for the longest of years. The crusader forces became the main cause of our disastrous condition, particularly in the economical aspect of it due to the unjustified heavy spending on these forces. As a result of the policy imposed on the country, especially in the field of oil industry where production is restricted or expanded and prices are fixed to suit the American economy ignoring the economy of the country. Expensive deals were imposed on the country to purchase arms. People asking what is the justification for the very existence of the regime then?

Quick efforts were made by individuals and by different groups of the society to contain the situation and to prevent the danger. They advised the government both privately and openly; they sent letters and poems, reports after reports, reminders after reminders, they explored every avenue and enlisted every influential man in their movement of reform and correction. They wrote with style of passion, diplomacy and wisdom asking for corrective measures and repentance from the "great wrong doings and corruption" that had engulfed even the basic principles of the religion and the legitimate rights of the people.

But -to our deepest regret- the regime refused to listen to the people accusing them of being ridiculous and imbecile. The matter got worse as previous wrong doings were followed by mischiefs of greater magnitudes. All of this taking place in the land of the two Holy Places! It is no longer possible to be quiet. It is not acceptable to give a blind eye to this matter.

As the extent of these infringements reached the highest of levels and turned into demolishing forces threatening the very existence of the Islamic principles, a group of scholars -who can take no more- supported by hundreds of retired officials, merchants, prominent and educated people wrote to the King asking for implementation of the corrective measures. In 1411 A.H. (May 1991), at the time of the gulf war, a letter, the famous letter of Shawwaal, with over four hundred signatures was sent to the king demanding the lift of oppression and the implementation of corrective actions. The king

humiliated those people and choose to ignore the content of their letter; and the very bad situation of the country became even worse.

People, however, tried again and sent more letters and petitions. One particular report, the glorious Memorandum Of Advice, was handed over to the king on Muharram, 1413 A.H (July 1992), which tackled the problem pointed out the illness and prescribed the medicine in an original, righteous and scientific style. It described the gaps and the shortcoming in the philosophy of the regime and suggested the required course of action and remedy. The report gave a description of:

- (1) The intimidation and harassment suffered by the leaders of the society, the scholars, heads of tribes, merchants, academic teachers and other eminent individuals;
- (2) The situation of the law within the country and the arbitrary declaration of what is Halal and Haram (lawful and unlawful) regardless of the Shari'ah as instituted by Allah;
- (3) The state of the press and the media which became a tool of truth-hiding and misinformation; the media carried out the plan of the enemy of idolising cult of certain personalities and spreading scandals among the believers to repel the people away from their religion, as Allah, the Exalted said: {surely -as for- those who love that scandal should circulate between the believers, they shall have a grievous chastisement in this world and in the here after} (An-Noor, 24:19);
- (4) Abuse and confiscation of human rights;
- (5) The financial and the economical situation of the country and the frightening future in the view of the enormous amount of debts and interest owed by the government; this is at the time when the wealth of the Ummah being wasted to satisfy personal desires of certain individuals! while imposing more custom duties and taxes on the nation. (The prophet said about the woman who committed adultery: "She repented in such a way sufficient to bring forgiveness to a custom collector!");
- (6) The miserable situation of the social services and infra-structure especially the water service and supply, the basic requirement of life;
- (7) The state of the ill-trained and ill-prepared army and the impotence of its commander in chief despite the incredible amount of money that has been spent on the army. The gulf war clearly exposed the situation;
- (8) Shari'a law was suspended and man made law was used instead;
- (9) And as far as the foreign policy is concerned the report exposed not only how this policy has disregarded the Islamic issues and ignored the Muslims, but also how help and support were provided to the enemy against the Muslims; the cases of Gaza-Ariha and the communist in the south of Yemen are still fresh in the memory, and more can be said.

As stated by the people of knowledge, it is not a secret that to use man made law instead of the Shari'a and to support the infidels against the Muslims is one of the ten "voiders" that would strip a person from his Islamic status (turn a Muslim into a Mushrik, non believer status). The All Mighty said: {and whoever did not judge by what Allah revealed, those are the unbelievers} (Al-Ma'ida; 5:44), and {but no! by your Lord! they do not believe (in reality) until they make you a judge of that which has become a matter of disagreement among them, and then do not find the slightest misgiving in their hearts as to what you have decided and submit with entire submission} (An-Nissa; 4:65).

In spite of the fact that the report was written with soft words and very diplomatic style, reminding of Allah, giving truthful sincere advice, and despite of the importance of advice in Islam - being absolutely essential for those in charge of the people- and the large number who signed this document as well as their supporters, all of that was not an intercession for the Memorandum. Its



content was rejected and those who signed it and their sympathisers were ridiculed, prevented from travel, punished and even jailed.

Therefore it is very clear that the advocates of correction and reform movement were very keen on using peaceful means in order to protect the unity of the country and to prevent blood shed. Why is it then the regime closed all peaceful routes and pushed the people toward armed actions?! Which is the only choice left for them to implement righteousness and justice. To whose benefit does prince Sultan and prince Nayeff push the country into a civil war that will destroy everything? And why consulting those who ignites internal feuds, playing the people against each other and instigate the policemen, the sons of the nation, to abort the reform movement. While leaving in peace and security such traitors who implement the policy of the enemy in order to bleed the financial and the human resources of the Ummah, and leaving the main enemy in the area -the American Zionist alliance enjoy peace and security?!

The advisor (Zaki Badr, the Egyptian ex-minister of the interior) to prince Nayeff -minister of interior- was not acceptable even to his own country; he was sacked from his position there due to the filthy attitude and the aggression he exercised on his own people, yet he was warmly welcomed by prince Nayeff to assist in sins and aggressions. He unjustly filled the prisons with the best sons of this Ummah and caused miseries to their mothers. Does the regime want to play the civilians against their military personnel and vice versa, like what had happened in some of the neighbouring countries?! No doubts this is the policy of the American-Israeli alliance as they are the first to benefit from this situation.

But with the grace of Allah, the majority of the nation, both civilians and military individuals, are aware of the wicked plan. They refused to be played against each other and to be used by the regime as a tool to carry out the policy of the American-Israeli alliance through their agent in our country: the Saudi regime.

Therefore every one agreed that the situation can not be rectified (the shadow cannot be straighten when its source, the rod, is not straight either) unless the root of the problem is tackled. Hence it is essential to hit the main enemy who divided the Ummah into small and little countries and pushed it, for the last few decades, into a state of confusion. The Zionist-Crusader alliance moves quickly to contain and abort any "corrective movement" appearing in the Islamic countries. Different means and methods are used to achieve their target; on occasion the "movement" is dragged into an armed struggle at a predetermined unfavourable time and place. Sometimes officials from the Ministry of Interior, who are also graduates of the colleges of the Shari'ah, are leashed out to mislead and confuse the nation and the Ummah (by wrong Fatwas) and to circulate false information about the movement. At other occasions some righteous people were tricked into a war of words against the Ulama and the leaders of the movement, wasting the energy of the nation in discussing minor issues and ignoring the main one that is the unification of the people under the divine law of Allah.

In the shadow of these discussions and arguments truthfulness is covered by the falsehood, and personal feuds and partisanship created among the people increasing the division and the weakness of the Ummah; priorities of the Islamic work are lost while the blasphemy and polytheism continue its grip and control over the Ummah. We should be alert to these atrocious plans carried out by the Ministry of Interior. The right answer is to follow what has been decided by the people of knowledge, as was said by Ibn Taymiyyah (Allah's mercy upon him): "people of Islam should join forces and support each other to get rid of the main "Kufr" who is controlling the countries of the Islamic world, even to bear the lesser damage to get rid of the major one, that is the great Kufr".

If there is more than one duty to be carried out, then the most important one should receive priority. Clearly after Belief (Imaan) there is no more important duty than pushing the American enemy out of the holy land. No other priority, except Belief, could be considered before it; the people of knowledge, Ibn Taymiyyah, stated: "to fight in defence of religion and Belief is a collective duty; there is no other duty after Belief than fighting the enemy who is corrupting the life and the religion. There is no preconditions for this duty and the enemy should be fought with one's best abilities. (ref: supplement of Fatwa). If it is not possible to push back the enemy except by the collective movement of the Muslim people, then there is a duty on the Muslims to ignore the minor differences among themselves; the ill effect of ignoring these differences, at a given period of time, is much less than the ill effect of the occupation of the Muslims' land by the main Kufr. Ibn Taymiyyah had explained this issue and emphasised the importance of dealing with the major threat on the expense of the minor one. He described the situation of the Muslims and the Mujahideen and stated that even the military personnel who are not practising Islam are not exempted from the duty of Jihad against the enemy.

Ibn Taymiyyah, after mentioning the Moguls (Tatar) and their behaviour in changing the law of Allah, stated that: the ultimate aim of pleasing Allah, raising His word, instituting His religion and obeying His messenger (ALLAH'S BLESSING AND SALUTATIONS ON HIM) is to fight the enemy, in every aspect and in a complete manner; if the danger to the religion from not fighting is greater than that of fighting, then it is a duty to fight them even if the intention of some of the fighters is not pure i.e. fighting for the sake of leadership (personal gain) or if they do not observe some of the rules and commandments of Islam. To repel the greatest of the two dangers on the expense of the lesser one is an Islamic principle which should be observed. It was the tradition of the people of the Sunnah (Ahlul-Sunnah) to join and invade -fight- with the righteous and non righteous men. Allah may support this religion by righteous and non righteous people as told by the prophet (ALLAH'S BLESSING AND SALUTATIONS ON HIM). If it is not possible to fight except with the help of non righteous military personnel and commanders, then there are two possibilities: either fighting will be ignored and the others, who are the great danger to this life and religion, will take control; or to fight with the help of non righteous rulers and therefore repelling the greatest of the two dangers and implementing most, though not all, of the Islamic laws. The latter option is the right duty to be carried out in these circumstances and in many other similar situations. In fact many of the fights and conquests that took place after the time of Rashidoon, the guided Imams, were of this type. (majmoo' al Fatawa, 26/506).

No one, not even a blind or a deaf person, can deny the presence of the widely spread mischiefs or the prevalence of the great sins that had reached the grievous iniquity of polytheism and to share with Allah in His sole right of sovereignty and making of the law. The All Mighty stated: {And when Luqman said to his son while he admonish him: O my son! do not associate ought with Allah; most surely polytheism is a grievous iniquity} (Luqman; 31:13). Man fabricated laws were put forward permitting what has been forbidden by Allah such as usury (Riba) and other matters. Banks dealing in usury are competing, for lands, with the two Holy Places and declaring war against Allah by disobeying His order {Allah has allowed trading and forbidden usury} (Baqarah; 2:275). All this taking place at the vicinity of the Holy Mosque in the Holy Land! Allah (SWT) stated in His Holy Book a unique promise (that had not been promised to any other sinner) to the Muslims who deals in usury: {O you who believe! Be careful of your duty to Allah and relinquish what remains (due) from usury, if you are believers \* But if you do (it) not, then be appraised of WAR from Allah and His Apostle} (Baqarah; 2:278-279). This is for the "Muslim" who deals in usury (believing that it is a sin), what is it then to the



person who make himself a partner and equal to Allah, legalising (usury and other sins) what has been forbidden by Allah. Despite of all of the above we see the government misled and dragged some of the righteous Ulama and Da'ees away from the issue of objecting to the greatest of sins and Kufr. (We bemoan this and can only say: "No power and power acquiring except through Allah").

Under such circumstances, to push the enemy-the greatest Kufr- out of the country is a prime duty. No other duty after Belief is more important than the duty of had . Utmost effort should be made to prepare and instigate the Ummah against the enemy, the American-Israeli alliance- occupying the country of the two Holy Places and the route of the Apostle (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him) to the Furthest Mosque (Al-Aqsa Mosque). Also to remind the Muslims not to be engaged in an internal war among themselves, as that will have grievous consequences namely:

1-consumption of the Muslims human resources as most casualties and fatalities will be among the Muslims people.

2-Exhaustion of the economic and financial resources.

3-Destruction of the country infrastructures.

4-Dissociation of the society.

5-Destruction of the oil industries. The presence of the USA Crusader military forces on land, sea and air of the states of the Islamic Gulf is the greatest danger threatening the largest oil reserve in the world. The existence of these forces in the area will provoke the people of the country and induces aggression on their religion, feelings and prides and push them to take up armed struggle against the invaders occupying the land; therefore spread of the fighting in the region will expose the oil wealth to the danger of being burned up. The economic interests of the States of the Gulf and the land of the two Holy Places will be damaged and even a greater damage will be caused to the economy of the world. I would like here to alert my brothers, the Mujahideen, the sons of the nation, to protect this (oil) wealth and not to include it in the battle as it is a great Islamic wealth and a large economical power essential for the soon to be established Islamic state, by Allah's Permission and Grace. We also warn the aggressors, the USA, against burning this Islamic wealth (a crime which they may commit in order to prevent it, at the end of the war, from falling in the hands of its legitimate owners and to cause economic damages to the competitors of the USA in Europe or the Far East, particularly Japan which is the major consumer of the oil of the region).

6-Division of the land of the two Holy Places, and annexing of the northerly part of it by Israel. Dividing the land of the two Holy Places is an essential demand of the Zionist-Crusader alliance. The existence of such a large country with its huge resources under the leadership of the forthcoming Islamic State, by Allah's Grace, represent a serious danger to the very existence of the Zionist state in Palestine. The Noble Ka'ba, -the Qiblah of all Muslims- makes the land of the two Holy Places a symbol for the unity of the Islamic world. Moreover, the presence of the world's largest oil reserve makes the land of the two Holy Places an important economical power in the Islamic world. The sons of the two Holy Places are directly related to the life style (Seerah) of their forefathers, the companions, may Allah be pleased with them. They consider the Seerah of their forefathers as a source and an example for re-establishing the greatness of this Ummah and to raise the word of Allah again. Furthermore the presence of a population of fighters in the south of Yemen, fighting in the cause of Allah, is a strategic threat to the Zionist-Crusader alliance in the area. The Prophet (ALLAH'S BLESSING AND SALUTATIONS ON HIM) said: (around twelve thousands will emerge from Aden/Abian helping -the cause of- Allah and His messenger, they are the best, in the time, between me and them) narrated by Ahmad with a correct trustworthy reference.

7-An internal war is a great mistake, no matter what reasons are there for it. The presence of the occupier -the USA- forces will control the outcome of the battle for the benefit of the international Kufr.

I address now my brothers of the security and military forces and the national guards may Allah preserve your hoard for Islam and the Muslim people:

O you protectors of unity and guardians of Faith; O you descendent of the ancestors who carried the light (torch) of guidance and spread it all over the world. O you grandsons of Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqaas , Almothanna Ibn Haritha Ash-Shaybani , Alga'ga' Ibn Amroo Al-Tameemi and those pious companions who fought Jihad alongside them; you competed to join the army and the guard forces with the intention to carry out Jihad in the cause of Allah -raising His word- and to defend the faith of Islam and the land of the two Holy Places against the invaders and the occupying forces. That is the ultimate level of believing in this religion "Deen". But the regime had reversed these principles and their understanding, humiliating the Ummah and disobeying Allah. Half a century ago the rulers promised the Ummah to regain the first Qiblah, but fifty years later new generation arrived and the promises have been changed; Al-Aqsa Mosque handed over to the Zionists and the wounds of the Ummah still bleeding there. At the time when the Ummah has not regained the first Qiblah and the rout of the journey of the Prophet (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him), and despite of all of the above, the Saudi regime had stunted the Ummah in the remaining sanctities, the Holy city of Makka and the mosque of the Prophet (Al-Masjid An-Nabawy), by calling the Christian army to defend the regime. The crusaders were permitted to be in the land of the two Holy Places. Not surprisingly though, the King himself wore the cross on his chest. The country was widely opened from the north-to-the south and from east-to-the west for the crusaders. The land was filled with the military bases of the USA and the allies. The regime became unable to keep control without the help of these bases. You know more than any body else about the size, intention and the danger of the presence of the USA military bases in the area. The regime betrayed the Ummah and joined the Kufr, assisting and helping them against the Muslims. It is well known that this is one of the ten "voiders" of Islam, deeds of de-Islamisation. By opening the Arab peninsula to the crusaders the regime disobeyed and acted against what has been enjoined by the messenger of Allah (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him), while he was at the bed of his death: (Expel the polytheists out of the Arab Peninsula); (narrated by Al-Bukhari) and: (If I survive, Allah willing, I'll expel the Jews and the Christians out of the Arab Peninsula); saheeh Aljame' As-Sagheer.

It is out of date and no longer acceptable to claim that the presence of the crusaders is necessity and only a temporary measure to protect the land of the two Holy Places. Especially when the civil and the military infrastructures of Iraq were savagely destroyed showing the depth of the Zionist-Crusaders hatred to the Muslims and their children, and the rejection of the idea of replacing the crusaders forces by an Islamic force composed of the sons of the country and other Muslim people. moreover the foundations of the claim and the claim it self were demolished and wiped out by the sequence of speeches given by the leaders of the Kuffar in America. The latest of these speeches was the one given by William Perry, the Defense Secretary, after the explosion in Al-Khobar saying that: the presence of the American solders there is to protect the interest of the USA. The imprisoned Sheikh Safar Al-Hawali, may Allah hasten his release, wrote a book of seventy pages; in it he presented evidence and proof that the presence of the Americans in the Arab Peninsula is a pre-planned military occupation. The regime want to deceive the Muslim people in the same manner when the Palestinian fighters, Mujahideen, were deceived causing the loss of Al-Aqsa Mosque. In 1304 A.H (1936 AD) the

awakened Muslims nation of Palestine started their great struggle, Jihad, against the British occupying forces. Britain was impotent to stop the Mujahideen and their Jihad, but their devil inspired that there is no way to stop the armed struggle in Palestine unless through their agent King Abdul Azeez, who managed to deceive the Mujahideen. King Abdul Azeez carried out his duty to his British masters. He sent his two sons to meet the Mujahideen leaders and to inform them that King Abdul Azeez would guarantee the promises made by the British government in leaving the area and responding positively to the demands of the Mujahideen if the latter stop their Jihad. And so King Abdul Azeez caused the loss of the first Qiblah of the Muslims people. The King joined the crusaders against the Muslims and instead of supporting the Mujahideen in the cause of Allah, to liberate the Al-Aqsa Mosque, he disappointed and humiliated them.

Today, his son, king Fahd, trying to deceive the Muslims for the second time so as to loose what is left of the sanctities. When the Islamic world resented the arrival of the crusader forces to the land of the two Holy Places, the king told lies to the Ulama (who issued Fatwas about the arrival of the Americans) and to the gathering of the Islamic leaders at the conference of Rabitah which was held in the Holy City of Makka. The King said that: "the issue is simple, the American and the alliance forces will leave the area in few months". Today it is seven years since their arrival and the regime is not able to move them out of the country. The regime made no confession about its inability and carried on lying to the people claiming that the American will leave. But never-never again ; a believer will not be bitten twice from the same hole or snake! Happy is the one who takes note of the sad experience of the others!!

Instead of motivating the army, the guards, and the security men to oppose the occupiers, the regime used these men to protect the invaders, and further deepening the humiliation and the betrayal. (We bemoan this and can only say: "No power and power acquiring except through Allah"). To those little group of men within the army, police and security forces, who have been tricked and pressured by the regime to attack the Muslims and spill their blood, we would like to remind them of the narration: (I promise war against those who take my friends as their enemy) narrated by Al-Bukhari. And his saying (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him) saying of: ( In the day of judgement a man comes holding another and complaining being slain by him. Allah, blessed be His Names, asks: Why did you slay him?! The accused replies: I did so that all exaltation may be Yours. Allah, blessed be His Names, says: All exaltation is indeed mine! Another man comes holding a fourth with a similar complaint. Allah, blessed be His Names, asks: Why did you kill him?! The accused replies: I did so that exaltation may be for Mr. X! Allah, blessed be His Names, says: exaltation is mine, not for Mr. X, carry all the slain man's sins (and proceed to the Hell fire)!). In another wording of An-Nasa'i: "The accused says: for strengthening the rule or kingdom of Mr. X"

Today your brothers and sons, the sons of the two Holy Places, have started their Jihad in the cause of Allah, to expel the occupying enemy from of the country of the two Holy places. And there is no doubt you would like to carry out this mission too, in order to re-establish the greatness of this Ummah and to liberate its' occupied sanctities. Nevertheless, it must be obvious to you that, due to the imbalance of power between our armed forces and the enemy forces, a suitable means of fighting must be adopted i.e using fast moving light forces that work under complete secrecy. In other word to initiate a guerrilla warfare, were the sons of the nation, and not the military forces, take part in it. And as you know, it is wise, in the present circumstances, for the armed military forces not to be engaged in a conventional fighting with the forces of the crusader enemy (the exceptions are the bold and the forceful operations carried out by the members of the armed forces individually, that is without the

movement of the formal forces in its conventional shape and hence the responses will not be directed, strongly, against the army) unless a big advantage is likely to be achieved; and great losses induced on the enemy side (that would shaken and destroy its foundations and infrastructures) that will help to expel the defeated enemy from the country.

The Mujahideen, your brothers and sons, requesting that you support them in every possible way by supplying them with the necessary information, materials and arms. Security men are especially asked to cover up for the Mujahideen and to assist them as much as possible against the occupying enemy; and to spread rumours, fear and discouragement among the members of the enemy forces.

We bring to your attention that the regime, in order to create a friction and feud between the Mujahideen and yourselves, might resort to take a deliberate action against personnel of the security, guards and military forces and blame the Mujahideen for these actions. The regime should not be allowed to have such opportunity.

The regime is fully responsible for what had been incurred by the country and the nation; however the occupying American enemy is the principle and the main cause of the situation . Therefore efforts should be concentrated on destroying, fighting and killing the enemy until, by the Grace of Allah, it is completely defeated. The time will come -by the Permission of Allah- when you'll perform your decisive role so that the word of Allah will be supreme and the word of the infidels (Kaferoon) will be the inferior. You will hit with iron fist against the aggressors. You'll re-establish the normal course and give the people their rights and carry out your truly Islamic duty. Allah willing, I'll have a separate talk about these issues.

My Muslim Brothers (particularly those of the Arab Peninsula): The money you pay to buy American goods will be transformed into bullets and used against our brothers in Palestine and tomorrow (future) against our sons in the land of the two Holy places. By buying these goods we are strengthening their economy while our dispossession and poverty increases.

Muslim Brothers of land of the two Holy Places:

It is incredible that our country is the world's largest buyer of arms from the USA and the area biggest commercial partners of the Americans who are assisting their Zionist brothers in occupying Palestine and in evicting and killing the Muslims there, by providing arms, men and financial supports.

To deny these occupiers from the enormous revenues of their trading with our country is a very important help for our Jihad against them. To express our anger and hate to them is a very important moral gesture. By doing so we would have taken part in (the process of ) cleansing our sanctities from the crusaders and the Zionists and forcing them, by the Permission of Allah, to leave disappointed and defeated.

We expect the woman of the land of the two Holy Places and other countries to carry out their role in boycotting the American goods.

If economical boycotting is intertwined with the military operations of the Mujahideen, then defeating the enemy will be even nearer, by the Permission of Allah. However if Muslims don't co-operate and support their Mujahideen brothers then , in effect, they are supplying the army of the enemy with financial help and extending the war and increasing the suffering of the Muslims.

The security and the intelligence services of the entire world can not force a single citizen to buy the goods of his/her enemy. Economical boycotting of the American goods is a very effective weapon of hitting and weakening the enemy, and it is not under the control of the security forces of the regime.

Before closing my talk, I have a very important message to the youths of Islam, men of the



brilliant future of the Ummah of Muhammad (ALLAH'S BLESSING AND SALUTATIONS ON HIM). Our talk with the youths about their duty in this difficult period in the history of our Ummah. A period in which the youths and no one else came forward to carry out the variable and different duties. While some of the well known individuals had hesitated in their duty of defending Islam and saving themselves and their wealth from the injustice, aggression and terror -exercised by the government- the youths (may Allah protect them) were forthcoming and raised the banner of Jihad against the American-Zionist alliance occupying the sanctities of Islam. Others who have been tricked into loving this materialistic world, and those who have been terrorised by the government choose to give legitimacy to the greatest betrayal , the occupation of the land of the two Holy Places (We bemoan this and can only say: "No power and power acquiring except through Allah"). We are not surprised from the action of our youths. The youths were the companions of Muhammad (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him), and was it not the youths themselves who killed Aba-Jahl, the Pharaoh of this Ummah?. Our youths are the best descendent of the best ancestors.

Abdul-Rahman Ibn Awf -may Allah be pleased with him- said: (I was at Badr where I noticed two youths one to my right and the other to my left. One of them asked me quietly (so not to be heard by the other) : O uncle point out Aba-Jahl to me. What do you want him for? , said Abdul Rahman. The boy answered: I have been informed that he- Aba-Jahl- abused the Messenger of Allah (), I swear by Allah, who have my soul in His hand, that if I see Aba-Jahl I'll not let my shadow departs his shadow till one of us is dead. I was astonished, said Abdul Rahman; then the other youth said the same thing as the first one. Subsequently I saw Aba-Jahl among the people; I said to the boys do you see? this is the man you are asking me about. The two youths hit Aba-Jahl with their swords till he was dead. Allah is the greatest, Praise be to Him: Two youths of young age but with great perseverance, enthusiasm, courage and pride for the religion of Allah's, each one of them asking about the most important act of killing that should be induced on the enemy. That is the killing of the pharaoh of this Ummah - Aba Jahl-, the leader of the unbelievers (Mushrikeen) at the battle of Badr. The role of Abdul Rahman Ibn Awf, may Allah be pleased with him, was to direct the two youths toward Aba-Jahl. That was the perseverance and the enthusiasm of the youths of that time and that was the perseverance and the enthusiasm of their fathers. It is this role that is now required from the people who have the expertise and knowledge in fighting the enemy. They should guide their brothers and sons in this matter; once that has been done, then our youths will repeat what their forefathers had said before: "I swear by Allah if I see him I'll not let my shadow to departs from his shadow till one of us is dead".

And the story of Abdur-Rahman Ibn Awf about Ummayyah Ibn Khalaf shows the extent of Bilal's (may Allah be pleased with him) persistence in killing the head of the Kufr: "the head of Kufr is Ummayyah Ibn Khalaf.... I shall live not if he survives" said Bilal.

Few days ago the news agencies had reported that the Defence Secretary of the Crusading Americans had said that "the explosion at Riyadh and Al-Khobar had taught him one lesson: that is not to withdraw when attacked by coward terrorists".

We say to the Defence Secretary that his talk can induce a grieving mother to laughter! and shows the fears that had enshrined you all. Where was this false courage of yours when the explosion in Beirut took place on 1983 AD (1403 A.H). You were turned into scattered pits and pieces at that time; 241 mainly marines solders were killed. And where was this courage of yours when two explosions made you to leave Aden in lees than twenty four hours!

But your most disgraceful case was in Somalia; where- after vigorous propaganda about the

power of the USA and its post cold war leadership of the new world order- you moved tens of thousands of international force, including twenty eight thousands American solders into Somalia. However, when tens of your solders were killed in minor battles and one American Pilot was dragged in the streets of Mogadishu you left the area carrying disappointment, humiliation, defeat and your dead with you. Clinton appeared in front of the whole world threatening and promising revenge , but these threats were merely a preparation for withdrawal. You have been disgraced by Allah and you withdrew; the extent of your impotence and weaknesses became very clear. It was a pleasure for the "heart" of every Muslim and a remedy to the "chests" of believing nations to see you defeated in the three Islamic cities of Beirut , Aden and Mogadishu.

I say to Secretary of Defence: The sons of the land of the two Holy Places had come out to fight against the Russian in Afghanistan, the Serb in Bosnia-Herzegovina and today they are fighting in Chechenia and -by the Permission of Allah- they have been made victorious over your partner, the Russians. By the command of Allah, they are also fighting in Tajakistan.

I say: Since the sons of the land of the two Holy Places feel and strongly believe that fighting (Jihad) against the Kuffar in every part of the world, is absolutely essential; then they would be even more enthusiastic, more powerful and larger in number upon fighting on their own land- the place of their births- defending the greatest of their sanctities, the noble Ka'ba (the Qiblah of all Muslims). They know that the Muslims of the world will assist and help them to victory. To liberate their sanctities is the greatest of issues concerning all Muslims; It is the duty of every Muslims in this world.

I say to you William (Defence Secretary) that: These youths love death as you loves life. They inherit dignity, pride, courage, generosity, truthfulness and sacrifice from father to father. They are most delivering and steadfast at war. They inherit these values from their ancestors (even from the time of the Jaheliyyah, before Islam). These values were approved and completed by the arriving Islam as stated by the messenger of Allah (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him): "I have been send to perfecting the good values". (Saheeh Al-Jame' As-Sagheer).

When the pagan King Amroo Ibn Hind tried to humiliate the pagan Amroo Ibn Kulthoom, the latter cut the head of the King with his sword rejecting aggression, humiliation and indignation.

If the king oppresses the people excessively, we reject submitting to humiliation.

By which legitimacy (or command) O Amroo bin Hind you want us to be degraded?!

By which legitimacy (or command) O Amroo bin Hind you listen to our foes and disrespect us?!

Our toughness has, O Amroo, tired the enemies before you, never giving in!

Our youths believe in paradise after death. They believe that taking part in fighting will not bring their day nearer; and staying behind will not postpone their day either. Exalted be to Allah who said: {And a soul will not die but with the permission of Allah, the term is fixed} (Aal Imraan; 3:145). Our youths believe in the saying of the messenger of Allah (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him): "O boy, I teach a few words; guard (guard the cause of, keep the commandments of) Allah, then He guards you, guard (the cause of ) Allah, then He will be with you; if you ask (for your need) ask Allah, if you seek assistance, seek Allah's; and know definitely that if the Whole World gathered to (bestow) profit on you they will not profit you except with what was determined for you by Allah, and if they gathered to harm you they will not harm you except with what has been determined for you by Allah; Pen lifted, papers dried, it is fixed nothing in these truths can be changed" Saheeh Al-Jame' As-Sagheer.

Our youths took note of the meaning of the poetic verse: "If death is a predetermined must,



then it is a shame to die cowardly." And the other poet saying: "Who do not die by the sword will die by other reason; many causes are there but one death".

These youths believe in what has been told by Allah and His messenger (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him) about the greatness of the reward for the Mujahideen and Martyrs; Allah, the most exalted said: {and -so far- those who are slain in the way of Allah, He will by no means allow their deeds to perish. He will guide them and improve their condition. and cause them to enter the garden -paradise- which He has made known to them}. (Muhammad; 47:4-6). Allah the Exalted also said: {and do not speak of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead; nay -they are- alive, but you do not perceive} (Bagarah; 2:154). His messenger (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him) said: "for those who strive in His cause Allah prepared hundred degrees (levels) in paradise; in-between two degrees as the in-between heaven and earth". Saheeh Al-Jame' As-Sagheer. He (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him) also said: "the best of the martyrs are those who do NOT turn their faces away from the battle till they are killed. They are in the high level of Jannah (paradise). Their Lord laughs to them ( in pleasure) and when your Lord laughs to a slave of His, He will not hold him to an account". narrated by Ahmad with correct and trustworthy reference. And : "a martyr will not feel the pain of death except like how you feel when you are pinched". Saheeh Al-Jame' As-Sagheer. He also said: "a martyr privileges are guaranteed by Allah; forgiveness with the first gush of his blood, he will be shown his seat in paradise, he will be decorated with the jewels of belief (Imaan), married off to the beautiful ones, protected from the test in the grave, assured security in the day of judgement, crowned with the crown of dignity, a ruby of which is better than this whole world (Duniah) and its' entire content, wedded to seventy two of the pure Houries (beautiful ones of Paradise) and his intercession on the behalf of seventy of his relatives will be accepted". Narrated by Ahmad and At-Tirmithi (with the correct and trustworthy reference).

Those youths know that their rewards in fighting you, the USA, is double than their rewards in fighting some one else not from the people of the book. They have no intention except to enter paradise by killing you. An infidel, and enemy of God like you, cannot be in the same hell with his righteous executioner.

Our youths chanting and reciting the word of Allah, the most exalted: {fight them; Allah will punish them by your hands and bring them to disgrace, and assist you against them and heal the heart of a believing people} (At-Taubah; 9:14) and the words of the prophet (ALLAH'S BLESSING AND SALUTATIONS ON HIM): "I swear by Him, who has my soul in His hand, that no man get killed fighting them today, patiently attacking and not retreating ,surely Allah will let him into paradise". And his (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him) saying to them: "get up to a paradise as wide as heaven and earth".

The youths also reciting the All Mighty words of: "so when you meet in battle those who disbelieve, then smite the necks..." (Muhammad; 47:19). Those youths will not ask you (William Perry) for explanations, they will tell you singing there is nothing between us need to be explained, there is only killing and neck smiting.

And they will say to you what their grand father, Haroon Ar-Rasheed, Ameer-ul-Mu'meneen, replied to your grandfather, Nagfoor, the Byzantine emperor, when he threatened the Muslims: "from Haroon Ar-Rasheed, Ameer-ul-Mu'meneen, to Nagfoor, the dog of the Romans; the answer is what you will see not what you hear". Haroon El-Rasheed led the armies of Islam to the battle and handed Nagfoor a devastating defeat.

The youths you called cowards are competing among themselves for fighting and killing you.

Reciting what one of them said: The crusader army became dust when we detonated al-Khobar. With courageous youth of Islam fearing no danger. If (they are) threatened: The tyrants will kill you, they reply my death is a victory. I did not betray that king, he did betray our Qiblah.

And he permitted in the holy country the most filthy sort of humans.

I have made an oath by Allah, the Great, to fight who ever rejected the faith. For more than a decade, they carried arms on their shoulders in Afghanistan and they have made vows to Allah that as long as they are alive, they will continue to carry arms against you until you are -Allah willing- expelled, defeated and humiliated, they will carry on as long as they live saying: O William, tomorrow you will know which young man is confronting your misguided brethren!

A youth fighting in smile, returning with the spear coloured red.

May Allah keep me close to knights, humans in peace, demons in war.

Lions in Jungle but their teeth are spears and Indian swords.

The horses witness that I push them hard forwarded in the fire of battle.

The dust of the battle bears witnesses for me, so also the fighting itself, the pens and the books!

So to abuse the grandsons of the companions, may Allah be pleased with them, by calling them cowards and challenging them by refusing to leave the land of the two Holy Places shows the insanity and the imbalance you are suffering from. Its appropriate "remedy," however, is in the hands of the youths of Islam, as the poet said:

I am willing to sacrifice self and wealth for knights who never disappointed me. Knights who are never fed up or deterred by death, even if the mill of war turns. In the heat of battle they do not care, and cure the insanity of the enemy by their 'insane' courage.

Terrorising you, while you are carrying arms on our land, is a legitimate and morally demanded duty. It is a legitimate right well known to all humans and other creatures. Your example and our example is like a snake which entered into a house of a man and got killed by him. The coward is the one who lets you walk, while carrying arms, freely on his land and provides you with peace and security.

Those youths are different from your soldiers. Your problem will be how to convince your troops to fight, while our problem will be how to restrain our youths to wait for their turn in fighting and in operations. These youths are commendation and praiseworthy.

They stood up tall to defend the religion; at the time when the government misled the prominent scholars and tricked them into issuing Fatwas (that have no basis neither in the book of Allah, nor in the Sunnah of His prophet (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him)) of opening the land of the two Holy Places for the Christians armies and handing the Al-Aqsa Mosque to the Zionists. Twisting the meanings of the holy text will not change this fact at all. They deserve the praise of the poet: I rejected all the critics, who chose the wrong way; I rejected those who enjoy fireplaces in clubs discussing eternally; I rejected those, who inspite being lost, think they are at the goal; I respect those who carried on not asking or bothering about the difficulties; Never letting up from their goals, inspite all hardships of the road; Whose blood is the oil for the flame guiding in the darkness of confusion; I feel still the pain of (the loss) Al-Quds in my internal organs; That loss is like a burning fire in my intestines; I did not betray my covenant with God, when even states did betray it! As their grandfather Assim Bin Thabit said rejecting a surrender offer of the pagans: What for an excuse I had to surrender, while I am still able, having arrows and my bow having a tough string?! Death is truth and ultimate destiny, and life will end any way. If I do not fight you, then my mother must be insane!

The youths hold you responsible for all of the killings and evictions of the Muslims and the violation of the sanctities, carried out by your Zionist brothers in Lebanon; you openly supplied them

with arms and finance. More than 600,000 Iraqi children have died due to lack of food and medicine and as a result of the unjustifiable aggression (sanction) imposed on Iraq and its nation. The children of Iraq are our children. You, the USA, together with the Saudi regime are responsible for the shedding of the blood of these innocent children. Due to all of that, what ever treaty you have with our country is now null and void.

The treaty of Hudaibiyyah was cancelled by the messenger of Allah (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him) once Quraysh had assisted Bani Bakr against Khusha'ah, the allies of the prophet (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him). The prophet (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him) fought Quraysh and concurred Makka. He (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him) considered the treaty with Bani Qainuqa' void because one of their Jews publicly hurt one Muslim woman, one single woman, at the market. Let alone then, the killing you caused to hundred of thousands Muslims and occupying their sanctities. It is now clear that those who claim that the blood of the American solders (the enemy occupying the land of the Muslims) should be protected are merely repeating what is imposed on them by the regime; fearing the aggression and interested in saving themselves. It is a duty now on every tribe in the Arab Peninsula to fight, Jihad, in the cause of Allah and to cleanse the land from those occupiers. Allah knows that their blood is permitted (to be spilled) and their wealth is a booty; their wealth is a booty to those who kill them. The most Exalted said in the verse of As-Sayef, The Sword: "so when the sacred months have passed away, then slay the idolaters where ever you find them, and take them captives and besiege them and lie in wait for them in every ambush" (At-Tauba; 9:5). Our youths knew that the humiliation suffered by the Muslims as a result of the occupation of their sanctities can not be kicked and removed except by explosions and Jihad.

As the poet said: The walls of oppression and humiliation cannot be demolished except in a rain of bullets. The freeman does not surrender leadership to infidels and sinners. Without shedding blood no degradation and branding can be removed from the forehead.

I remind the youths of the Islamic world, who fought in Afghanistan and Bosnia-Herzegovina with their wealth, pens, tongues and themselves that the battle had not finished yet. I remind them about the talk between Jibreel (Gabriel) and the messenger of Allah (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on both of them) after the battle of Ahzab when the messenger of Allah (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him) returned to Medina and before putting his sword aside; when Jibreel (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him) descend saying: "are you putting your sword aside? by Allah the angels haven't dropped their arms yet; march with your companions to Bani Quraydah, I am (going) ahead of you to throw fears in their hearts and to shake their fortresses on them". Jibreel marched with the angels (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on them all), followed by the messenger of Allah (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him) marching with the immigrants, Muhajeroon, and supporters, Ansar. (narrated by Al-Bukhary).

These youths know that: if one is not to be killed one will die (any way) and the most honourable death is to be killed in the way of Allah. They are even more determined after the martyrdom of the four heroes who bombed the Americans in Riyadh. Those youths who raised high the head of the Ummah and humiliated the Americans-the occupier- by their operation in Riyadh. They remember the poetry of Ja'far, the second commander in the battle of Mu'tah, in which three thousand Muslims faced over a hundred thousand Romans: How good is the Paradise and its nearness, good with cool drink But the Romans are promised punishment (in Hell), if I meet them. I will fight them.

And the poetry of Abdullah Bin Rawaha, the third commander in the battle of Mu'tah, after the martyrdom of Ja'far, when he felt some hesitation: O my soul if you do not get killed, you are going to die, anyway. This is death pool in front of you!

You are getting what you have wished for (martyrdom) before, and you follow the example of the two previous commanders you are rightly guided! As for our daughters, wives, sisters and mothers they should take prime example from the prophet (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him) pious female companions, may Allah be pleased with them; they should adopt the life style (Seerah) of the female companions of courage, sacrifice and generosity in the cause of the supremacy of Allah's religion.

They should remember the courage and the personality of Fatima, daughter of Khatab, when she accepted Islam and stood up in front of her brother, Omar Ibn Al-Khatab and challenged him (before he became a Muslim) saying: "O Omar , what will you do if the truth is not in your religion?!" And to remember the stand of Asma', daughter of Abu Bakr, on the day of Hijra, when she attended the Messenger and his companion in the cave and split her belt in two pieces for them. And to remember the stand of Naseeba Bent Ka'b striving to defend the messenger of Allah (Allah's Blessings and Salutations may be on him) on the day of Uhud, in which she suffered twelve injuries, one of which was so deep leaving a deep lifelong scar! They should remember the generosity of the early woman of Islam who raised finance for the Muslims army by selling their jewellery.

Our women had set a tremendous example of generosity in the cause of Allah; they motivated and encouraged their sons, brothers and husbands to fight- in the cause of Allah- in Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Chechenia and in other countries. We ask Allah to accept from them these deeds, and may He help their fathers, brothers, husbands and sons. May Allah strengthen the belief - Imaan - of our women in the way of generosity and sacrifice for the supremacy of the word of Allah. Our women weep not, except over men who fight in the cause of Allah; our women instigate their brothers to fight in the cause of Allah.

Our women bemoan only fighters in the cause of Allah, as said:  
Do not moan on any one except a lion in the woods, courageous in the burning wars. Let me die dignified in wars, honourable death is better than my current life.

Our women encourage Jihad saying: Prepare yourself like a struggler, the matter is bigger than words! Are you going to leave us else for the wolves of Kufr eating our wings?! The wolves of Kufr are mobilising all evil persons from every where! Where are the freemen defending free women by the arms?! Death is better than life in humiliation! Some scandals and shames will never be otherwise eradicated.

My Muslim Brothers of The World: Your brothers in Palestine and in the land of the two Holy Places are calling upon your help and asking you to take part in fighting against the enemy --your enemy and their enemy-- the Americans and the Israelis. they are asking you to do whatever you can, with one own means and ability, to expel the enemy, humiliated and defeated, out of the sanctities of Islam. Exalted be to Allah said in His book: { and if they ask your support, because they are oppressed in their faith, then support them!} (Anfaal; 8:72)

O you horses (soldiers) of Allah ride and march on. This is the time of hardship so be tough. And know that your gathering and co-operation in order to liberate the sanctities of Islam is the right step toward unifying the word of the Ummah under the banner of "No God but Allah" ).

From our place we raise our palms humbly to Allah asking Him to bestow on us His guide in every aspects of this issue.

Our Lord, we ask you to secure the release of the truthful scholars, Ulama, of Islam and pious youths of the Ummah from their imprisonment. O Allah, strengthen them and help their families.

Our Lord, the people of the cross had come with their horses (soldiers) and occupied the land of the two Holy places. And the Zionist Jews fiddling as they wish with the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the route of the ascendance of the messenger of Allah (ALLAH'S BLESSING AND SALUTATIONS ON HIM). Our Lord, shatter their gathering, divide them among themselves, shaken the earth under their feet and give us control over them; Our Lord, we take refuge in you from their deeds and take you as a shield between us and them.

Our Lord, show us a black day in them!

Our Lord, show us the wonderment of your ability in them!

Our Lord, You are the Revealer of the book, Director of the clouds, You defeated the allies (Ahzab); defeat them and make us victorious over them.

Our Lord, You are the one who help us and You are the one who assist us, with Your Power we move and by Your Power we fight. On You we rely and You are our cause.

Our Lord, those youths got together to make Your religion victorious and raise Your banner. Our Lord, send them Your help and strengthen their hearts.

Our Lord, make the youths of Islam steadfast and descend patience on them and guide their shots!

Our Lord, unify the Muslims and bestow love among their hearts!

O Lord pour down upon us patience, and make our steps firm and assist us against the unbelieving people!

Our Lord, do not lay on us a burden as Thou didst lay on those before us; Our Lord, do not impose upon us that which we have no strength to bear; and pardon us and grant us protection and have mercy on us, Thou art our patron, so help us against the unbelieving people.

Our Lord, guide this Ummah, and make the right conditions (by which) the people of your obedience will be in dignity and the people of disobedience in humiliation, and by which the good deeds are enjoined and the bad deeds are forebode.

Our Lord, bless Muhammad, Your slave and messenger, his family and descendants, and companions and salute him with a (becoming) salutation.

And our last supplication is: All praise is due to Allah.



## 10. DEFENSIVE ACTION

“Oh ye who believe! Take not the Jews and Christians for friends. They are friends one to another. He among you who taketh them for friends is one of them. Lo! Allah guideth not wrongdoing folk.”  
Surah 5. Al-Ma'idah, The Table Spread. V 51.

Afghanistan, 1997

We spent a lot more time on the move after the events of 1996. Osama became paranoid of mobile phones, pagers and electronic equipment that was not our own. He feared that any electronic device could emit a homing signal for an American bomb or missile. All our premises and equipment was scanned daily for bugs or unusual signals. Some of our technicians were as talented as anyone working in missile development in America; we were not a ragtag army of camel traders as some in the west would like to portray us.

Early in the year, we stayed in Khost. One of our important east Afghanistan bases, Khost is high in the mountains, about 170km from Peshawar. Khost had become a major staging point for our opium business. Without state interference since the Taliban controlled the country, opium could be grown and shipped openly. Production increased fourfold in the years after the liberation of Afghanistan and Khost was our main hub.

Word reached us through our members in the Pakistani military that a band of mercenaries was being readied in Pakistan. They were financed by the Saudis, organized by the Americans and their mission was to capture or kill Osama. We were advised that our location in Khost was known to the attackers and they were preparing to launch their assault within days.

- We must leave immediately, I insisted to Osama.
- Agreed, but first we discover their spies and kill them.

We called a meeting of our Khost fighters. It was held in a large meeting room at our main opium depot. Bags of opium were stacked to the ceiling in the room and its pungent smell filled the air.

- One of us is a traitor. Perhaps more than one, announced Osama.

There was a murmur of fear in the room. Perhaps 20 men were gathered there, most of whom were known to me personally. I found it hard to believe that any would betray Osama.

- I give you a last opportunity to make peace with Allah. Who has betrayed me?

Nobody admitted their treachery so Osama went to the door and called for his electronics expert. The man entered the room, carrying an electronic box, attached by wire to an aerial. He went from man to man, sweeping the aerial the length of their bodies, front, sides and back. After a time, the device emitted a whining signal while a fighter who was not known to me was being scanned. Osama went to him and reached into his satchel, which was where the scanner had led our attention. He took the satchel and emptied its contents onto the ground. One item stood out; it was a cellular phone.

- You know that these devices are not permitted among us, only encrypted satellite phones. Is it you who has betrayed me? Is it you who will let the American mercenaries home in on your positioning signal?

- I am sorry, please forgive me, stammered the man, who was a Pakistani.

- You know that we cannot forgive spies or traitors, answered Osama. Now tell me who is working with you.

The man didn't answer, but his gaze strayed from the floor to another Pakistani fighter on the other side of the room. I saw this and went to the man. I beckoned the scanning expert to him. The

scanner alerted us to the man's watch.

The second man collapsed to the ground in fear. He was truly guilty. Osama addressed him, with a pistol held to the traitor's head.

- Are there any more traitors in Khost?
- No, Lord. It is only us two who have betrayed you.
- Very well. I must leave now.

He gestured to me and to our local commander to come outside. The other men grabbed the traitors and began beating them and cursing their treachery.

- Do not kill them yet, commanded Osama. We must discover who their masters are, so that this cannot happen again.

Outside, Osama told me that we must leave Khost immediately. He told the commander that the two men should be tortured until they gave up the names and locations of their American and Pakistani connections. Then they should be killed and left out for the vultures in the desert. Then the commander was to conceal the opium in a cave outside the city and place the traitors' tracking devices on a mule to be released in the mountains. He was also to plan the assassination of the enemy officials given up by the traitors. Having witnessed the anger of our comrades, he would have no trouble finding volunteers to carry out the killings.

Three days after we reached Kandahar, a force of almost 1,000 mercenaries was seen in the mountains near Khost. They traveled in heavily-armed jeeps and were supported by helicopters. We don't know if they found our mule.

In Kandahar, Osama made contact with our Egyptian commander, Dr al-Zawahiri. Al-Zawahiri was a surgeon and Osama's personal physician. He was also a ruthless man who had a great faith. He inspired us to continue fighting in Allah's name, even when things looked bleak for us. He was active in Egypt and Sudan and was ready to launch an attack on Egypt's tourist industry, the country's largest source of foreign capital, even more than the Americans gave in handouts.

Osama told me the attack would occur within days. When it happened, it took the world by surprise and it was a long time before it was connected to Al-Qaeda. 30 fighters launched coordinated strikes on the tourist site of Luxor, home to many of Egypt's greatest antiquities. The fighters attacked, first killing the soldiers who protected the site, then the tourists. In a day of great bloodshed and success, 67 foreigners died. Egypt's tourist economy has not recovered to this day.

## 11. THE SECOND FATWA

"Those who believe and do right: Joy is for them, and bliss their journey's end."

Surah 13. Ar-Rad, The Thunder. V 29.

Bangladesh, 1998

When India was partitioned in 1947, the British left behind a great mess. India's Hindus and Muslims could not co-exist, so they were cut up into new states. India in the centre, mainly Hindu, Pakistan to the west, mainly Muslim and Bangladesh to the east, again mainly Muslim. In fact, Bangladesh was originally named East Pakistan. But the British couldn't do it right, so thousands were butchered in race riots when the borders on paper did not reflect reality on the ground. What chance could a Muslim family have when surrounded by enemies in a foreign state? The Kashmir question was also left by the British as a festering sore; an Islamic province that should have belonged to Pakistan was left disputed. Many of us fought with the Kashmiri guerrillas, but the Kashmir question would only be resolved as part of a greater resolution in Pakistan.

Bangladesh was originally a province of Pakistan, but gained independence in 1971 in a complicated war which involved India and Pakistan. The popularly elected ruler, Sheikh Mujib, was assassinated by pro-Pakistan military in 1975. The Americans wanted Bangladesh to stay part of Pakistan and were involved in the assassination and support for military dictators that followed. It is in America's interest to keep its rivals fighting amongst themselves. We saw Bangladesh as a fertile recruiting ground for Al-Qaeda and Osama planned to release an important statement with our allies there.

Osama was to travel to Bangladesh in February and I asked to accompany him. He agreed and we flew, with two of Osama's protection unit, on one of the weekly flights from Islamabad in Pakistan to Dhaka, capital of Bangladesh. The flight was very popular as it helped the Muslims on either side of India to remain in touch. Many Bangladeshis worked in Pakistan because, even with Pakistan rarely more than a few paces from chaos, Bangladesh was in a worse condition. Thousands of Bangladeshi families depended on this source of revenue and the country itself depended on foreign aid for 90 percent of its budget. It truly was a mess. Many years of military rule had given way to equally inefficient political parties. Rich resources such as natural gas were unexploited and natural disasters such as cyclones that nowhere else on earth has witnessed struck the people with grim regularity. Bangladesh was ripe for Islamic resurgence and, given its location, provided a stepping stone for Al-Qaeda to the Far East. Indonesia, let us not forget, has more Muslims than any nation on the planet. Stirring Indonesia, the Philippines and, eventually, China was of critical importance to our plans.

Disembarking from the plane on the runway apron, I was overpowered by a strong smell of rot. It was Bangladesh's fertility that I could smell. The country is a water state; a delta at the confluence of two great rivers, the Ganges and the Brahmaputra. When they unite, they become the mighty River Padma, which brings its sweet stink to Dhaka; all the dead things, the human filth, the waste of half a subcontinent. Yet this curse was also the people's blessing. Such powerfully fertile silt as was landed on their shores in vast quantities every day allowed for three rice crops a year and the growth of many bountiful crops. But the land is subject to flooding at any time. Two thirds of the country is flooded during the monsoon and the ever-changing channels that race inexorably to the Bay of Bengal are a daily hazard. A family could struggle for weeks to plant their crops only to see it washed away in minutes by a new channel or a brief flood. And it was fertile ground for us.

We took a taxi to central Dhaka where we would meet with leaders from Al-Jihad and Jamaat ul Ulema e Pakistan, the Islamic groups that we had funded since 1990. We would unite, with our Egyptian groups, in a joint declaration against our enemy. We had instructions to go to a café near the port. There was a man waiting for us and he gave Osama a piece of paper. Osama read it and asked the driver to take us to an address in the centre of the town.

It was a guesthouse which we had paid for after the model of our first in Peshawar. The World Islamic Front was born. The Fatwa was issued on February 20, 1998 and appeared in all the world's media in the following weeks. It read:

Praise be to God, who revealed the Book, controls the clouds, defeats factionalism, and says in His Book: "But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the pagans wherever ye find them, seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war)"; and peace be upon our Prophet, Muhammad Bin-'Abdallah, who said: I have been sent with the sword between my hands to ensure that no one but God is worshipped, God who put my livelihood under the shadow of my spear and who inflicts humiliation and scorn on those who disobey my orders.

The Arabian Peninsula has never, since God made it flat, created its desert, and encircled it with seas, been stormed by any forces like the crusader armies spreading in it like locusts, eating its riches and wiping out its plantations. All this is happening at a time in which nations are attacking Muslims like people fighting over a plate of food. In the light of the grave situation and the lack of support, we and you are obliged to discuss current events, and we should all agree on how to settle the matter.

No one argues today about three facts that are known to everyone; we will list them, in order to remind everyone:

First, for over seven years the United States has been occupying the lands of Islam in the holiest of places, the Arabian Peninsula, plundering its riches, dictating to its rulers, humiliating its people, terrorizing its neighbors, and turning its bases in the Peninsula into a spearhead through which to fight the neighboring Muslim peoples.

If some people have in the past argued about the fact of the occupation, all the people of the Peninsula have now acknowledged it. The best proof of this is the Americans' continuing aggression against the Iraqi people using the Peninsula as a staging post, even though all its rulers are against their territories being used to that end, but they are helpless.

Second, despite the great devastation inflicted on the Iraqi people by the crusader-Zionist alliance, and despite the huge number of those killed, which has exceeded 1 million... despite all this, the Americans are once again trying to repeat the horrific massacres, as though they are not content with the protracted blockade imposed after the ferocious war or the fragmentation and devastation.

So here they come to annihilate what is left of this people and to humiliate their Muslim neighbors. Third, if the Americans' aims behind these wars are religious and economic, the aim is also to serve the Jews' petty state and divert attention from its occupation of Jerusalem and murder of Muslims there. The best proof of this is their eagerness to destroy Iraq, the strongest neighboring Arab state, and their endeavor to fragment all the states of the region such as Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Sudan into paper statelets and through their disunion and weakness to guarantee Israel's survival and the continuation of the brutal crusade occupation of the Peninsula.

All these crimes and sins committed by the Americans are a clear declaration of war on God, his messenger, and Muslims. And ulema have throughout Islamic history unanimously agreed that the jihad is an individual duty if the enemy destroys the Muslim countries. This was revealed by Imam Bin-

Qadamah in "Al- Mughni," Imam al-Kisa'i in "Al-Bada'i," al-Qurtubi in his interpretation, and the shaykh of al-Islam in his books, where he said: "As for the fighting to repulse [an enemy], it is aimed at defending sanctity and religion, and it is a duty as agreed [by the ulema]. Nothing is more sacred than belief except repulsing an enemy who is attacking religion and life." On that basis, and in compliance with God's order, we issue the following fatwa to all Muslims:

The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies, civilians and military, is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it, in order to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque and the holy mosque [Mecca] from their grip, and in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam, defeated and unable to threaten any Muslim. This is in accordance with the words of Almighty God, "and fight the pagans all together as they fight you all together," and "fight them until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in God."

This is in addition to the words of Almighty God: "And why should ye not fight in the cause of God and of those who, being weak, are ill-treated (and oppressed)?; women and children, whose cry is: 'Our Lord, rescue us from this town, whose people are oppressors; and raise for us from thee one who will help!'"

We, with God's help, call on every Muslim who believes in God and wishes to be rewarded to comply with God's order to kill the Americans and plunder their money wherever and whenever they find it. We also call on Muslim ulema, leaders, youths, and soldiers to launch the raid on Satan's U.S. troops and the devil's supporters allying with them, and to displace those who are behind them so that they may learn a lesson.

Almighty God said: "O ye who believe, give your response to God and His Apostle, when He calleth you to that which will give you life. And know that God cometh between a man and his heart, and that it is He to whom ye shall all be gathered."

Almighty God also says: "O ye who believe, what is the matter with you, that when ye are asked to go forth in the cause of God, ye cling so heavily to the earth! Do ye prefer the life of this world to the hereafter? But little is the comfort of this life, as compared with the hereafter. Unless ye go forth, He will punish you with a grievous penalty, and put others in your place; but Him ye would not harm in the least. For God hath power over all things."

Almighty God also says: "So lose no heart, nor fall into despair. For ye must gain mastery if ye are true in faith."

The Fatwa achieved its purpose. The Muslim world was uniting against its common enemy. Those Muslims who didn't believe unity was possible were impressed that Muslims from across Africa and Asia were united in Jihad.

A further message was delivered on August 7, when we attacked the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. The Americans knew to expect a major attack, we had given plenty of warning with our Fatwa, but they did not expect the targets to be their colonial outposts in Africa.

A car bomb exploded at the rear entrance to the American embassy in Nairobi. It caused a five-story building to collapse and killed over 200, including a dozen Americans. Another car bomb exploded at the front of the embassy in Dar-es-Salaam, killing eleven, unfortunately none were American.

Two weeks later, the Americans retaliated. Cruise missiles came in the night to Afghanistan. Three of our training camps near Khost were destroyed. Fortunately, the camps were lightly staffed and we lost just a dozen men and small amounts of equipment. The American missiles also struck a



pharmaceutical plant in Sudan. The enemy feared that we were manufacturing chemical weapons there. In reality, it was a state-owned plant making infant food. This, combined with the poor choice of targets in Afghanistan gave us great confidence; the Americans, with all their satellites and missiles, could not identify our key bases.

## 12. PLOTS WITHIN PLOTS

“And the guilty behold the Fire and know they are about to fall therein, and they find no way of escape thence.”

Surah 18. Al-Kahf, The Cave. V 53.

Afghanistan, 1999

It was a cold spring morning. Crystal clear, blue skies met us as we stood at ease in the main square of our main base in Kandahar. The low sun shone in our eyes and Osama came from the sun, suddenly, like a mystical being, which I believe he had become. In our eyes anyway. The increased pace of our military activity and the attacks from our enemies had not made him any less cool and relaxed. Indeed, as our Jihad gained momentum, Osama seemed to become more at peace with himself. He knew that he was following the path ordained for him by Allah and this lent him an air of invincibility. His stature among our fighters was growing larger by the day. Truly, one must have a fearless leader if one is to engage in combat with the mightiest power on earth.

- It is a good morning, he said in greeting.

- A gift from Allah, we replied.

We prayed for a short while and Osama then asked us to walk to one of the special projects bunkers. The bunker was guarded by four heavily-armed soldiers of Allah in two sand-bagged emplacements. I knew it to be the bunker for nuclear bomb experiments and felt that progress must have been made. I could not believe how much work had indeed been done. Three minutes later, I was shown a functioning nuclear bomb. The enormity of what I and my comrades witnessed did not sink in for many days, but the immediate impact was as if it had actually detonated when I looked at it. Here was the power to destroy Washington or New York completely. In a second. And this power was in our hands.

The leading scientist on the project made a short presentation about the technical functioning of the device and its expected performance. It would have a yield of approximately one megaton, the equivalent destructive power of one million tones of explosives. This was enough power to wipe out any city, if the bomb was positioned well. Then a soldier went through the detonation process - every one of us would have to know how to detonate this bomb - it was that important to us. Only our finest soldiers and deepest agents would be entrusted with this weapon, but every member of Al-Qaeda must be in a position to help the mission if required. Its detection by the enemy before detonation could bring nuclear fire down on Muslim heads without any gain. I had been developing training plans for months.

We stood in awe, filling the stuffy, windowless room that was already crammed with technical equipment, computers and boxes.

- What is required now is a plan of attack, one that will bring success, said Osama.

- What is the target, asked one of the awestruck men.

- Washington DC is my preferred choice, but I am open to persuasion if another target can bring with it greater chances of success. I would like you all to take some time to let this development sink in. We now have the weaponry to take this war to its conclusion. We will meet at the training lab in two hours when we will discuss targeting options for approval by a council of Al-Qaeda leaders.

This would be my opportunity to propose the targeting options that my logistics team had developed over the previous year. At the appointed time, we gathered in one of my classrooms. Osama

stood at the big blackboard at the front of the class. He picked up a stick of chalk and wrote the word “Victory” on the board.

- One device is ready, he began. We will have one per year if our programme isn’t discovered. Within five years, I want the first bomb detonated. The question is where. The second question is how. As to where, I believe that the complete destruction of Washington DC while the politicians and president are at work would precipitate the unravelling of American society more than any other event. The Americans say they cherish their freedoms, but would be like blindfolded mice in a maze without the bureaucrats and uniformed thugs to keep them in line. They think they have democracy, when a few grey men and shadowy banks decide who shall govern, who shall be courted by the state and who shall be consigned to the margins. If the American federal control system was destroyed, America would quickly degenerate into chaos. There would be no money for Israel. There would be no military adventures in Afghanistan or Iraq. There would be no taste for further attack. We would defeat them. Retaliation, in the form of nuclear attack would be expected if we strike America. We postulate that Sudan or Afghanistan would be targeted if this were to pass. Most likely this base would be attacked and destroyed.

- It would be a great pity to lose this base, I said.

- True, but we may need to evacuate long before our nuclear attack if any of our other hammer blow plans are successful in the meantime. It will be as it will be. The cycle of time will pass and we will return.

- Would an attack on another American city not bring the same chaos? asked one of our Pakistani brothers.

- Chaos, certainly, but I don’t know if it would be enough to destabilise the regime except at local level.

- The destruction of Manhattan would wipe out the American stock exchanges and a lot of Jews, proposed a Saudi.

- Yes, but the exchange is virtual, existing on computer networks, Wall Street is simply where most traders come together. It is very symbolic, however. The collapse of the American and global economies are our goals and erasing New York City from the face of the earth would certainly help.

- Then Los Angeles might be a better target, ventured a fighter from Sudan. California is the wealthiest state in America and Los Angeles has more of the rich than anywhere in America. There is also Hollywood and television, the Americans’ greatest escape from their mundane lives. The city is also on a fault, the San Andreas fault. Could we plant our bomb there, start an earthquake and watch the west coast slide into the sea?

- An interesting idea, answered Osama, and one we have considered before.

- The American computer industry is also based in that region, Silicon Valley. Damaging that would affect their defence industry, ventured an Afghan commander.

The discussion moved towards military targets. The Pentagon was in Washington but probably outside the blast radius of a bomb planted near the White House. Other defence targets we discussed included the Boeing aircraft factory in Seattle, CIA headquarters, FBI headquarters and the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. We then went to the model rooms, where I had been overseeing a new project designed to familiarise all our soldiers with the layout of our enemy’s key cities.

In the first room was a model of Washington DC. The model measured about 10 meters square. It was made from sand, bound with a light glue and each key building in the city was represented to scale. It gave the viewer the impression of being a giant, standing on the edge of the city

as you choose your quarry. The effect was completed by enormous colour photographs of the city that filled the walls. Strong lights hung from the ceiling.

- One meter equals one mile, I explained. As you can see, the key targets are marked with name tags, but you will recognise the white House, the Pentagon and so on. Government buildings such as the State Department and the Department of Finance are not as obvious as some others. It is my belief, created by overseeing the research and construction of this model, that the area called the Federal Triangle, between the Capitol Building and the White House would be our ideal target.

- Why do you believe this? Asked Osama.

- The White House and the Capitol are the symbols of America's state. Destroying them would be as effective as killing their inhabitants. Which we would hope to achieve also. But the heart of the state is in the buildings between them. These are the bureaucrats who pump out the orders that control the society. Their loss in one stroke would be an incalculable blow to the Americans. Even the Supreme Court is within range. We could paralyse the legal system; law and order would break down, with nobody capable of leading the country to recovery. The National Archive is also here. At a stroke, we would erase their history. Two large museums are in our ideal target zone; the Natural History Museum and the National Gallery of Art. There was a Hollywood film which used Persian artifacts to transport a nuclear device into America. I wonder if this could be done in reality? A nuclear bomb in this area would also destroy four of Washington's five subway lines.

The discussion carried on, examining public transport, security and surrounding road systems. It was generally agreed that the Federal Triangle would be the best target in Washington. We moved on to New York.

The room was in use by a group of students and their field craft teacher. The teacher excused his group and we were able to begin our discussion. I was particularly proud of the New York model; its skyscrapers rose as straight as arrows from its accurate city canyons. The bridges and tunnels connecting Manhattan with its neighbours were also well represented.

The twin towers of the World Trade Center stood proudly on lower Manhattan, symbolising for us all the twin pillars of capitalism: greed and exploitation. Looking towards midtown, we saw the United Nations building which was truly a prime target. The model also showed us how vulnerable the city was to attacks on its transport infrastructure. Without all its tunnels and bridges functioning, the city would be paralysed. Small bombs could do that job.

It was proposed that the World Trade Center would be our prime target, as a nuclear bomb there would also destroy Wall Street. The United Nations building would be the next best target, particularly if American leaders are present for an important debate.

We then looked at a model of Los Angeles. The sprawl of the city made it difficult to work to the same scale as Washington and New York. Ventura Boulevard was the key feature, cutting across the city from east to west. Burbank, where the movie studios are currently based, Downtown, which is primarily a financial centre, and the vast slum areas were pointed out. Silicon Valley was miles away and the San Andreas fault was too far away from everything for a bomb there to be anything other than a shot in the dark. The distances between targets of note made Los Angeles a poor choice for our first nuclear bomb.

Models were under construction in other rooms in this part of the base. London, Riyadh, San Francisco, Atlanta, Miami, Berlin and Rome. All would have their sand model in Afghanistan. If only the people of these cities knew what lengths we would go to to learn about them. Perhaps they should have had difficulty sleeping?

We had a nuclear bomb. I was overjoyed. It had taken us ten years to get to this stage in the Jihad. It would, no doubt, be a few more years before we could detonate the bomb successfully at its target. But we had it. The bomb would remain stable and functional for ten years. After that time, its plutonium would need to be renewed. Ten years would be plenty of time. The thoughts of nuclear explosions destroying our enemies, as would a blast of fire from Allah, made me dizzy with excitement. Osama invited us back to his office for a final decision.

We gathered around his map table, which was covered with a large map of Washington DC. A paper disc had been cut out, of approximately the blast radius of our bomb. Osama placed the disc on the Federal Triangle.

- This disc represents complete and utter destruction. Massive destruction and loss of life will occur out to three or four times this radius. Transport and electrical networks for the entire city will be wiped out and the projected death toll is 500,000 crusaders.

- Praise be to Allah, I exclaimed, still unable to contain my joy.

- Are we agreed that this is our designated target?

Everyone agreed that success in this mission would deal our enemy a crippling blow, one from which he may be unable to recover. It was agreed that a special project team would be created, with the power to call on any or all Al-Qaeda resources. I was involved in the training and intelligence gathering and dispatched scouts to Washington to bring back as much information as possible on retail and commercial premises in the target area; these would be easier to penetrate than the government buildings and also offered us the best chance of cover.

Within days, I had two men working in different restaurants in the target area. They would blend in, become known to their regular customers and explore. More men were ready to apply for jobs in the museums.

Other members of the team worked on travel options, bomb transportation ideas and time preferences. We would meet again in one month. As the meeting closed, Osama warned us to extreme secrecy.

- The enemy knows that we want nuclear weapons. They know that we will use them in their homeland. However, their knowing what we want to do and knowing what we can do are very different. If they know that we have a weapon, they can make it very difficult for us to achieve target positioning. We must ensure that knowledge of our weapon does not leave this group. The soldiers who will be chosen to

deliver it will not know about the weapon until the mission begins. I must stress that if the Americans knew about our ability to manufacture nuclear weapons here, they would invade in a matter of days. We need more time, please remember this.



### 13. THE MARTYR'S CALLING

“For those who answered Allah’s call is bliss; and for those who answered not His call, if they had all that is in the earth, and therewith the like thereof, they would proffer it as ransom. Such will have a woeful reckoning, and their habitation will be Hell, a dire abode.”

Surah 13. Ar-Rad, The Thunder. V 18.

Afghanistan, 2000

During 2000, our planning, training and recruiting increased apace. I had over 1,500 men through my training camps across Afghanistan that year. Our camps in Sudan and Yemen added to this army, giving us another thousand trained fighters, ready to become martyrs for Allah and our great struggle against the Crusades and the Jews.

We endured incredible hardships with great ease. The Qur’an kept our faith alive, nay burning. It told us many times over that all the riches of the earth are as nothing when compared to Allah’s bounty. This life is but an illusion. We are here to make a simple choice; to serve Allah or not to serve Allah. We had each chosen to serve Allah and pain or even death were but points on our journey to Allah and the joyous bounty he lavishes on all his servants. Martyrdom, dying for Allah and Jihad, held great attraction to many of our poor recruits as it guaranteed admission to heaven for their families also. None of us feared death.

The Americans were actively trying to locate our key bases. Satellites were focused on the Afghan plains and mountains and we used our ingenuity to conceal our activities. Weapons and explosives training would be conducted on ranges away from the main bases in case that explosions could be detected from above. The Americans also used unguided spy planes, flown from Pakistan. One was shot down in the summer and was taken to Khost. At around the same time, two spies were intercepted coming over the mountains from Pakistan. A Pakistani tribal chief notified us that they were passing through his area. Little did they know it, but the spies were dead men before they even set foot in Afghanistan. They were brought to our base near Khost and I traveled from Kandahar to interrogate them and to examine the enemy spy plane.

The journey to Khost was long and difficult, but at least I traveled by jeep. There were two jeeps in our convoy. I was accompanied by two of my assistants, who would assist in interrogating the spies. I also had an electronics warfare technician, who would assess the enemy aircraft and assess our strategy for electronic countermeasures against it. We had three fighters, for protection, though each of us was fully-armed. All had orders to watch the skies at all times.

After a day on the road, we stopped at a village for rest. We were in Taliban-controlled territory and felt safe as we cleaned, prayed and ate. After dinner, my assistants came to me and asked for an opportunity to talk. We took a walk around the village, always watching the skies.

They told me that they felt uneasy about interrogating the spies who awaited us in Khost. I explained that our war was as much about information as it was about guns and bombs.

- If the enemy has no information on us, he can do nothing. He, on the other hand, can never hide from us. The biggest threat to Osama, to you and to all our brothers is the spy who betrays us to our enemy for American dollars. The spy will likely be a fellow Muslim. This must not prevent you from using all means to get the truth. A traitor Muslim deserves no kindness from us. Allah will see he is rewarded on Judgment Day. We must regard the traitor as a ticking bomb. We must discover what he knows about us, who his handlers are, what our enemy’s tactics are and his last communication with his

handlers. All these things are vital for us to know. They may save the lives of good men.

- But is it still acceptable to use torture? Asked one of the young men.

- It is not alone acceptable, it is essential, I replied angrily. I wondered if this man had the strength to do his job properly.

- Pardon my foolishness, he replied in embarrassment.

- Torture is well-practiced by our enemies, I continued. They think nothing of bleeding a man to death if they think they will find our leader. To the American military, torture has always been a tool that is used whenever necessary. Their stooges in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia use torture as you and I would use the Qur'an. The difference between us and the Americans is that they claim to be better than us. They are such evil hypocrites.

Our intelligence reports had contained many instances of our men being tortured most painfully in recent years. The Saudis were the worst, but the CIA had interrogated our men as well. They were brutes and every report I read hardened my heart against spies and traitors.

Next day, I traveled with our electronics technician, the man who could barely contain himself with the anticipation of examining a Predator. The more he told me about it, the more I feared it. A team of 55 technicians operated the system, which included four aircraft per unit, a ground control station and a satellite base station. The aircraft was controlled directly from the base station when within its line of sight. When beyond it, the satellite link took over. A Predator has a range of 650 kilometers, a ceiling of over seven kilometers and a cruise speed of over 200 kilometers per hour. It has a nose camera for use by the remote pilot, a variable aperture TV camera, a variable aperture infra red camera for night surveillance and a synthetic aperture radar for looking through smoke and dust. Besides its potential ability to find our bases, we most feared the development of a multispectral targeting system, which was undergoing tests. The Predator would eventually carry two Hellfire AGM 114 air to ground missiles, which could be launched and guided to their target by the pilot 650 kilometers away from the theatre of operations. It was vital that we found a defence against it.

We reached Khost two days later. We stayed at our base outside the town, in the foothills of the mountains leading to the Pakistani border. The base was spread over two acres and consisted of eight large huts, guard towers, a munitions depot, a control office with scrambled communications facilities and a fence and minefield around the perimeter. Recruits were busy training on assault courses at the far end of the camp as we entered. Training activities at this base were light, as it had more strategic importance for us, being so near the Pakistani border.

We washed, prayed and ate. Then I asked the camp commander to take my men to begin interrogating the spies. I was eager to examine the enemy aircraft and went straight to the hangar where it was kept. My technician was excited at the prospect of examining the aircraft and we were to be accompanied by a camp technician. The guards let us through the entrance and we found the craft, certainly it was much bigger than I had expected.

The Predator was mostly intact, as its chute had deployed when the engine was shot. Some wing parts had broken on impact with the ground and these were on the table beside the main fuselage. It was more than eight meters long, with a wingspan of 15 meters and looked like a large model aircraft. Its propeller was at the rear and its large nose contained the cameras and radar. Painted in military camouflage, it looked a formidable craft.

My technician got to work immediately. He opened his toolkit and swept the Predator for signals.

- It is quiet, he said.

- Good, but check it regularly as it may have a delayed reaction transponder for the enemy to follow, I ordered.

- Can I begin to disassemble it? Asked the technician.

- Yes, and remove the wings for transportation, I replied, but keep notes of each step you take. We will take it back to Kandahar as soon as our business here is done. Are you sure it contains no bomb?

- I cannot be sure yet, but my sniffer has picked up no traces of explosives.

He removed the side panels of the craft, assisted by the camp technician. They spent much time examining the guidance and control systems of the craft, as jamming these systems would be our best defence against the Predator, particularly at night. It used two different types of data link to communicate with the base station and satellite. Interrupting the data flow was our best hope. I was greatly concerned about this beast and feared a time when the skies over Afghanistan would be crowded with them. I left the technicians to their work and went to see the spies.

The base commander waited outside the hut where I had been and brought me to a heavily-defended hut across the square.

- The men were captured coming over the mountains, using a trail which is frequented by our fighters, he said.

- That is not good. Who else uses the trail? I asked.

- Some smugglers and bandits, but we were not aware of enemy activity until now.

- You must order your men to avoid that trail for now and send out an Email with this development, I ordered. So what of the men?

- They are both Pakistani and in separate cells. They claim to come from Quetta. One has admitted being a spy, paid by the Pakistanis to find out about our bases and leaders. The older one maintains his cover story, that they are bandits looking to rob an opium train. They were both armed with AKs and carried satellite phones.

- So they meant to call in an attack if they found us? I wondered.

- That is my belief, answered the commander.

- Could they be Pakistani intelligence?

- Possibly the older one. The other broke too easily.

- Let's start with the younger one.

We entered the hut and walked along a dark corridor until we came to a door with an armed guard outside. We entered the room to find the spy tied to a chair, blood streaming from his nose and ears. He was crying for mercy. My assistant was using scissors to cut the webs at the base of the spy's ears. He had a box of salt on his table, as well as pliers, tweezers, needles and a box of matches.

Continue your interrogation, I commanded.

- Who paid you to come to Afghanistan, you traitor?

- I don't know, he replied. My companion dealt with that. I came just for the money.

- Does he work for Pakistani intelligence?

- I don't know, he told me nothing. I just did as I was told.

Salt was rubbed in his wounds, but he stuck to his story. He was either telling the truth or very well trained. We went to see the other spy.

His head was covered with a cloth bag, while my assistant walked around him, beating his head and face every few seconds with a sock full of sand. The spy flinched when hit, never knowing where the next blow would come from.

- Remove the bag, I ordered.

The spy's face was badly bruised and bleeding, but he stuck to his story. He pleaded with me for his life and I ordered the torture to become more decisive. I left the room with the commander. Screams of pain echoed after us.

- I would like to contact someone in Pakistani intelligence, said and we walked towards the communications office.

Pakistani intelligence was occasionally of use to Al-Qaeda. We were all Sunni brothers, after all. Pakistan had no great love of America and, when all is said and done, the Pakistani economy relies greatly on the trade in opium and hashish. Pakistan had sought to exert its influence over Afghanistan for many years and its support of the Taliban gave it greater leverage in the area than ever before. There were high-ranking officers in the Pakistani military and intelligence services who were members of Al-Qaeda, but there were others in the pay of the Americans who would prefer to see us destroyed.

I used a scrambled telephone line to call a comrade who worked in the middle ranks of the Peshawar office of Pakistani intelligence. I asked him if his organization was involved in the dispatch of two spies to Khost in recent days. He said he would check and I should call him back in an hour.

When I called back, he told me that both men were intelligence agents from a roaming unit and they had been sent to find the downed Predator spy plane and destroy it. Neither of the men had ties to, or sympathies toward, Al-Qaeda, so he suggested the best course of action would be to kill them.

I told the base commander what I had learned and he found the story credible, as did I.

- Can you deal with them? I asked.

- They will be feeding the vultures by sundown, he replied.

- Good. We will take the Predator back to Kandahar, in case a force is sent to find the spies.

You will increase security and patrols?

- Of course. When will you leave us?

- Immediately.

We arranged for a flatbed truck and driver to accompany us back to Kandahar with the spy plane. My young torturers were not happy at having to leave their work unfinished, but the technician was amazed at the amount of technology packed into the Predator and looked forward to spending many weeks discovering its secrets.

Back in Kandahar, the old routine continued. I developed new training modules to cover our three most important routine modes of attack. The vehicle bomb, the assassination and the ambush were attacks that could be carried out by any Al-Qaeda fighter and their importance could not be understated. The new training modules were designed to pack all the required knowledge into self-contained bundles for wider dissemination to non-members, refresher courses and pre-attack preparation.

The vehicle bomb was our most important means of attack. It had been used effectively in America, Saudi Arabia, Tanzania, Kenya, Chechnya, Algeria, Bosnia and every other theatre of war. Its usefulness would become more important in the following years. The training consisted of identifying the target, identifying the most suitable vehicle for attack, building the bomb and executing the attack. When the module was ready, I took classes myself from among the recruits in camp at the time. While they had covered my material previously, in basic training, the fact that it was now condensed into a blueprint for fast action appealed to them. One of my classes included three Yemenis, who would be the nucleus of a new cell once they returned home. Based in the south of Yemen, near Aden, they would become martyrs almost as soon as they left Afghanistan.

On October 12, 2000, they readied their vehicle for attack. It was a small, fast speedboat, laden with the explosives that I taught them how to make. They entered Aden harbour, where their target awaited them. The USS Cole, one of America's most modern and sophisticated battleships lay at anchor, unaware that vehicle bombs don't always have wheels. Two of those brave Yemenis were in the attack vehicle and they successfully struck the enemy ship and detonated their bomb. 13 Americans died, many more were injured and the ship suffered major damage. I wept with pride when I heard news of the attack. It was a mighty blow, which showed that the most powerful military force on earth has little defence against intelligent, well-motivated fighters. There was much celebration in camp that night and there was great enthusiasm shown for my classes in the following weeks.

2001 would further show the power and flexibility of the vehicle bomb to all the world. Instead of cars or boats, we would use commercial aircraft and instead of explosives, we would use jet fuel.

2000 ended on a sour note, with Bush the Younger stealing the American Presidential election. It amazed us how, with family connivance, he could rob the most powerful position in the world, but it did not surprise us. Because of his background and connections, we expected a greater military onslaught against us, but it didn't matter to us who was in the White House. Enemy was enemy. Different shades and hues of enemy didn't count. Bush the Elder had forced Al-Qaeda to confront western imperialism. He decided that Saddam Hussein's survival after Gulf War One would create a greater demand for US munitions in the Gulf states. That shortsighted business decision was one of history's greatest miscalculations. Bush the Younger would pay for the father's mistakes. He would soon have his baptism of fire.



#### 14. THE DAY OF VENGEANCE

“And when We exacted a covenant from the prophets, and from thee, O Muhammad, and from Noah and Abraham and Moses and Jesus son of Mary. We took from them a solemn covenant;  
“That He may ask the loyal of their loyalty. And He hath prepared a painful doom for the unfaithful.  
“O ye who believe! Remember Allah’s favour unto you when there came against you hosts, and We sent against them a great wind and hosts ye could not see. And Allah is ever Seer of what ye do.”  
Surah 33. Al-Ahzab, The Clans. V 7-9.

Afghanistan, 2001

The year began quietly, with training continuing daily. An average of 100 fighters graduated from our Afghan bases each month. They were dispersed to our battlefields around the world or put into sleeping cells in traitor Muslim countries or in the lands of our crusader enemies. A major development was the report on the Predator spy plane. The technician who had traveled with me to Khost spent months examining the aircraft with a team of electronics and communications experts. Their submission, pending further research, was that it would be possible to jam the plane’s communications system, but only when in contact with its base station. The satellite data link was very highly coded. With some investment in modern Russian or Chinese jamming equipment and complex modifications, we could have a reliable jammer at each of our key bases within the year. The deployment strategy would be to force the Predator to crash before the satellite data link took over. This would at least give us some defence and the technicians were ordered to keep working on the satellite data link.

The report also advised that the Predator needs a substantial runway from which to operate, of at least 1,500 meters. This knowledge, combined with the known range of the craft, gave us a target area to find the launch site. Our spies in western Pakistan were given the task of finding the base as a high priority. The Predator’s Achilles heel was that it could not be satellite-controlled during take-off and landing. That could be our opportunity for attack with our jammer.

We also made substantial progress with chemical and biological weapons. Our base near Jalalabad had been our main research facility since 1997 and the work there had blossomed into deployable weapons. Our scientists had focused their efforts on anthrax, a bacterial organism with deadly infectiousness and ricin, the poison from the fruits of the castor-oil plant. Anthrax spores had been sourced secretly from Iraq after the First Gulf War and we were now capable of growing the organisms ourselves. Several doses of anthrax were successfully dispatched to two American cells and one in Britain at this time, while production continued. A large plantation of castor-oil plants gave our scientists sufficient raw material to make large quantities of ricin. They had also developed a training module and manual detailing the production of ricin with readily available raw materials and equipment. This news delighted me and the use of these biological weapons became an inherent part of our basic training. Biological weapons would yet allow us to deliver a hammer blow against our enemies.

In the early summer of 2001, Osama called a meeting of the Al-Qaeda commanders in Afghanistan. 20 men gathered in a cave south of Kandahar. All were ordered to switch off all phones, computers and electronic equipment before leaving for the meeting place.

I drove to the cave in a jeep with two comrades. Osama had left for the cave the previous day, wanting time to himself. The cave was guarded by 12 fighters, who asked us to wait in a shaded area outside until all had arrived safely. An open tent had been erected and inside were bottles of water and

fruit. The heat of the day made this a welcome oasis and I sat with my comrades in great expectation of what was about to occur.

After an hour, Osama emerged from the cave. His eyes and smile showed that he had been in rapturous prayer to Allah. He came to us and ate and drank ravenously; clearly he hadn't had any food or drink in 24 hours. After a time, we were all present and Osama had replenished his body. He invited us to pray, which we did, then we entered the cave.

The cave was one of our many secret bases in the mountains of Afghanistan. After entering through a tight crack in the rocks, the cave opened out into a natural, spacious chamber. Boxes of weapons, ammunition, food and water could be seen in the dim light at the rear of the cave. As my eyes grew accustomed to the low light, I noticed a tunnel had been dug into the rock directly opposite the entrance. That would be the escape tunnel.

- I have invited you here today because of the utmost secrecy which must surround what I am about to disclose. As you know, the World Trade Center in New York has long been one of my favored targets. A plan is in place which may succeed in bringing the towers to the ground. This plan is so brave and intelligent, it will also allow us to attack the White House and the Pentagon in Washington. All may be destroyed.

Exclamations of joy filled the room. I knew what Osama was talking about, but most of the commanders did not. Only those who need to know of our operations should have knowledge; this is how we will outlive our enemies. Osama held up his hands in a gesture which brought immediate silence.

- I appreciate you will have many questions, so I will outline our planned attack. Then, more importantly, I want to finalise our evacuation plan before the American retaliation which will surely come with great swiftness and ferocity.

He motioned to us to sit on the cushions which had been placed along both walls, the length of the cavern. We sat, cross-legged and listened intently.

- The Great Day of Vengeance is almost upon us, he began. A secret attack will occur this year and it may destroy our enemy's will to fight. 12 cells have been working toward the same goal. 29 of the fighters are in America and they will launch the attack. On a specified date, four teams of soldiers will take separate internal flights. Shortly after take-off, each team will take control of the aircraft, using knives and sharp weapons on the air crews. The teams will include fighters who have had training, in America and elsewhere, and know how to fly passenger jets. The aircraft will change course to our four targets. Each will impact on its target over the course of a morning. Hell will unfold before our enemies' eyes, live on their televisions.

We praised the plan like a gaggle of excited schoolboys. I had worked on it for three years, recruiting many of the key fighters and developing pilot training courses in Sudan. Osama continued his briefing.

- The targets for the attack are as follows, in order: One, North Tower of the World Trade Center, New York City; Two, South Tower of the World Trade Center, New York City; Three, the Pentagon, Washington DC; Four, the White House, Washington DC. It is unlikely that we will be successful in destroying all the targets. The Pentagon, for example, is expected to have air defence missiles, we cannot know for sure. The White House also is likely to have such defence. I have no doubt that if the President is in his executive office, the defenders would shoot down a jet full of their own; by then, the other attacks will have occurred and they will suspect us immediately. However the plan has a good chance of success. The Americans have not suspected anything yet; the cells we have

activated for this mission are some of our very best.

Everybody present in the cavern agreed that this was indeed a plan worthy of Allah. We would bring the Jihad to our enemy on Allah's terms. The Almighty Destruction would soon smite our enemy. And this was just the beginning.

On September 9, we made a pre-emptive strike against the warlord Massoud, who we expected to become a key ally in the American counter-attack against us. Two fighters, in the guise of television journalists met with Massoud in his main base to conduct an interview to which he agreed some weeks previously. The camera was a bomb and our men bravely gave their lives to mortally injure Massoud.

Two days later, Massoud died, just as the first hijacked plane slammed into the World Trade Center. I was in Osama's study all day on September 11, along with Osama himself and five of our commanders. Osama had invited Mullah Omar to the study also. Mullah Omar was full of praise for our killing of Massoud and we could only tell him that there would soon be much better news. There was no news from our American cells, as we sat on ornate cushions and watched the international news channels on three televisions. Evening was falling outside as the news broadcasts began to be interrupted by footage of the Twin Towers, one of which was burning furiously. The commentators were announcing excitedly that an aircraft had accidentally crashed into the tower. It was thought to have been a small plane, but the destruction betrayed that falsehood. Osama announced to Mullah Omar that this was an attack in progress. The TV cameras stayed trained on the Twin Towers. All the networks now carried the live feed of the shocking images. We watched, in great anticipation of what would happen next. Minutes later, before our very eyes and the eyes of half the world, we saw the second jet hit its target. We exclaimed thanks to Allah and there was much jubilation in the room. Osama nodded to me to let the word be spread. I ran to the camp commander's office and told him that we had struck the World Trade Center in New York. I ordered him to pass the word around the base and to our fighters in the rest of Afghanistan that they should watch their televisions or listen to the radio reports with great pride in the glory of our martyred comrades.

It was beginning to sink in to the American newsmen that they were under attack. As the minutes passed slowly, news came through that the attack on the Pentagon was also a success. The TV screens were split between the burning towers of capitalism and the burning military headquarters of the world's mightiest army. Osama was quiet and thoughtful. I knew that he was hoping for full success and the destruction of the White House. The televisions told us that Bush the Younger was in Florida and so would not die, but the symbol of the White House was almost as important to us as the destruction of the man himself.

News came through that our fourth plane had hit the ground in Pennsylvania and we were disappointed. Our disappointment was much assuaged by the falling of the Twin Towers and the panic that was clearly gripping the entire land of our enemy. The President had gone to ground in the middle of nowhere, fearing that we would attack his plane and, for a few hours, America was a land under siege. We had accomplished our greatest victory yet in our Jihad. We stayed up all night, watching the reports and reliving the great attack over and over. There was sense of great jubilation in the camp the next morning, as we packed up our weapons and equipment and dispersed into the mountains.

Following the great attack, Osama recorded a speech for transmission, in October 2001:

Let the whole world know that we shall never accept that the tragedy of Andalusia would be repeated in Palestine. We cannot accept that Palestine will become Jewish.

And with regard to you, Muslims, this is the day of question. This is a new attack against you,

all against the Muslims and Medina. So be like the followers of the prophet, peace be upon him, and all countrymen, lovers of God and the prophet within, and a new battle, great battle, similar to the great battles of Islam, like the conqueror of Jerusalem. So, hurry up to the dignity of life and the eternity of death.

Thanks to God, he who God guides will never lose. And I believe that there's only one God. And I declare I believe there's no prophet but Mohammed.

This is America, God has sent one of the attacks by God and has attacked one of its best buildings. And this is America filled with fear from the north, south, east and west, thank God.

And what America is facing today is something very little of what we have tasted for decades. Our nation, since nearly 80 years is tasting this humility. Sons are killed, and nobody answers the call. And when God has guided a bunch of Muslims to be at the forefront and destroyed America, a big destruction, I wish God would lift their position.

And when those people have defended and retaliated to what their brothers and sisters have suffered in Palestine and Lebanon, the whole world has been shouting.

And there are civilians, innocent children being killed every day in Iraq without any guilt, and we never hear anybody. We never hear any condemnation from the clergymen of the government.

And every day we see the Israeli tanks going to Janin, Ramallah, Beit Jalla and other lands of Islam. And, no, we never hear anybody objecting to that.

So when the swords came after eight years to America, then the whole world has been crying for those criminals who attacked. This is the least which could be said about them. They are people. They supported the murder against the victim, so God has given them back what they deserve.

I say the matter is very clear, so every Muslim after this, and after the officials in America, starting with the head of the infidels, Bush. And they came out with their men and equipment and they even encouraged even countries claiming to be Muslims against us. So, we run with our religion. They came out to fight Islam with the name of fighting terrorism.

In Japan, hundreds of thousands of people got killed. This is not a war crime. Or in Iraq, what of our brothers who are being killed in Iraq. This is not a crime. And those, when they were attacked in my Nairobi, and Dar Es Salaam, Afghanistan, and Sudan were attacked.

I say these events have split the whole world into two camps: the camp of belief and the disbelief. So every Muslim shall take arms, shall support his religion.

And now with the winds of change has blown up now, change has come to the Arabian Peninsula.

And to America, I say to it and to its people this: I swear by God the Great, America will never dream nor those who live in America will never taste security and safety unless we feel security and safety in our land and in Palestine.

The Americans came to Afghanistan in a fierce onslaught of satellite-guided bombs, cruise missiles and helicopter gunships. I sheltered in a mountain base towards Tora-Bora. I had been there since the twelfth of September, immediately after the Day of Vengeance. By early December, the enemy was coming close. One bright morning, I saw that some of our rearguard fighters had reached the foothills a few miles below my position. Though they were sheltered by rocks, the American ground attack jets and Apaches had pinned them down. Predator spy planes buzzed like a swarm of insects all around us. Within minutes, a B52 bomber approached the scene. I could see its contrails from my base, with the crackle of gunfire down below echoing through the valleys. I never saw it drop its bombs.

Suddenly the sky lit up with intense flashes and, a few seconds later, the ground beneath my feet shook as a terrible thunder reached my ears. I guess that 24 2,000 pound bombs landed right on my comrades. Without a chance to dig holes, they were pulverized. Over 100 men died at a stroke. Our enemy was deeply angry with us. He had been mortally wounded. He would stop at nothing to wipe Al-Qaeda from the face of the earth. I packed immediately and traveled on to Tora-Bora.

After two days, I reached the narrow ledge on the approach to the cave. I remembered my journey here many years before. Now the time had come for Tora-Bora to live up to our expectations. On the approach, I was stopped by three soldiers, who warned me, with AKs raised, to halt. They approached and recognized me. They welcomed me and advised that I should hurry; B52s had been spotted approaching over Pakistan.

The Americans would have been unable to attack us so fiercely if not for the support from that Pakistani snake, Musharraf. He would pay dearly for supporting our enemy. We understood that the Americans had threatened a nuclear strike on his nuclear missile sites if he did not support their 'War on Terrorism' completely. He would also make millions of dollars himself out of the deal. The Pakistanis had set up checkpoints at almost every entry point from Afghanistan. Of course, we had many more escape routes than they knew about, but we were, effectively, surrounded by Americans and traitor Muslims.

As I approached the main cave entrance, the attack began. A string of heavy bombs exploded on the mountain above my head. I dove into a trench, one of the many arrayed before the entrance. Fragments of rock and bomb metal flew down and killed some men who had been taken by surprise.

We had no weapon against B52s, they were too high for our anti-aircraft missiles, but we could engage enemy aircraft with lower ceilings. I made it into the cave and watched as the enemy attack unfolded. For three days, they bombed us. Missiles flew in and pounded the area around the cave entrance. Fighters with Stinger missiles managed to down three enemy aircraft, including one jet bomber. The trenches served us well and any enemy troops who entered the valley were cut down.

Osama, who was inside the cave commanding the operation, decided that it was time for us to leave. We had lost only a few dozen men, but the enemy onslaught was becoming unbearable. Our scouts had spotted Pakistani troop movements behind us and we had to go now before we were trapped. He gave his orders to his senior commanders; they were to hold the enemy for as long as possible, then melt away after us.

We gathered our supplies of food, water and ammunition and set off through the cave at sunset. There was a new moon awaiting us in Pakistan. As we made our way down from the mountains, the sounds of gunfire and bombs reverberating through the canyons behind us, a massive explosion was heard. The ground shook beneath our feet as I had never before experienced and we were lucky not to have been killed by falling rocks which rained down on our trail.

- Have they used a nuclear bomb, I asked?

- I doubt it, answered Osama. We had heard of a new bomb they developed, the Daisycutter. It is the largest non-nuclear bomb in their arsenal. I fear they have used it on our comrades.

It later emerged that it had been dropped on Tora-Bora, but the steep mountainsides had absorbed much of the blast, funneling it back up into the sky.

We saw no Pakistani soldiers as we made our way down into the western plains. Then we separated, to travel on alone. It would be almost a year before I saw Osama again. He headed south towards Quetta, while I went north to Peshawar.





## 15. REWARD FROM GOD

"And for the poor fugitives who have been driven out from their homes and their belongings, who seek bounty from Allah and help Allah and His Messenger. They are the loyal."

Surah 59. Al-Hashr, Exile. V 8.

Pakistan, 2002

September 11 continued to shake the world as I made my way to Peshawar. Our guest house was under surveillance by the Pakistanis, so I stayed with a Mujahideen family on the outskirts of town. The Americans had swept all before them when they came to Afghanistan for revenge. While many Taliban units stood and faced their enemy, Taliban leaders had prepared for the invasion the same way as Al-Qaeda; they were in hiding even before September 11.

Our dispersal policy had worked well. My orders were similar to many of my Afghan-based comrades. Lay low in the wild North West Frontier area, check my email regularly and pass on any intelligence regarding enemy activity.

My cover story was that I was the uncle of the man with whose family I stayed. I had identification papers that would prove this. I had lived in Afghanistan as a poor opium farmer and moved to Pakistan to escape the war. My guns were buried outside the house and I had a small, comfortable room in which I listened to radio broadcasts from around the globe, studied the Qur'an and recovered my health.

Our enemy had been struck a potentially mortal blow on September 11. He now realized the precarious position he was in. The cornered animal is the most dangerous. He lashed out at us with all the weapons at his disposal, everything short of nuclear bombs. We could take it. 90 percent of his bombs hit nothing but rock. We had lost many good men and the Taliban were swept from power, but our preparations and dispersal plans had served us well. Informers were our greatest threat; the American guns and bombs can destroy any enemy on an open battlefield, that we will not dispute, but how do you kill your enemy when he hides in a crowded city? Even one of your own cities? The CIA and other James Bonds were shown to be incapable of preventing September 11. Without intelligence, they have nothing. My fear is for a curious child to be bribed by a policeman for news on any new visitors. Then I would be questioned. But children here know not to talk. As do their parents. This society has thrived for hundreds of years on secrecy. Nobody talks to any stranger about the business of drugs, arms or Jihad, so we are virtually impossible to penetrate. My cover should protect me, as it is credible, but I do not know if the enemy has a profile of me. Osama is the most wanted man on earth. He chose this path, to become a guiding light for our soldiers, but I had not courted publicity, preferring to work quietly.

American intelligence agencies had just a handful of traitor Muslims on September 11. Some say that they had information on our attack before it occurred, which I do not believe, but hadn't translated it yet. Now they scrambled for more traitors to join their ranks. After all, how can an American infiltrate Al-Qaeda? In simple terms, he cannot. Picture the typical member of the US military. He is white, Christian and used to comfort. How can he learn Arabic, memorise the Qur'an, change his skin and grow happy to live in the wild deserts that we call home? He cannot. Their only hope is in recruiting spies from among our own ranks or traitor Muslims who live beside us. We must also prepare for traitor Muslims from other places being sent here to seek us out.

These thoughts preoccupied me as I passed several months at Peshawar. During this period,

Peshawar truly became my adopted home. There was a dynamism missing in Saudi Arabia and this region of self-governing tribes, most of whom engaged in illegal trade, showed me the truth about the hated self-serving traitor regimes in Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan and, indeed, in greater Pakistan. We Muslims could rule ourselves, needing only the Holy Qur'an for guidance.

The Pakistani government sent many troops to the area. They were attempting to seal off the border with Afghanistan, but it was too little, too late. Army patrols passed my house only rarely, but their presence increased greatly in Peshawar city and my visits there became less frequent.

I had to travel to the city every month to check my Email, as we had orders to only use electronic communications in urban areas. Late one bright May morning, I walked the three miles into Peshawar to check for new orders and news on enemy activity. I was stopped by an army checkpoint at the entrance gate. They checked my papers and searched me, but I carried little except for an excellent forged I.D. The soldiers seemed tense and a newspaper boy was shouting something about an attack, so I bought a paper. It carried news of an attack by our men, who became martyrs when they destroyed a bus full of foreigners aiding the Pakistani military. In essence, they collaborated with our enemy. I smiled to myself as I read the garbled reports.

I was hungry from my walk, so I stopped at a café and had some bananas and tea while I continued reading. The attack had taken place in Karachi, when 11 French naval engineers were blown up on their coach outside a tourist hotel. This followed a raid the month before, when 16 Germans were blown up at a synagogue in Tunisia. That was an excellent strike on the tourist economy of another traitor regime. The rate of attacks was picking up and I eagerly went to check my Email and see if new orders awaited me.

My preferred internet café was in a small room at the back of a coffee bar. Two computer terminals were tucked in the corner behind dark hanging curtains. The room was filled with smoke and the smell of fresh coffee. A computer science graduate, trained in America, worked at keeping the computers and the internet connection functioning. His father owned the café and I knew to trust him as his father had been a Mujahideen fighter in Afghanistan.

- Good morning, I smiled. Do you have a computer for me?

- Indeed, he replied, breezily. 100 percent secure connection to the outside world. I've just finished running diagnostic checks and there is nobody keeping tabs on these computers, that is my belief.

- Excellent. May I?

He gestured to the computers and I took the one with the screen which could only be viewed by the user. While the boy busied himself repairing a computer whose guts were strewn over a small table, I went straight to my Email server and logged into one of my primary Al-Qaeda accounts. Three new messages awaited.

I glanced around the room and peered through the curtains into the main bar. I was the only customer inside the building, with a few men sitting outside at tables. If anyone entered the bar, I would see them as the entrance door was in my line of view.

The first message was dated that day, May 8, 2002. It was a highly coded call to arms for general release. It ordered cells to begin making contact with other cells to create bigger offensive groups. It said that cell meetings would be facilitated by higher ranks. It reiterated the high threat level from enemy activities and warned that major attacks on soft targets and crusader outposts would follow. Using quotes from the Qur'an, fighting rhetoric and references to great Muslim victories from the past, all tied up in codes, it was virtually impenetrable to an outsider but as clear as day to me. I was back in

action. My heart began to beat rapidly.

The second message was personal, from Osama, writing under a codename. A couple of days old, it told me of his holiday in southern Pakistan, how he was well-rested and eager to get back to work. He mentioned Karachi as a possible destination on his travels and spoke of the forthcoming Islamic festival to be held there. This was my instruction to meet with Osama in Karachi within weeks. My heart beat even louder.

The third message was from one of our internal security officers, again for general release. It spoke of new structures in the US military-intelligence system. The enemy had formed attack groups, consisting of CIA, Rangers and helicopters, backed up by cruise missiles and air strikes. The groups worked independently and were tasked with hunting and destroying our leaders and cells. They were active in Afghanistan and Yemen and could be expected in Pakistan at any time. The communication also included information on the enemy use of pilotless aircraft like the one we had recovered in Afghanistan. Our spies obtained details of the Americans' tests of the drones to fire missiles at ground targets. Such a system, when linked with satellite observation and guidance, as were their latest JDAM bombs, would be very dangerous to us. Theoretically, no training camp would be immune from sudden attack.

I deleted all Emails, logged out of my Email server and looked at some harmless websites, including Afghanistani news and Al-Jazeera Arabic news. Few of the stories interested me, but coverage of the earlier bomb in Karachi was building. The attack was being labeled an audacious attack on a heavily-defended military target. 15 were dead.

So as not to arouse any suspicions, I stayed for a coffee in the outside bar, after paying the owner's son a few rupees for the computer access. My heart still raced from the messages. I had to get to Karachi by June 1, a little over three weeks away. I would make my way to one of our safe houses and Osama would find me.

It would be a long journey, Peshawar is to the far north of Pakistan, while Karachi is on its coast, on the Arabian Sea. There would be patrols and checkpoints. I would have to invent a cover story for my poor, Afghani opium farmer self to want to travel south to Karachi. I set out for home and began to formulate my plans.

My adopted family was sad to hear my news. While I held out the possibility of returning to stay with them after my trip to Karachi, they knew that I would never be back. I knew this too.

We had a quiet dinner and I began to pack my things. I had little or nothing of my own, except my guns, which I decided to bring. I dug them up in the early morning, loaded a mule with provisions and blankets and set off in the direction of the rising sun. I left behind a gift of 200 US dollars for my board and the mule. I left it on the broken kitchen table, weighed down with a stone bowl.

I traveled towards Islamabad before turning south when I met the River Indus. The highway followed the river's course to the sea and it was, as always, busy with traffic. I joined the quiet lane, a dirt track between the highway and the river bank which was used mainly by old men on mules, children on bikes and homeless beggars who pitched their begging chants at busy junctions or near food vendors.

Within a few days, I had made good progress. The journey was peaceful, with little military activity. Police stood at checkpoints along the highway, but they were mindful of bandits and thieves, not looking for me and my kind. As I traveled the length of Pakistan, the mighty mountains of the Sulaiman were a constant to my right, while to my left, the plains stretched into the Thar Desert and India. I left the Indus at Hyderabad and rested there for a day to clean the dust from me before the

final stretch to the sea.

I reached Karachi a few days before the religious festival would begin. I passed safely through a checkpoint on the outskirts of the city. My cover story was simply that I was a pilgrim, on my way to a Sunni Islamic celebration. With hundreds more pilgrims before and behind me and thousands more already in the city, I blended well.

I hadn't been in the city before, but had a good idea of my bearings. Karachi is the biggest city in Pakistan and I hadn't been among so many people in a year. It was too fast a pace for me, I must admit. I felt as though all seven million of Karachi's souls looked at me as I led my mule. I followed one of the main arterial roads towards Mereweather Tower and made my way towards the old port area, which was a rickety warren of shacks, sweaty textile factories and warehouses. Near the sea, beside two large cranes, was a safe house. It operated as a sailors' rest house and, when I got there, one of my fellow officers was enjoying tea in the dining room. I ignored him and he ignored me. I asked the innkeeper about selling my mule. He said he would get a potential buyer to see it within the hour and he would have it fed and washed by then.

I settled into my room, washed and prayed. As I made ready to go in search of food, a light knock came to my door. A boy was outside. He handed me a note and I gave him a few rupees. Then I asked if he had tended my mule. When he told me, shyly, that he had, I gave him more rupees. I locked the door and sat on the bed to read my note.

It was from one of our commanders and welcomed me to Karachi. It said that I should walk along the sea wall and I would be contacted. It also told me to be armed at all times as Pakistani intelligence were actively hunting our cells in Karachi. I burnt the note and locked my room behind me. My AK was wrapped in blankets under my bed, so I told the innkeeper that I didn't want my room cleaned, or entered by anyone, during my stay. He consented easily. I carried my automatic pistol in my waistband, well hidden by my robes. I carried it cocked, with a round in the barrel ready for immediate use. This meant that I had to move carefully and be aware of my position at all times. A good posture for Karachi.

I met the mule man outside and agreed a price of 200 rupees for the beast. Then I walked along the old port seafront in search of a meal that wouldn't kill me. The fresh perfume of the Arabian Sea mixed with the stinks of open sewers and burning oil. Some large gulls stood lazily on the sea wall, flying to sea as I came near, then being pushed back by the breeze to where they had been when I was past. The breeze was hot and I mopped my brow. A drinks vendor approached me calling out his list of wares. I asked for a cold drink and he offered a Coca-Cola. When I refused an American brand, he laughed loudly. Then he looked me in the eye and gave me an Al-Qaeda password, a means for soldiers to identify themselves to each other when required. I replied to his password and he clapped his hands.

- Mujahideen! I knew I knew you! We fought together in Afghanistan. Remember when we ambushed the Russian patrol together and you shot down the helicopter with the Stinger?

- Those were great days, I said, and meant it. I haven't seen you since then. Are you based here?

- This is my home town, he replied. This is where I can do Al-Qaeda's work to my greatest potential. I was sent to find you. I have only now learned that your hotel is being watched by the Pakistanis. Do you have any weapons or material there?

I told him about the AK and the pistol in my waistband. We decided it would be better if I went to a safe house unknown to the Pakistanis. The boy would be sent along with my belongings and AK next morning.

We continued along the sea wall. A pair of Pakistani agents lounged against the wall, licking ice



creams, wiping their mouths with tissues, wearing pilot sunglasses. A group of young girls wearing western clothes passed the agents when we did, so they barely paid us a glance. We left the sea and entered the warrens of shanties. After a few minutes, I was confused as to my location.

- This movement is to confuse any spies who may be following us, offered my guide and comrade, sensing my unease. To find your bearings, most alleys run perpendicular to the sea wall. Find the sea wall and you'll find a way out.

I glanced over my shoulder and, right enough, at the end of the alley I could see the wall's mighty blocks. Soon after, we arrived at a warehouse and stood by a rear door. Two teenagers lounged on the steps of a shanty across the street. They waved at my companion.

- It is safe, he said.

We entered the building and went to a small office, passing two armed Mujahideen soldiers on the way. They checked each of us for our identification and swept us for electronic devices. Inside the office we found Osama with five of our leading Pakistani operatives. He greeted me and gestured at us both to sit.

We chatted quietly for a few more minutes until our last commander, a comrade from Afghanistan and one of Al-Qaeda's most important field commanders, arrived with a case of soft drink cans. Osama called the meeting to order and outlined our position and immediate plans.

The dispersal of our soldiers before the American invasion of Afghanistan had been largely successful. Our total losses since September 11 were less than 1,000 killed or captured. It was feared that some of those captured had broken under torture and were supplying our enemy with useful information. All our codes and passwords had been changed a number of times since then, so it was unlikely that the enemy had access to our communications. Terrible attacks were expected from our enemy and all of us were ordered to make cell security our top priority.

- This might seem contradictory, Osama began, given the new orders for cells to merge and launch major attacks. But if we, as commanders, keep track of the cells we are merging and assess the cell members individually, then we will protect our structure. Knowledge of levels above cells by cell members must be minimized. We must plan for further captures and treachery.

He gave orders to each of us to merge cells in different parts of Pakistan. I was to merge two cells here in Karachi. Another was to merge cells in Islamabad and another commander was to travel to Indonesia, to prepare for actions there. Two commanders were to go to Africa and merge cells in Kenya, Sudan and Egypt.

- We have weathered the worst that our enemy could throw at us, continued Osama. We must now reconstitute ourselves and strike back hard. Our plans to deliver hammer blows against our enemies continue and you must grant me patience. September 11 was but the first of many hammer blows to strike our hated enemies. Allah has delivered us from our enemies. Truly we have been rewarded by God.

There was general delight at this statement.

- By the end of this year, our key leadership will be at one location, back in Afghanistan. You will each receive your specific orders from me after this meeting.

Osama then opened the meeting for each of us to have his say. After lengthy discussions of our tactics and enemy activities, interspersed with thanks to Osama for September 11 by those who hadn't seen him since the Day of Vengeance, the meeting broke up and Osama spoke with each of us individually.

My orders were to unite two cells in Karachi. I was given the names of the cell leaders and the

means for getting in touch with them. My knowledge of code words would then be enough for them to accept their orders from me, who they had not met before. My next mission was a journey to Tajikistan, far to the north, where an agent had sourced some uranium. I was to locate the agent, get the uranium and arrange for its transport to a secret mountain base near Kandahar, where Osama would be by December.

With new identity papers, I met the cells and gave them their orders. Their mission was a success; on May 8, their car bomb was exploded by a martyr outside the US consulate in Karachi. I left the city before the attack, as it was too crowded for me. I traveled north on public transport. I rested in Peshawar for a few weeks, staying at a small inn. I spent my time quietly recruiting new members for Al-Qaeda. The attacks of September 11 had made the recruitment of new fighters so much easier. Whereas before, we were seen as a dangerous enemy of the Americans, Al-Qaeda was now seen by many Muslims as the army of Allah which could actually defeat our hated infidel enemies and bring true freedom under God to all Muslims. I dispatched those that I had recruited to make contact with cells in Peshawar, Karachi and Islamabad. Their training would be difficult in the current conditions, but trained well they would be.

In early August, as I reached the northern border, I heard news of an attack on a Christian school in the Pakistani Himalayas. A part of me was thankful that no children died in the raid, just their traitorous security guards. But it was important for all to know that even the Christians' children will never know safety in a Muslim nation.

A strip of Afghanistan juts across the top of Pakistan, dividing it from Tajikistan. I knew that crossing through Afghanistan would be the most dangerous part of my mission and worried constantly about the return journey, on which I hoped to carry the material for a nuclear bomb. The mountains and climate were inhospitable to most and after I had passed Peshawar and traveled through Kalam and Gakuch, the number of travelers met greatly diminished.

Arriving in the frontier town of Chillinji, I was questioned by Pakistani police, along with my fellow bus travelers. My story was simply that I was an Afghan peasant who had been to visit relatives near Peshawar and was returning home. My new identity papers gave my address as being in the part of Afghanistan that is sandwiched between Pakistan and Tajikistan, so I should be covered throughout my journey.

The town was dirty, rough and had far too many police and military around for my liking. Chillinji was on the border of Jammu and Kashmir, the Pakistani province that had brought Pakistan and India to the brink of war many times. I stayed overnight in Chillinji before continuing my journey on foot. I still had a long way to go and was as yet undecided as to whether I would cross directly into Tajikistan and make my way towards the southern city of Khorog from there, or to sweep around inside Afghanistan to where it met Khorog at the border some 300 kilometers from Chillinji. Going through Tajikistan would reduce my journey by nearly 100 kilometers. I had decided that I would make my decision based on the safety of the mission but could travel for a day or two before making that decision.

The next morning, I passed through the border post, which was surprisingly easy with two bored and tired young soldiers waving everybody through with the most casual of inspections. My pistol was hidden within my backpack. I was back in Afghanistan and it felt wonderful. There were no soldiers or police to be seen, the security infrastructure was controlled by the Americans and they had not seen fit to monitor this part of the border. Fools. I set off on the mountainous road, marveling at the view that surrounded me. To my left were the Hindu Kush mountains, separating Pakistan from

Afghanistan. To my right were the snowy peaks of Kashmir, leading to Tibet and, eventually, the mighty Mount Everest. Ahead of me was Tajikistan, the former Soviet republic, now a Muslim nation still run badly by ex-Communists. Nine tenths of Tajikistan was mountainous and its peaks rose to dizzying heights before me. I made my way to a café where buses, taxis and private cars gathered. Drivers haggled with those who needed transport and I was approached by a man who needed someone to share his fuel expenses.

- I go to Khorog, kind sir. Is this on your travels? He asked.

- It may be, what do you require of your passengers?

- I have no passengers yet, he replied. All here travel to Toktomush or stay in Afghanistan.

- How much would my fare cost? I asked.

- Do you have rupees or dollars?

- Dollars.

- For 25 dollars, I will take you to anywhere in Khorog.

I looked him straight in the eye.

- Can I trust you?

- As Allah guides and controls us all, so I will never betray a fellow Muslim. The Americans are a different story.

He spat a sizable lump of phlegm onto the pot-holed road.

- I accept your offer, but I warn you that I am armed.

I paid half my fare so that my driver could get some fuel. Then we bought some provisions and set off. As we drove into the mountains, my driver pointed out the sights excitedly. I had seen so many mountains in recent years, but the peaks of Tajikistan still held wonder for me. A state of conflict existed in the country, with Islamic fighters engaged in low-level conflict with the government. With over 80 percent of the population Sunni Muslim, there was little or no recognition of the importance of Islam. This would change. We had supplied the Tajik Muslims with weapons since 1997, once Afghanistan was secure. Our cell in Khorog had launched attacks on the government forces and assassinated some officials, but it now truly proved its worth with the seizure of uranium for our nuclear weapons programme. Tajikistan was rich in uranium, having supplied the Soviet arsenal for decades. Our experts would know if it was suitable to make an atomic device or whether further enrichment was required. Even if its quality was too poor, it would give us the material to make a dirty bomb. A dirty bomb is a conventional device which is wrapped in uranium or some other radioactive substance. When the bomb is detonated, it sends radioactive particles across a wide area. A well-placed dirty bomb could render the centre of a major city uninhabitable for thousands of years. It could be almost as effective as the detonation of an actual nuclear device. These thoughts filled my mind as we crossed Tajikistan.

My driver knew the route well. He told me that he drove regularly from Tajikistan to Pakistan, transporting opium. When I asked why he was giving me such information, he replied that all good Muslims must work together to destroy the Americans. He could recite some of Osama's key speeches, including the Declaration of Jihad, almost word perfect. As I began to see his devotion to prayer and his dislike of the Americans, I decided I could trust him.

One evening, we were entering a dangerous gorge as night began to fall. We decided to stop and sleep in the car, which was an old, Soviet-era Trabant, noisy but reliable enough. We prepared some tea and ate crackers and dried meat. I decided then to tell my driver about my connection with Al-Qaeda and that I was on an important mission. I had decided to kill him and take his car if he reacted

badly. On the contrary, he was delighted to be ferrying one such as I on a dangerous mission. He asked to join our group and I inducted him. My mission suddenly became a lot easier; I was no longer paying a stranger to bring me to my destination, I was now traveling with a fellow soldier. I told him about my mission, saying only that I had to collect a package in Khorog and bring it to our mountain base on the border near Kandahar. He insisted on completing the mission with me, as his first task in helping to bring about the destruction of our enemies. God was certainly smiling on me.

We neared Khorog at sunset a day later. The city is in the heart of the Pamirs, the mountain range from which the surrounding ranges spring. We passed through the Pamirs Botanical Gardens. The oxygen from the collections of plants was welcome, given the high altitude. Dominated by a hydroelectric station and the factories that were fed by it, Khorog had little to recommend it. We went to an inn that my colleague knew to be safe from the police's prying eyes and both had hot baths. We met for dinner and planned our next move. I had memorized a phone number for the agent with the uranium. I called him from a payphone in the inn and he asked that I should go to a mosque near the centre of town. I told him about my colleague, whose name he knew, and I advised that he would accompany me with his car. Khorog was in a semi-autonomous area, Gorno-Badakhshan, and the main city of Tajikistan's Muslim separatists. Armed police and soldiers loitered at most street corners, but they paid us little attention as we looked like locals and our car had local registration plates.

We met our contact in the entrance hall of the mosque, which was open for evening prayers. He brought us to a small office and lifted a tarpaulin in the corner. Under the cover was a metal drum, about one meter tall and half a meter in diameter. It was blue in colour and had radiation warning symbols all around and Russian Cyrillic text stenciled on top.

- God is great, said our Tajik friend. This drum contains 25 kilos of uranium 235, which I am told is sufficient to make an atomic bomb.

- God is great, I exclaimed.

I couldn't believe our luck. I had expected to be given a couple of kilos of the more abundant uranium 238, an isotope that needs to be purified to make weapons grade material.

- How did you get it? I asked.

- The Russians left behind a lot more than a crumbling economy and a corrupt administration. They mined the uranium here and purified it before sending it back to Mother Russia. After all, why pollute their homeland if they can leave their dirt here? The corruption and incompetence of the administrators here gave us an opportunity. My cell has been working to this end for many months. I am proud of our success and I pray that you will deliver this uranium to Washington DC in a form that will shake the planet.

We gave thanks and loaded the drum into the car at the rear entrance to the mosque after the congregation had left. Our Tajik colleague also provided us with useful intelligence on security checks at the nearby Afghan border and advised on the best cover story to use. He checked our identification papers and approved our profiles.

We rested that night, but I could not sleep. The journey to Kandahar was long, but uneventful. Though we had to pass through Kabul, we were never stopped by American troops. We bribed our way through Afghan-manned checkpoints. At one stage, we drove within a heavily armed American convoy of Humvees and APCs. I sweated, but my driver stayed cool. We reached our base and immediately delivered our cargo to the atomic weapons team. To say that they praised our Tajik brothers would be an understatement. My driver returned to Khorog to join the cell. I left the atomics team to their work and I returned to mine.

Time passed slowly, interspersed with news of more brave attacks, including the Bali bombing in October, which struck westerners holidaying and behaving disgracefully in a Muslim nation. There followed the attack on the Jewish tourists in Mombasa in November. Our strategy of destroying the tourist industry was paying dividends. The attempt to shoot down an Israeli passenger jet that same day in Kenya failed only because the fighters who attempted the attack had more courage than training in the use of missiles.

There was also news of an American attack on four of our top commanders in Yemen. We had established a number of training camps in the wild desert in the Yemeni/Saudi border. The enemy had received intelligence of our movements and used one of his pilotless aircraft to launch a missile at our men's jeep. All were killed. The traitor who betrayed them turned out to have been a Yemeni policeman who pretended to support us. He is now dead.

The year ended with a bitterly cold winter in Afghanistan. But our December sand storms brought us not Father Christmas, but Osama bin Laden.



## 16. DAYS OF TERROR

“But Allah hath been gracious unto us and hath preserved us from the torment of the breath of Fire.

“Lo! We used to pray unto Him of old. Lo! He is the Benign, the Merciful.

“Therefore warn men, O Muhammad. By the grace of Allah thou art neither soothsayer nor madman.”

Surah 52. At-Tur, The Mount. V 27-29.

Afghanistan Pakistan Border Area, 2003

As the Americans reduced their presence in Afghanistan so as to fight war in Iraq, so we began to sense victory. The remaining Americans were confined to Kabul, Mazar-e-Sharif and a few other towns. Their special forces made regular visits, in force, to other places, such as Kandahar and Khost, but most of the forces of the Coalition of Crusaders were of little threat. Our spies, agents, informers and fighters were everywhere. The Taliban had regrouped in strength, with a little help from the Pakistanis. Hekmatyar the warlord had had enough of the puppet government.

Our fighters trickled back into the border mountains from their dispersed locations. We fought the American war machine in Afghanistan, but on our own terms. The vast majority of our fighters had survived the onslaught and most were now regrouping to continue training, intelligence-gathering and planning attacks against the occupiers.

We had seven mountain bases which hadn't been discovered by our enemies. The Taliban, who had taken the brunt of the American action, had their own bases and had been quietly increasing opium production to finance new weapons purchases. Our links with the drugs trade continued apace. It is true that Al-Qaeda has always had sufficient finances for its operations. Osama's fortune, his investments, his family's wealth are but a fraction of the funding we receive through private donations from the millions of Muslims who support our cause, including some of the very wealthiest. Drugs were also an important contributor; our opium operations in Afghanistan netted the organization over \$50 million that year, while we were technically occupied by the Americans. The Taliban and other warlords such as Hekmatyar could have made more than us. Afghanistan's puppet government was failing in its allotted task of creating a stable, docile, puppet statelet with a pipeline across it to transport oil from the former Soviet republics.

Hekmatyar called for a meeting with Mullah Omar and Osama to conspire collectively to destabilise the puppets and coordinate attacks on the occupiers. Osama was wary of being called to a meeting and wasn't sure about whether to trust Hekmatyar. He responded to the request by asking where the meeting was planned to occur. The reply came that Osama should choose the place and the time. He also gave us some useful information, as a carrot. His men had identified a Predator spy plane base in the desert, south of Kabul. This was good intelligence, if true. We had been unable to locate a Predator base and our jammer was ready for testing. We also knew that Hekmatyar had narrowly escaped a missile attack from a Predator, just a few months earlier. He clearly wanted revenge and was happy for us to exact it on his behalf. No matter, if the intelligence was correct.

Osama sent a reply to Hekmatyar, after speaking with Mullah Omar, who wanted to proceed with the meeting. It was arranged that the meeting would happen in the fort city of Quetta, Pakistan, on market day. Still called by its ancient name of Shal by locals, it was the city where we felt safest from spies and infiltrators, simply because virtually 100 percent of residents supported Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Hekmatyar would be foolish to betray us here.

A team was dispatched to test the Predator jammer and security squads checked the University

of Balochistan, where the meeting was to take place in a private office. We traveled with Mullah Omar, across the mountains by mule and by jeep to Quetta, avoiding the heavy military presence on both sides of the Bolan and Khojak Passes. When we arrived, Engineer Hekmatyar was waiting. He was a complex man, having fought bravely against the Russians, but then destroying Kabul in his bitter struggle for power. He had allied with Massoud when the Taliban rose and for this we will never fully trust him again. He fled to Iran and returned to Afghanistan once the American tide had subsided. Now he sought control again and now, no doubt, saw us as useful tools in his bloody chess game.

He greeted Osama warmly, unexpectedly warmly. The Day of Vengeance had filled him with awe and respect for Al-Qaeda. After greeting Mullah Omar just as warmly, he asked us to put the past to one side so that we can work together to do Allah's will. We agreed and set about planning the destruction of the puppet traitor Karzai and returning Islamic rule to Afghanistan.

We returned to our secret mountain base, while Hekmatyar returned to his heartland. Night letters, messages posted in public places calling for Jihad, spread word that the battle to liberate Afghanistan was beginning yet again. Attacks on occupying soldiers, UN staff, all foreigners, were stepped up. The Afghan army was a special target for us. Primarily fighters from the Northern Alliance, they were traitor Muslims, accepting the Crusaders' money to fight their brother Muslims. We took great relish in killing them.

Osama recorded a message, which he released to the al-Jazeera satellite network on February 12, 2003:

- In the name of Allah, the merciful and the compassionate, a message to our brothers in Iraq. Greetings, all you who believe in Allah and worship him as he deserves and do not die unless you are Muslims.

We are following with great interest and utmost concern the preparations by the crusaders to occupy the capital of Islam formally (ph) and to rob the wealth of Muslims and to appoint over you an agent government that follows Washington and Tel Aviv, like all other treacherous and spy Arab governments, in preparation for the founding of the greater Israel. So may Allah help us.

We wish to stress on the threshold of this war, the war of the infidels and disbelievers, which the U.S. is launching with a number of its allies and agents.

First, the sincerity of intentions for the fighting should be for the sake of Allah only, no other, and not for the victory of national minorities or for the aid of the infidel regimes in all Arab countries, including Iraq. Allah Almighty said those who believe fight for the sake of Allah and those who did not believe fight for the sake of the Devil. So fight the allies of the Devil for the Devil is weak.

Second, we remind that victory comes from Allah Almighty alone, and we only have to do our best through preparations and incitement and jihad. Allah Almighty said, all you who believe, if you fight for the sake of Allah he will give you victory and strengthen your feet. And we should hurry to repent to Allah from our sins, especially the biggest sins.

As the prophet, peace be upon, him said, "Avoid the seven big sins; not believing in Allah, magic, killing of souls that God forbid unless it's justified, taking interest, taking the money of the orphan, and accusing unwittingly (ph) pious Muslim women of sins." That is agreed to. And also, the rest of the big sins, such as adultery and alcohol and disobeying the parents and giving false testimony. We should rush to obey Allah in general, especially to mention Allah at the time when the armies meet.

Abu-Adarda (ph), may Allah bless him, said, "A good deed at the time of the invasion for you fight with your actions."

Third, it became apparent to us through our defence and fighting of the American enemy that it relies mainly in war on the psychological war, given its huge media machine and reliance on air strike to hide its main weak points, which are fear and cowardice and absence of the fighting spirit among American soldiers. Those soldiers are completely convinced about the injustice of their government and its lies, and they lack a fair cause to fight for. And they are rather fighting for the capitalist and interest hoarders (ph), and weapons and oil merchants, including the criminal gang at the White House, which harbours crusader hatreds and personal hatreds from Bush the father.

It's also become apparent to us that the most effective way to empty the air power of its contents is by establishing trenches that are covered and camouflaged in large numbers.

I have previously pointed that out last year in the Tora Bora mountain (ph), that great fight in which the power of belief overcame the material power of evil by holding fast to the principles of Allah Almighty. And I will mention to you a part of that great battle to show the extent of their cowardice on one hand, and the degree of effectiveness of trenches in the war of attrition against them on the other.

Our number were at least 300 Mujahideen. We dug 100 trenches spread over one square mile at the rate of one trench per (inaudible) to avoid incurring injuries from the strikes.

And our centres were targeted from the first hour of the American strike on (inaudible) 20th, the year 1422 Hegira, or corresponding to October 7th, 2001. We were subjected to intense strikes and then it continued intermittently until the middle of Ramadan, and after that, on the morning of the 12 in Ramadan, intensive air strikes began after the American leader was certain that Al Qaeda elements were in Tora Bora, including this humble servant, and that rebel fighter Dr. Aminizara (ph). And the flights were around the clock, so not a second passed without military planes flying over our heads day and night.

Wherein in the Pentagon, command centre, devoted with all its allied forces, was determined with all its allied forces to blow up this tiny spot and annihilate it. So the airplanes poured fire over us, especially after they ended their mission in Afghanistan. The American airplanes hit us with smart bombs and heavy bombs, and string (ph) bombs, and also used bombs that penetrated caves and also bombers like B-52. The circuits were two hours over our heads, and each time fired 20 to 30 bombs. And the C-130 airplanes bombed us with carpet bombs and other murderous bombs.

Despite this tremendous bombing, which was coupled with the outrageous media campaign, that was unprecedented at this time, not to mention the hypocritical forces used to fight us for two continuous months, we managed to confront all their daily attacks, thanks be to Allah, and we forced them back each time defeated, carrying their dead and injured.

Despite all that, the American forces did not dare to invade our location. So what clearer proof is there to their cowardice and fear and lies and their alleged (inaudible) surrounding their forces? The conclusion of the battle was the great and miserable failure of the forces of evil over a small group of Mujahideen, a group of 300 in the trenches inside one square mile, at a temperature that was 10 degrees below 0. The result of the battle was the death of a few of us, 6 percent approximately. We prayed that Allah will accept them as martyrs. And as for our injuries in the trenches, it was at the rate of 2 percent, thanks be to Allah.

So if all the international forces of evil could not achieve its goals over one square mile and a small number of Mujahideen with very humble capabilities, how can these evil forces achieve victory over the Islamic world? This is impossible, Allah willing, if the people held fast to their religion and insisted on fighting for his sake.

So our brother fighters in Iraq, do not be scared by what Americans promote about the greatness of its forces and their smart bombs and laser-guided bombs, for smart bombs have no mentionable effect in the middle of mountains and trenches and plains and forests. They must have an obvious target.

As for the trenches, they are well camouflaged, and neither smart bombs nor dumb bombs will be able to get them unless by haphazard bombing which squanders the ammunition of the enemy and its money. So use trenches. As Amar (ph), may peace be upon him, said, "Take cover with the land."

That is take the land as a shield, for that is sufficient to exhaust the ammunition of the enemy within a few months. As for the daily fight, then it's something that can be easily dealt with. We also advise you to lead the enemy to prolonged and heavy and exhaustive fighting using the camouflage defence fight in plains, mountains, farms and cities.

What the enemy fears most is the war of cities and streets, that war that the enemy expects tremendous, grave losses in. So we also stress the importance of suicide operations against the enemy, those operations that cause so much harm to the enemy in the U.S. and Israel and they have never seen anything like them in their history, thanks be to Allah.

We also stress that anyone who assists the U.S. from among the Iraqi hypocrites or Arab rulers, or those who accept their actions and follow them in their crusader war, whether by fighting with them or through providing administrative support or any other form of support or help, even verbal, to kill Muslims in Iraq, they should know that they are infidels deviating from their religion and their blood is sanctioned.

Allah Almighty said, "All you who believe, do not take Jews and Christians as supporters. Some of them support each other, and those who take them as supporters then they are a part of them." Allah doesn't guide unjust people.

We also stress that Muslims have to move and incite and organize the nation into armies to face these great events and harsh conditions, and to liberate themselves from the slavery of these unjust and infidel regimes enslaved by the U.S. From among the most ready for liberation are Jordan, Morocco, Nigeria and Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

It's also not hidden that this crusader war targets first and foremost Islam, irrespective of whether the Ba'ath Party and Saddam were deposed or not.

The Muslims in general and the Iraqis in particular have to prepare for jihad against this unjust campaign, and have to make sure to load up on ammunition and weapons, for that is their duty. Allah Almighty said, "Let them take care and pay attention to their weapons."

The infidels wished you would forget about your weapons and your belongings so that they can launch an all-out attack on them.

It's known that fighting to achieve victory for the infidels is not permissible. And you know the Muslim's belief should be clear when fighting that it should be for the sake of Allah. As the prophet, peace be upon him, said, "Whoever fought to raise the word of Allah, then he's fighting for the sake of Allah."

And it doesn't harm in these conditions the interest of Muslims to agree with those of the socialists in fighting against the crusaders, even though we believe the socialists are infidels. For the socialists and the rulers have lost their legitimacy a long time ago, and the socialists are infidels regardless of where they are, whether in Baghdad or in Aden (ph).

And this fighting about to take place resembles the fight with the Romans earlier and the collusion of interest doesn't harm, for the Muslims' fight against the Romans was due to the collusion

of the interests with the Persians.

Before concluding, we stress the importance of optimism and keeping good spirits, and warn against pessimism and dejection and fear. The prophet said, "Be a harbinger of good news and do not spread pessimism." And he also said, "The voice of Abultaha (ph) addressing the army is better than a thousand men."

It was mentioned in the narrative that a man told Herod (ph) on the day of the Armuk (ph) battle how numerous are the Romans and how few are the Muslims. So Herod (ph) told him, "Wrong is that what you said, for the armies do not achieve victory by mere numbers, but are defeated through leydown (ph) and such words."

So let the words of Allah be before your eyes: "If you know the enemy, then hit their necks and let your encounter with the crusaders follow what the poet said. Do not let your aim be anything but striking beneath our (ph) necks."

In conclusion, I advise you and myself to be pious to Allah and (inaudible) in open, and to be patient and persevere in the jihad so the victory is patient for one hour. And I also advise myself and you to mention Allah and pray to him. Allah Almighty said, "All you who believe, if you meet the enemy hold fast and mention the name of Allah often so that you may win."

Oh Allah, the sender of the book, and mover of the clouds and defeater of the enemy, defeat them. Let us be victorious and let us be victorious over them. Let us be victorious and let us be victorious over them. Let us be victorious and let us be victorious over them. Let us be victorious and let us be victorious over them.

And as Allah said, "Make us do good things on Earth and good things in eternity, and protect us against torture of Hell." And may Allah have peace upon his prophet, Mohammed.

Like most Muslims, we were not surprised by America's attack on Iraq. Even from our positions in the mountains, we could easily detect a growing apprehension in the Muslim world. America was flexing its muscle in the war between Christianity and Islam and the many despotic Arab regimes were fearful of their own security. The true reason for America's invasion of Iraq was nothing to do with weapons of mass destruction, it was to ease Saudi Arabia's security concerns.

Saddam Hussein had threatened to invade Saudi Arabia in 1990 when he took Kuwait. This led to a major American military presence in the land of the Two Holy Places, which led in turn to Al-Qaeda and our success in recruiting. The only way that America could defuse the anger in the Muslim world was to remove Saddam Hussein and, thus, remove the American military presence from Saudi Arabia.

We had no liking of the Iraqi regime, but we felt for the Iraqi people. Most Iraqis were decent Sunni Muslims, with many Shia Muslims in the south and Kurds in the north. While Hussein used the Sunni population as his power base and sought to destroy the other factions, he polluted any decent Islamic principles with his Ba'ath Party, which was nothing more than a personality cult with dangerous socialist ideology. Hussein had worked for Arab unity and made some progress until he became a tool of the Americans. As America's strategic requirements in the middle east, so it became time to get rid of Saddam Hussein. Most Arabs and Muslims understood this. While there was much anti-American sentiment expressed by those states around Iraq when war began, it was but double-speak by regimes which greatly assisted the American war effort.

The conduct of the war was not unexpected. The Americans' overwhelming air power made light work of Iraq's conventional defences. The satellite-guided bombs, which had been used for the



first time in Afghanistan, rained down on Iraq's conventional forces. Cruise missiles destroyed key installations in the cities, Iraq's air defence system was shattered. Guerilla operations against the Americans were successful, but theirs was an unstoppable force, by conventional means. Al-Qaeda commander Ayman al-Zawahiri recorded a tape, which was broadcast by the Arabic television channel al-Jazeera in May, after America declared victory in Iraq.

- 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.

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.

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 Mujahideen 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.

The Iraq war achieved three strategic goals for Al-Qaeda. Firstly, it showed the Muslim world how the American war machine cared not about Muslim women and children. It made my blood boil to see the relentless images of slaughtered civilians. They call us terrorists? Secondly, it allowed us to build active cells inside Iraq, for the first time. Our fighters were not engaged in the war, but their attacks on the occupation forces helped to wear down American resolve. Thirdly, it led to American withdrawal from Saudi Arabia. Some forces remained behind to help protect the regime, but the potential opposition to our planned coup was dramatically reduced. America's withdrawal also gave us a huge boost within the Muslim public. Al-Qaeda had forced an American withdrawal from the land of the two Holy Places, let there be no disputing that. Now we had to prove that we could deliver even greater rewards to our followers.

The guerilla campaign was begun by Saddam loyalists. Saddam had survived the war by hiding in Baghdad, even though there were many attempts to kill him, by both Americans and Iraqis. When the Americans took Baghdad, Saddam fled to Syria. He distributed secret videos of himself to his supporters, in which he extolled them to heroic deeds in defence of Islamic Iraq; it suited him to use Islam, even though he had little respect for it.

The Americans showed the vulnerability of an armored force in an urban environment. The Russians had learned the lesson in Grozny and the Americans had a taste of it in Mogadishu; an RPG will destroy all but a main battle tank and even such a mighty enemy can be destroyed by a large mine. City streets are perfect for two man teams to launch attacks, yet almost impossible for heavy armour to operate effectively.

Our cells began to launch attacks on the Americans and distribute propaganda for Al-Qaeda. There were a number of Sunni clerics who returned to political activity after Saddam's downfall. Some of these men fitted our Islamic ideology to perfection and we provided security for them, as well as supporting them financially.

With America becoming bogged down in Iraq, losing men every day, the Taliban became active once more in Afghanistan. Our fighters also found it easier to operate. America's mighty military machine was becoming stretched. They were militarily committed in Afghanistan, Iraq and Columbia. They also had battle-ready garrisons in Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, South Korea and a major force in the hated prison camp at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba.

In May, attacks were launched on the American compounds in Riyadh and the tourist infrastructure of another puppet traitor regime, Morocco. The Riyadh attack was executed by four cells, each attacking a different target simultaneously. They machine-gunned the guards at the foreigners' compounds and drove vehicle bombs into the heart of the snakes' den. The destruction was absolute and the carnage filled the world's TV screens. Many foreigners began leaving Saudi Arabia as even the Sauds' blood money was no longer enough. All foreign workers in Saudi Arabia were now legitimate targets. The Saud regime could not exist without foreign labour, from western medical workers to Pakistani slaves. With a few more such successes, we would drive every infidel from our shores. Morocco had long been an American stooge and it was with great relish that Osama approved a series of attacks in Casablanca. 12 brave martyrs attacked a number of tourist sites, killing many and inflicting a grievous injury on Morocco's tourism industry.

The complexity of events at this time can be illustrated by the events of just one day. July 4, 2003 was America's second independence day since September 11. Security was intense, as the simple fear of a major attack on their homeland was enough to send them in paroxysms of paranoia. We did not have to launch an attack on that symbolic day in order to cost the American economy millions of dollars.

The first event was the release of an audio tape by Saddam Hussein. He spoke of 'jihad cells' in another attempt to bring Islam into his conflict with America. He asked the people of Iraq to support his guerilla fighters and to avoid giving information to the Americans. Coming the day after America had put a bounty of 25 million dollars on Hussein's head, the same price as on Osama's head - such foolish Americans, the tape had the desired effect and the battle for Iraq became more bloody.

Secondly, our brothers in Quetta launched an attack on a Shia mosque during Friday prayers. Dozens were killed. Many in the Muslim world questioned our methods in attacking a mosque. Our answer, well-publicized in the days following the attack, was that the Shia tribes in Quetta were bought by the American and Pakistani intelligence services. Al-Qaeda and Taliban soldiers had been captured because of them. In light of their treachery, not even their places of worship are sacred.

Thirdly, the Americans decided to intervene in Liberia. The west African state had been founded by freed American slaves after their Civil War. In the years preceding 2003, chaos had reigned supreme, with tribes of rebels vying to remove the dictator, Charles Taylor, and replace him with their own particular brand of savagery. One in six Liberians was a Muslim and we had been supplying and organizing them for years. Cells were active in the country, as they were in virtually every other African country, and they were ready to draw America into another conflict. The Americans had no good experience of Africa. It was time they remembered why.

## 17. ALLAH'S THUNDER

"Verily Allah knoweth those who believe, and verily He knoweth the hypocrites."

Surah 29. Al-Ankabut, The Spider. V 11.

Afghanistan, 2004

I returned to Afghanistan in early 2004, the year that our Jihad fighters began to smell victory from the spilt blood of our foes. It felt good to be back in the land that had nurtured Al-Qaeda. The Americans had been pulling their forces from Afghanistan and they were replaced by inexperienced soldiers from Germany, Japan and other enemy countries. The Taliban had been regrouping and our own fighters too were more active.

Attacks on the occupiers increased in frequency and ferocity. The occupiers had retreated to positions around Kabul, the countryside was too dangerous for them. Kandahar was back in our hands. The situation on the ground was beginning to resemble that in 1988. Where the Russians had learned to fear our ambushes, so the new occupiers had learned the same lesson.

The Americans were full of talk when they invaded in 2001. They pledged billions to give Afghanistan a stable government under their puppet president, Karzai, and said they would stay for as long as it took. Needless to say, only a fraction of the money was delivered and, where Afghanistan had known stability under the Taliban, chaos reigned under Karzai. The warlords were growing ever stronger and we allied ourselves with the Taliban and the warlord Hekmatyar. The Muslim world knew well never to believe the Americans after the mess they made of Afghanistan.

Our first major blow against their puppet government was the assassination of Karzai. He was one of the most heavily-protected heads of state in the world, but we managed to kill him. This was a great sign to all other American puppets, that there was no hiding place from Al-Qaeda.

In an echo of the assassination of Egypt's Sadat, we had two fighters in Karzai's personal security detail. His closest bodyguards were American CIA men, but his home and offices were protected by Afghans from his own tribe. One evening in March, as he prayed in his courtyard with his family, our assassins managed to get into clear firing positions inside his house. They fired their AKs and threw grenades. In seconds, Karzai and his family were dead. The CIA lost two of their men before our brave fighters succumbed to the counter attack. Theirs was absolute dedication.

The following day, our nuclear bomb exploded in Washington DC. The bomb was transported by cargo ship from Karachi, through Rotterdam, to Baltimore. It was in a container of ornamental garden statues of the Buddha. A secret compartment was lined with lead to block x-rays and prevent radiation leakage. If the container was screened on entering America, our plan would have been detected. Luckily, we got through safely, due in no small part to our agents in Baltimore Port. Many cells were involved in the delivery of the device and those in the port waited weeks for one container to arrive. They delayed its unloading until the customs spot check teams were on a shift change and moved it swiftly through the system. It was driven by truck to Washington DC and delivered to a warehouse in an industrial park.

The nuclear device was then transported, late at night, by branded van to a coffee house in the Federal Triangle, which was operated as a franchise by one of our cells. The device was unloaded in a rear alley and placed in the open area frequented by smoking customers. It was in position at 3.30am, just 23 hours after it had entered the country.

The specially trained nuclear attack cell took command of the mission and waited until morning

when they would activate the device. Time passed slowly for them. 8.46am was the planned detonation time, both as an echo of September 11 and because the population of Washington would be at its peak at that hour of a Monday morning. The chaos and destruction would be absolute. The brave martyrs waited patiently, expecting the CIA to attack at any moment. They drank coffee, of which there was a more than adequate supply, and checked regularly for Email messages. Osama sent a message just after midnight on the day of the attack, confirming the action. As the minutes ticked by, there was no change to the command.

At the appointed time, the glorious martyrs used two keys to activate the device. When both keys were turned simultaneously, modified cannon inside fired lumps of uranium 235 at each other, causing critical mass and a runaway nuclear reaction. This resulted in massive amounts of energy being created, released as neutrons, heat, light and assorted particles. The explosion was estimated at 10 kilotons, or 10,000 tones of TNT, which was lower than our models had predicted. But the blast did exceed our expectations, as it held a deadly second blow in reserve.

Washingtonians hurried to work, many nursing hangovers from the weekend and sudden memories of the work that lay ahead that just didn't seem relevant on Friday afternoon. Deliveries were made and breakfasts eaten. The coffee house remained closed, even as tens of thousands of state employees filed into their meaningless jobs. Police and soldiers manned checkpoints all over the central political zone. Helicopters buzzed and traffic roared. Politicians took their places in their lavish offices and intelligence briefings told many in positions of power that Al-Qaeda aimed to deliver an atomic bomb to Washington.

5 city blocks on the edge of the Federal Triangle were instantly vaporized. The blast shook the White House and the Capitol Building and destroyed all the city's subway systems. It will be many months before an accurate death toll is written, but it is estimated that 22,000 of the enemy died in the blast.

While the shock waves rolled down the Potomac River, the fires engulfed buildings beside ground zero. Many had been left standing, but their empty, burning windows stared like the eyes of a dead beast. In the minutes and hours after detonation, a further 4,000 were killed by the flames or the falling buildings. The emergency systems were unable to cope with the carnage, some key assets were within the blast radius. When the dust settled and the cries of pain were being drowned by the wailing of sirens and the thudding of helicopter blades, all eyes were on the President, who was in his office beside the White House at the time of attack.

Within an hour, the tv news networks had live camera feeds of the scene. I watched the reports with Osama. We had moved to a new base with our highest level officers. All other fighters had been ordered to disperse and prepare for follow up attacks and enemy reprisals. The reporters were panic-stricken. We watched coverage with a journalist standing on a rooftop with the desolation behind him. A huge pall of smoke hung over central Washington. Flames leapt into the sky and the White House was a partial ruin. Other reporters cut in and out and reports of bomb scares in other cities were flashed on the screen. All flights were grounded, but it was too late.

A scheduled passenger flight from Miami to Washington Dulles had been hijacked fifteen minutes before the detonation and was hit its target, the headquarters of the National Security Agency outside Washington, thirty minutes after zero hour. The complex was almost completely destroyed and hundreds of America's top spies and code breakers died.

A second plane, on a scheduled flight from San Diego to San Francisco, struck San Diego's naval shipyards shortly after take off. It destroyed a nuclear submarine in dry dock and sank a new



guided missile frigate that was ready to begin sea trials. Many other vessels were damaged and hundreds of sailors and military industrial complex workers were killed.

My noon, our enemy was perplexed. Our attacks were finished for that day, but they feared so much, the tv transmitted the pure panic of the population. It emerged that Bush the Younger was only slightly hurt; he appeared briefly for the cameras, his head bandaged, left arm in a sling, being ferried away in a mass convoy. No sooner had Bush run away than our follow up punch was revealed.

The atomic explosion was less than we anticipated because not all the uranium had coalesced on detonation. The nuclear explosion used only half of the uranium, the rest was scattered with the blast. Our bomb was both atomic and dirty. Most people within a 3 kilometer radius and those downwind up to 10 kilometers away had received a potentially fatal dose of radiation.

It will be many years before the true cost of that bomb is known to the Americans, but now, three years on, Washington DC is a ghost town, Bush the Younger has lung cancer and the American economy is in freefall. A million may yet die from the Second Day of Vengeance.

Even as the day's events unfolded, Vice President Cheney, who had assumed command after Washington was attacked and Bush injured, declared war on Al-Qaeda from a bunker in Seattle. The Americans had often assured their people that they were 'at war' with terrorism, this declaration now made it official. We knew that the most terrible storm was coming our way, but our strategic plan relied on this. The Americans would lash out and we would recruit our legions of martyrs for the final battle.

Our cave base would protect us for an expected six months of constant enemy surveillance and probing attacks. It was well-located for this end. A long, narrow canyon on the north face of a peak contained the cave entrance. Always in shadow, the entrance was concealed behind a twisting pathway. It was constructed by our engineers before the Day of Vengeance and had not been discovered in the invasion after that attack. It was stocked with ample supplies of food, water, weapons and reading matter. A silent generator powered our lights and communications, which were all passive or encrypted and we had sufficient diesel to run it for a year. A closed circuit tv surveillance system with night vision covered all access routes to the canyon out to a distance of 4 kilometers and mines were planted near the entrance. These could be detonated remotely while we used a rear escape tunnel. We planned to sit out the American attack then slip out into a changed world, when we would travel to Yemen in preparation for the coup that would deliver Saudi Arabia from the Saud family of traitors.

Within three days of our Second Day of Vengeance, when the true scale of our success was becoming apparent, the assaults began. Simultaneous land and air attacks were launched on Afghanistan and Sudan. They flew 300,000 troops into Bagram airbase near Kabul in 48 hours. Cruise missiles and JDAM bombs wrecked many of our training camps. Ground assault teams combed the mountains between Afghanistan and Pakistan and hundreds of Predator spy planes sought our position. But the Taliban and Hekmatyar's men were waiting for them. Every convoy of enemy troops was ambushed. Americans died in twos and threes, much as they had in Iraq, and suicide attacks on their bases inflicted major damage. This was truly war and, while some of our men participated, we were sidelined. Mullah Omar and Hekmatyar believed that Islam had greater chance of defeating the Crusaders with Al-Qaeda's top leadership alive and planning for the bigger picture, rather than bleeding to death for the sake of a dead American GI.

The assault on Sudan was expected by us, but we had not anticipated its ferocity. We had not alerted our Sudanese friends of our impending attacks, in case the enemy intercepted our communications. However, all Al-Qaeda bases there, as well as in Yemen, Algeria, Egypt, the Philippines, Pakistan and Bangladesh had been notified and abandoned with stealth.

Less than two weeks after the new invasion of Afghanistan, 20,000 US Marines landed at Port Sudan. The Sudanese army put up some resistance, but their positions were obliterated by bombers and helicopters and the Marines were able to dock and disembark easily. With the port bridgehead secure, they began a thrust for Khartoum, led by unstoppable tank columns. Meanwhile, fresh columns come from Egypt to the north. The Americans were supported by Egyptian troops, which we did not expect. However, this development worked to our advantage as the Egyptian populace was incensed that their government should assist the Crusaders in their invasion of a fellow Muslim nation. As pincers closed on Khartoum from the north and the east, airborne soldiers landed at the airport. After a fierce firefight, the Sudanese army defenders detonated charges that destroyed most of the airport's key facilities and hundreds of the invaders. Their martyrdom boosted the spirit of the Sudanese people and many joined in the defence of their Muslim nation. But it was too little. The Christian southerners were supplied with artillery and air support and they too began to push towards the capital. The brave Muslim Brotherhood leaders who had supported us so well fled to the west, across the Teiga Plateau and into Chad. The Americans took Khartoum after just four days. Our men hid in cave bases in the Nubian Desert, southern Egypt. Few were killed or captured in the invasion and conquest of Sudan.

Our enemy's next step came as a surprise to us. As my comrades and I lay low in our Afghanistan cave, the shockwaves from the Washington attack continued to echo. Indonesian Muslims had begun to rally in their thousands in support of Al-Qaeda. Muslim insurgents and Al-Qaeda cells worked together to destabilise the government position on many of its thirteen thousand islands and rid the nation of infidels and disbelievers. With more Muslims than any other country on earth, Indonesia would be a vital part of the New World Nation of Islam. The non-Muslim minorities were pushed out or killed. Nobody much cared when the Chinese Totoks in Indonesia were burned from their homes. But the Crusaders came to the aid of the Christians when Muslim gangs began to attack their properties on Java and Sumatra.

The Indonesian military was over-stretched, fighting our forces on too many fronts, so appeared incapable of saving the Christians. America offered to assist and the Indonesian president, fearing for his own position amid spiraling public disorder, allowed them in. 50,000 American troops were redeployed from South Korea and the Philippines, where ongoing conflict with our brothers was at a stalemate. To see Americans on the streets of Jakarta was a surprise and a shock. It appeared that they knew how important Indonesia would be to us and were staking their claim on it with a military force that would be difficult to remove.

By the end of the year, America had invaded three Muslim countries, increased its forces in many more traitor Muslim countries and carried out the covert assassination of two of Iran's leading clerics. The shock of the Second Day of Vengeance had forced them to overextend their military resources. Our spies learned of secret plans to call up more reserves, exhausting their entire supply. Presidential discussions about reactivating conscription were leaked to the media by us, causing increased public unease. Their war in Afghanistan needed more men if they would have a realistic chance of finding our secret bases, but Sudan needed a strong occupying force to counter the daily attacks by Muslim Brotherhood fighters. Iraq was still a thorn in America's side, drawing blood as each day went by and they were now fully committed in Indonesia. Fortifying troops in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Dubai, Egypt and Turkey drew down the reserves from all bases at home and in non-Muslim countries. If we could stretch them in another front, we could draw forces away from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, making our planned coup that much easier.

These were the issues we pondered and discussed for endless hours in our cave. There were six

of us in hiding together; myself and Osama and four of his personal bodyguards, who took it in turns to monitor the cameras and patrol outside. We felt that victory was within our grasp. The only chances the enemy had to discover us would be during a complete search of the mountains, which would take 100 years to complete, or detecting our heat signature from above. Heat dispersal systems were built deep into the mountain from the generator, so our signature was invisible. For all America's military posturing around the world, she was hurting badly in the homeland. Our Second Day of Vengeance had a dramatic effect on the population. People talked of little else and their media obsessed with us. False alarms caused fresh panic daily and Al-Qaeda was blamed for everything from forest fires to plane crashes. Their economy was ruined, with deflation beginning to cause a second great Depression. The only products on which consumers spent their money were guns and home security measures. Plastic sheeting and duct tape sales peaked again, amid fears of a biological attack. Law and order began to collapse, with lynching of Muslims and whites only areas declared. Bush the Younger was re-elected for another term as President. The nation's sympathy for his minor injuries on the Second Day of Vengeance gave him an easy campaign. Pity the poor Americans who once again chose to be led by the family that had caused them so much pain. Christian leaders spoke repeatedly about the Biblical battle of Armageddon in which they believed they found themselves. Perhaps they were correct. This was a war between good and evil and good would prevail before God. Of this we could assure them.

## 18. THE PROPHECY

"O ye who believe! When ye meet an army, hold firm and think of Allah much, that ye may be successful.

"And obey Allah and His messenger, and dispute not with one another lest ye falter and your strength depart from you; but be steadfast! Lo! Allah is with the steadfast."

Surah 8. Al-Anfal, Spoils of War. V 45-46.

Afghanistan, 2005

It was time to reposition our forces for the attack on Saudi Arabia. A complex plan was arranged. In it, we detailed the movements of cells and individual fighters to the positions they would take up in the desert region between Yemen and Saudi Arabia. Most soldiers were simply supplied with destination coordinates and would make their own way to the objective. Others were tasked with bringing supplies and equipment that we would need, so had to be supported in their journeys.

Bases had been constructed in the assembly area, some dated back to our period of consolidation in Afghanistan in the late 1990s. We had adequate bedding and tents for 20,000 men. Training ranges and transport were also ready for us. Enough small arms, missiles and martyr bombs were ready and we also had our most precious weapons ready for this most important of battles. One nuclear device and 4 helicopters with nerve agent bombs were ready for use. The nuclear device would be used in Riyadh on the main American base and the nerve agent would be used to attack the Saudi family. With luck, we would wipe out the hated Saudis and their American mercenaries in one morning, allowing our fighters to take Riyadh with ease. The Saudi army, well equipped with American tanks and British bombers, would be difficult to confront on the battlefield, but against an army of willing martyrs, fighting in the city's alleys with RPGs and landmines, they would be destroyed. Now, as we finalized our logistics, the Americans needed to be distracted from the Saudi peninsula.

Osama spoke regularly during this time about the Prophecy which had been revealed to him. It had happened while he went to the desert in Jiddah all those years before. In the rapture of prayer and fasting, Allah had given him his divine Prophecy. It was that Osama would free the Muslim peoples of Saudi Arabia from the traitorous despots who had ruled them for centuries. This was truly the homeland of Allah, Muhammad and Islam. The Prophecy's clarity that his mission would be a success helped to drive Osama during our difficult times. One day, Osama and I went on a patrol to the end of our canyon. Osama had insisted that we go, so as to get some fresh air. It was a cold February day and my ears and nose were numb within minutes of leaving the warmth of our cave. A clear light struck the steep mountainsides far above our heads, but we remained in cold, dark shadow. At the end of our canyon, we climbed for a while to a position that gave us a view for some miles. We saw some dust clouds being thrown up in the distance and three high altitude enemy aircraft, but no sign that our position was in danger. We returned to the cave and sat by the fire for hours.

- In a real way, this is the battle towards which we have struggled this past 20 years, he told me.
- Saudi Arabia is indeed the most valuable prize, I replied.
- What will become of us? He asked wearily.
- We will be the ones who helped to liberate the Land of the Two Holy Places for all Muslims.

This is your destiny, Osama. You are living to bring your Prophecy to reality. You are mighty and brave and an honest man before God. Why do you seem downcast?

- My health is failing me, he began. My kidneys cause me pain most days and I fear other parts

of my body which have been injured in this war are painful also. I fear that I will not live to see our victory.

- Without you, there can be no victory, I replied. When will the Doctor return to check on you?

- The Doctor is already in Yemen. That is why we must make our move soon. Our best plan is to get to Quetta and fly from there to Jiddah on a Hajj pilgrimage flight. The Hajj will allow us to blend in with a million worshippers and get us close to our destination.

The Hajj was due to begin in only a few weeks. It had taken on a special significance, with the upsurge in Muslim pride and desire for self determination under Allah. The traitor Muslim regimes across the world shook with fear as the Muslim voices united into one that preached God's way as the only way. This would be an unstoppable force which would come to destroy the traitors and their evil ways. Security around the holy sites was more intense than ever. The Saudi authorities feared that the pilgrims would begin a riot and attack the regime. American forces were ready to support the Saudi army and police if events got out of control, but they stayed well hidden.

Destabilising the Hajj would have been a good action, but it was more valuable to us as a cloak for the movement of many of our fighters back into Saudi Arabia. Traveling with perfect identification papers, families and sick relatives, they appeared as honest pilgrims, doing their duties as good Muslims. Also, it would have been disrespectful to interfere with our innocent Brothers' right to pay homage to Allah.

We began to pack and prepare for our journey. We would carry only automatic pistols, travel by mule to Pishin and get a pilgrim bus to Quetta airport. Osama shaved his beard very tight and wore glasses. This helped to greatly change his appearance. Though the shaving of the beard is prohibited under Salafy Islam, he did it for the success of our mission. We traveled with two of Osama's bodyguards, the others would protect the cave until they heard from us.

We left on foot, through the rear escape tunnel which led toward the Pakistani border. After a day's travel, we crossed the border without seeing a single American or Pakistani soldier. Spy planes could be seen in the distance, over the Pakistani plains, but we were out of their range. We came to a small village, which also served as a transit point for our fighters. Half a dozen Al-Qaeda men worked in the village, selling mules and guns as border traders. We purchased four mules, rested for a night so as to check the route ahead by making some phone calls and prepared for the most dangerous part of our journey.

The Pakistanis knew they could not compete with us in the mountains, so they concentrated their forces in the valleys leading into Pakistan. Nearly all roads ran through their checkpoints and enemy satellites supplied information to local commanders on any potentially hostile forces moving in from Afghanistan. As we neared Pishin, an army checkpoint appeared out of the morning mist. Manned by at least 100 troops, everyone was being scrutinized and having their papers checked. There were many pilgrims on the road around us. Osama nodded that we would continue through.

Our papers were checked and we were questioned about our journey. A young soldier gazed thoughtfully at Osama for a few seconds and I feared the worst. But we were not discovered and passed on into Pishin, where many pilgrim buses waited in the village square. As each bus became full, it would leave for Quetta and we took the bus which was nearest departing. Within the hour, we were on the road. The bus was bursting at the seams with pilgrims, all joyous and excited at beginning their great Hajj. Every Muslim is expected to complete the Hajj during their lifetime and, for many of our fellow travelers, this was the culmination of their life's work.

Time passed quickly and we reached Quetta airport at dawn. The terminal building was



thronged with pilgrims as hajj was but two days away. We blended easily and checked in individually onto the same flight. The plane took off on schedule and a few hours later, we had returned to Saudi Arabia, the place of our birth and the place of our greatest battle.

Jiddah's sprawling airport was packed with pilgrims and armed police. We were stopped and searched many times as we made our way through customs and out into the concourse. A friend met us and took us into Jiddah in his car.

- The city is crawling with police and army, he told us. Like I have never seen before. Did they suspect your journey, I wonder?

- Unlikely, answered Osama. They fear the hajj may spill onto the streets. The regime is but a paper tiger and there are many pilgrims here who could light the match that would destroy it forever.

As we drove into the suburbs, checkpoints at each junction made it impossible for any to move without credible identification. We stayed in our agent's house and, over dinner, planned our next move. A sumptuous feast was arranged for us, with all manner of meats, cheeses, fruits, breads and teas. This was the finest food we'd eaten in nearly a year. Life in the cave didn't seem so bad while we lived it, but now, surrounded by simple luxuries such as fresh food and sunshine, I didn't relish our impending trip into the inhospitable desert. Our destination would be the Rub' al-Khali, or empty quarter; over 400,000 square kilometers of desert without streams, inhabitants or shelter. This would be the perfect location from which to gather our forces and launch our attack. Bases were deep underground, to provide protection from the fierce sun and the daily sandstorms. Water was pumped from deep wells and all bases were amply stocked with food and weapons. The desert had bred us and the desert would give us succor in the battle to end the war.

We stayed in Jiddah for a few weeks, returning to full strength and learning more about the global struggle. We didn't leave the house even once, as it was feared that spies were all over the city for the Hajj. Having made it safely back to our homeland, we needed to keep a low profile. Some visitors came to the house one morning. It was the Doctor and some of his closest commanders. They had been tasked with preparing our bases in the Empty Quarter and came to Jiddah upon hearing of Osama's return.

The Doctor spent a day and a half examining Osama and testing his bodily functions. He reported that Osama's health was, indeed, failing and a kidney transplant would be required within six months or his life would be in peril. Osama was not pleased with this news, but came to accept it. He chose to have the operation before our final attack on the Saud regime. The Doctor advised that the operation could be carried out immediately a donor was located and recuperation would take from 4 - 8 weeks. I immediately volunteered to donate a kidney, as did the others in the house. The Doctor said that tests of blood groups and immunologic profiles would be required, to reduce the risk of rejection or complication. Osama was put on immediate dialysis until the operation. When the blood and immune system test results were completed, the Doctor was not happy. None of our profiles was suitable. He advised that the only possible solutions were to find a close relative of Osama's who would donate a kidney or to locate one from a suitable cadaver. A relative was the best solution as kidneys from cadavers take longer to function properly after transplantation and the odds of rejection or secondary infection are greatly increased. Even with a relative's kidney, Osama would require immunosuppressive drugs for the rest of his life. It was decided that I would visit one of Osama's brothers to ask for his help.

Being from a family of 52 children, Osama had a large pool to draw on. Having thought long and hard about his predicament, he chose his favourite brother, the one who had promised Osama in

recent times that he would cut off his right arm were it to help our cause. I traveled alone to the brother's house, a large villa overlooking the Red Sea near Jiddah's port. I was met at the gate by a security man, having traveled as a tv repairman, complete with van and uniform. We feared that Saudi spies would be observing all Osama's relatives in case he would try and make contact.

I entered the luxurious house and was greeted warmly by the brother. He enquired after Osama's well-being and whereabouts and my heart sank as I told him of his brother's poor health. Without my having to ask, he immediately volunteered to help by donating a kidney. This was indeed a joyous development. I took a blood sample with the kit I had brought. Then I got him to sign a form to confirm that had fixed his tv reception and left. I returned the van to the shop, which was run by the brother of one of our agents, and returned to Osama and the Doctor.

We waited anxiously for the test results and were overjoyed when we heard that a match had been made. The operation would take place immediately. Osama asked me to go to the Empty Quarter during his recuperation, so that our training could be increased. The Doctor would remain by his side. As the surgery was prepared in another location, Osama called a meeting with all our commanders in Saudi Arabia at the time. It would be our most important council of war. Nine gathered at the house and, after a prayer and some food, the meeting got under way.

- We are gathered here today to plan the final stages of our seizure of Saudi Arabia, began Osama. It is time for us to put all our cells on alert. Those in this region will work directly on the attack, while those outside the theatre will work to capitalise on our progress and draw enemy forces away.

- What of our diversion while our forces assemble here? I asked.

- This will happen within days. It is important that all cells are aware of the reason for the diversion. I ask each of you to ensure that all lines of communication with cells are kept open for a few days. The Hajj ends soon, but it still gives us the best cover for our communications and movements. The diversion itself will consist of the assassination of the Kuwaiti Emir and a coordinated uprising in Iraq. Our goal is to make the Americans and their traitor allies believe that the Kuwait attack was sponsored by remnants of Saddam Hussein's regime and that the uprising is their work also. This should draw most of the forces in Saudi Arabia towards Iraq and away from the Empty Quarter.

The plan was discussed at length for many hours and it was time for dawn prayers when the discussions had finished. We each knew what part we had to play. My role would be to ensure that all our fighters in the southern bases were fully-trained and ready for their greatest battle.

I stayed with Osama until after the operation, which was a success. But he was very weak and the Doctor feared that his complete recovery may take longer than expected. The day I left Jiddah, the attack on the Kuwaiti Emir was launched. The Kuwaiti royal family was attending a regatta on the Kuwait City seafront. An assassination squad drove a boat bomb into the promenade, killing the Emir and those closest to him. In total, over 80 were killed by the blast. Our brave martyrs carried Iraqi personal effects and identification and we hoped that enough fragments of bogus evidence remained.

Simultaneously, a series of coordinated raids was launched against the British and American occupiers in Iraq. Every base was attacked and every convoy was ambushed. Attempts were made to assassinate the American military commander and the Iraqi traitors who joined the puppet council. For 48 hours, the scene was one of carnage and confusion. The Americans feared that the Ba'athists were trying to take control of Iraq once more. Sure enough, many of the American forces based on our peninsula were moved into Iraq and Saudi security forces moved closer to Riyadh. America had no troops in reserve. This left the routes open to us to move our men into the west of the country and

Yemen. Oman was another staging post, as it too was close to the Empty Quarter. And our fighters flooded in from all over the Middle East. Veterans of many campaigns and bloody conflicts converged on the Land of the Two Holy Places for the final struggle of liberation. The operation was a great success, with only a handful of our men captured.

As the year drew to a close, we had assembled 12,000 men in the Empty Quarter and the enemy had no clue as to our plans. Osama was with us too, having recovered fully from his kidney transplant operation. His health was now as strong as it had been back in Afghanistan in the 1980s. We felt powerful. Allah was on our side and the endgame was about to unfold.

## 19. OPERATION ALLAH'S RAGE

"So they plotted a plot: and We plotted a plot, while they perceived not.

"Then see the nature of the consequence of their plotting, for lo! We destroyed them and their people, every one.

"See, yonder are their dwellings empty and in ruins because they did wrong. Lo! herein is indeed a portent for a people who have knowledge."

Surah 27. An-Naml, The Ant. V 50-52.

Saudi Arabia, 2006

All winter long, the Empty Quarter was whipped by sand storms. To be caught in the open during a storm would be risk almost certain death. The enemy stayed well away from us and the constant blanket of airborne sand gave us protection from spy planes and patrolling helicopters. Even the Predators were not immune to our sand. Our bases were concentrated in the highlands, which gave some respite from the harsh conditions further north. The ridges and canyons also afforded us natural protection from aerial spies and made the construction and concealment of our bases easier to manage.

Training and preparations continued apace. Our underground bases consisted of living quarters, briefing rooms and firing ranges. Every man ate, drank and slept with his AK and each was a highly skilled marksman, better trained than our American foes. Scouting parties regularly probed the desert for enemy activity, but there was little to report. The Americans believed that we were still in Afghanistan and they continued to search the mountains with their Pakistani allies. They would find few of our men, even if they searched every cave in Afghanistan. The bulk of our forces was in Saudi Arabia or Yemen and the remainder were in Pakistan, preparing to launch a coup there simultaneously with our seizure of power in Saudi Arabia.

The Pakistani operation would be carried out by our men, allied with the Pakistani Islamic guerilla groups with whom we had operated for over 12 years. A sizable portion of the Pakistani army and air force was ready to join us when we seized the upper hand. A total armed force of 40,000 men was ready to take up arms against the traitor dictator Musharraf. Truly our enemies would not know which way to turn when we attacked. Our Taliban allies were also briefed about the plans. They would attack occupying forces at the time of the Pakistani revolution, making it difficult for America to reinforce Musharraf from Afghanistan. Our fighters in Iraq would increase their attacks on the infidels when we attacked Riyadh, again pinning down the reinforcements that the traitor Muslims would need to save their dirty skins.

With Saudi Arabia and Pakistan under our control, and with the Americans unable to intervene strongly, our plan was to foment Islamic uprisings in all other states that were run by puppet, traitor Muslims. We had agitators ready in all traitor states. Their task would be political and military. They would distribute leaflets calling for the destruction of the traitor regimes and also carry out bombings and assassinations. Our vision was for chaos to consume the Islamic world and, when the chaos subsided, to unify Islamic nations into a Global Islamic Alliance. Then we would be strong enough in unity to utterly destroy our enemies and bring Islam to its deserved position of dominance.

The plan was to be activated in the middle of July, when the sun was at its hottest. That would give our men a natural advantage over the Crusaders and their heavy weapons. As the day of attack neared, preparations reached a high pitch. Weapons and ammunition were delivered to strategic locations well inside Saudi Arabia. These and other supplies were landed on the remote eastern coast of

Yemen and shipped across the desert by camel. Guns, missiles, mortars, explosives and electronic equipment, including night vision goggles and encrypted communications systems, all were placed in position. Confidence ran high and our plan was evolving perfectly.

A fortnight before the launch of Allah's Rage, as we had named the operation, Osama called myself and the rest of his commanders in that theatre to a meeting. Though we had operational meetings on a daily basis, this would be the final planning discussion before the attack. I was nervous, as were all the others in the room. We were deep underground and the space was lit only by wall-mounted oil lamps so as to minimise our electricity consumption. What power we had was used for communications and ventilation. A large map of Saudi Arabia was on the wall farthest from the door and we sat on the floor, which was covered in fine rugs.

Osama stood by the map, greeted us and led us in prayer. Then he addressed the gathering.

- Starting tomorrow, we move our forces to within striking distance of Riyadh and Mecca. It will take many days and nights to travel the 500 kilometers and the environment, as we have come to know, is extremely hostile. All units have their travel plans and rendezvous points. Our most important asset now is the element of surprise. Our agents inside Saudi intelligence report that there is no inkling of our plan known to our enemies. They believe us to be still in Afghanistan. It is of the utmost importance that none of our units are detected in transit. That is why the diversionary uprising in Iraq will begin tomorrow. The uprising will include missile attacks on Kuwait and incursions into northern Saudi Arabia. This will focus American spy satellites and Saudi concerns to the north of Riyadh. The south will belong to us. On the day of the attack, the Saudi royals will be the first to feel our anger. Our units will then push into Riyadh, seizing the palaces and administrative centres. Oil facilities will be the secondary targets and all will be mined in case of reprisals. At this point in the attack, many units of the Saudi armed forces will join us and a popular uprising of the oppressed people of Saudi Arabia will force the complete capitulation of the regime. When we declare the foundation of Islamic Arabia, we will prepare for the hardest part of our campaign, absorbing the counter attack of our foes.

- What of Mecca? Asked a commander.

- The taking of the Most Holy Place will be decisive. Our units in and around Jiddah number 2,000 men. They have finely detailed plans for the taking and holding of Mecca, without causing any damage to its most important sites. The assault on Mecca will occur simultaneously with our assault on Riyadh. Both rely on the success of the first stage of the attack, which is the killing of the traitor dynasty.

- What if that attack is not successful? Asked another officer.

- It cannot fail, answered Osama. If the king or the crown prince survive, there will be a rallying point for the armed forces that are not with us and also some of the populace. That would greatly complicate our mission and give time for other traitor regimes in the region to come to the king's aid. I have faith that our assassination plan will succeed. If it does not, we proceed with our plans, but we cannot expect the military forces loyal to our objectives to join us in the open fight. In that scenario, 12 units in Riyadh will have as their key objective the location and destruction of the royals. Let us not forget that this corrupt state was founded when Ibn Saud scaled the walls of Riyadh with just 15 men in 1902, defeated the governor and was acclaimed by the populace as their new ruler. Truly, we have more strength and belief.

- And what of Pakistan?

- The Pakistani coup will unfold to a different timescale. I expect that we will declare the existence of Islamic Arabia to all the world within seven days of beginning our operation. Our men in



Pakistan have orders to choose their time of best opportunity according to our success. Everything depends on us.

Osama looked around the room, smiling at each of us.

- You are all my brothers and I am very proud of our time together. The time for talking is over. When next we meet, it will be in Riyadh. Please pass this message to all your men: "You have fought long and hard in the defence of Allah. Now the time has come to liberate the Land of the Two Holy Places. As your commander, I have the strongest feelings of pride in you and your achievements. But think of the coming campaign as your greatest chance of glory. Those that survive the battles will live long in luxury as heroes of Islam. Those that perish will enjoy an eternity in heaven as martyrs for Allah. May Allah bless you and guide your bullets." That is all.

I left the meeting with a huge knot in my stomach. This was it, the final battle was about to unfold and I would be in the thick of it. My unit would not leave the base for two days, so this gave me ample time to prepare and to pray. I shared a room with another officer and, when I returned there for some rest, he was packing his equipment.

- I leave tonight, he said, a broad smile on his face.

- May Allah guide and protect you, I said.

His unit would be one of the first into action, attacking the main American/Saudi airbase outside Riyadh. Their success would save many of our fighters' lives. Their means of attack included surface-to surface missiles and a convoy of truck bombs, all of which were ready in the desert near the base. Many, if not all, of his men would certainly become martyrs. They would be assisted by units of the Saudi National Guard, whose leaders were with us. The Deputy Crown Prince, as commander of the National Guard, was an Al-Qaeda loyalist and he fully expected to become king once we had killed Fahd and the Crown Prince. My comrade left and I was alone.

I prayed through the night for protection of our forces. By morning, though tired, I felt an increasing confidence. I spent most of the day in a firing range or going over our objectives with my unit commanders. We were tasked with taking and holding the Saudi secret police headquarters. It was a well-fortified building which held many dark secrets of the Saud regime. I had command of 200 men and a variety of powerful missiles. We pored over the ground plans of the building and the surrounding streets. Our plan was simple; we would lay in ambush outside both the main and rear entrances. Shortly after hearing of the attack on King Fahd and his corrupt family, the bulk of the secret police force, which numbered in the hundreds, was expected to race from their headquarters to come to the aid of the royals. We would destroy them with truck mines and missile crossfire. While the ambush engagement continued, a small force would detonate a large bomb at the main entrance and would then enter the building. The ambush teams would follow and we would sweep the entire structure to wipe out all resistance. The dungeons and torture chambers below ground level would be a key target, as almost 100 of our fighters, spies and agents were held captive there. We would also urgently seek intelligence data which would be of use in the unfolding revolution, including information on the whereabouts of all the royals. I was satisfied that my commanders knew their places in the plan and that all were confident of our success. Late that night, we packed our gear and prepared to leave the base for Riyadh.

Osama came to me and wished me well. He would remain at the base until closer to the day of attack, as he needed to be in constant communications with our units in Jiddah, Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan. There were hundreds of decisions yet to be taken and orders to be given. I was sad at having to leave him in this time of great stress, but he needed my support less than I needed to be

involved in an important battle. Not since Afghanistan had I been engaged in an open battle and I was excited by the prospect.

- Your mission is of the utmost importance, he told me. The secret police are the most brutally efficient of Fahd's forces. If they slip out of our trap, they will cost us many lives and make the taking of Riyadh very difficult.

I told him that I well understood the importance of my mission and that he need not worry. Then he asked me to look hard for his brother who, we feared, was a prisoner in the base. I promised that I would return his brother safely to him in Riyadh. We prayed briefly together, embraced and, for the first time, he kissed me on the cheek.

My equipment consisted of the lightweight AK rifle which Osama had given to me on the day our families united in Sudan. I had a waist pouch with six magazines of 30 rounds each, a dagger and an automatic pistol. I carried a backpack containing 10 liters of water, some dry food rations and maps of the Empty Quarter and Riyadh. None of us would carry communications equipment on our journeys, that and our heavy weapons awaited us nearer our objectives.

I traveled with fourteen men from my unit. All were battle-hardened and all had been trained personally by me in Afghanistan or Sudan. We had worked together for months planning and exercising our assault and would link up with the rest of our team at our logistics base on the outskirts of Riyadh. We left in the dead of night, on camels. Most of our army traveled north in the guise of Bedouin. As long as the numbers in each group were kept low, a caravan of camels and riders would never raise suspicion in the Empty Quarter. There was no moon and the night was black. Wolves howled in the near distance, but our camels were not nervous. We followed trails that had been traveled by our forefathers for 2,000 years and our camels were sure-footed and confident. The sky was clear, with the sand storms having subsided earlier in the day. We used the north star for navigation, confirming our position hourly with GPS devices against our detailed maps. There were no oases in the Empty Quarter, which is the largest expanse of sand in the world. After a few hours, the dawn broke and we reached our first staging post.

A large tent was erected in the shade of a large sand dune. A light coating of sand covered much of the tent, rendering it invisible to the eye from more than 50 meters. We tethered our camels and gave them water and food from the supplies inside the tent. Notes were pinned to the inside of the tent. These were from our comrades who had traveled before us and mostly consisted of quotes from the Qur'an and messages of solidarity that would mean nothing to an outsider. We rested for a few hours and set off again in the late afternoon.

That night, we came to an oil installation. The Empty Quarter held large quantities of oil and was dotted with pumping stations, which fed the pipelines that crossed the arid landscape. Our secondary mission was to place explosive charges at this and two more oil installations that were on our designated path. We concealed the camels and lay on the crest of a dune while we observed our target through night vision binoculars. All was quiet. A wire fence surrounded installation, which was poorly lit and seemed to be staffed by only a few men. None appeared armed. I ordered two men to place satchel charges on the pipeline a few hundred meters from the installation and two more to place charges under the largest pump inside. They slipped away into the night and we watched as they successfully completed the tasks. Both bombs were wired to mobile phones. If Osama decided at any time that the installation should be destroyed, the phones would be called and the charges would detonate. I and six other commanders also carried all the numbers.

After a week, we approached Riyadh, having set charges at the other installations on our target

list. The camels were left in a canyon with sufficient grazing to keep them in good condition. We had no doubt that our attack would be successful, but it is always important to have an escape plan also.

We lay on a low hill and observed the capital of Saudi Arabia, as it lay in peace before the approaching storm. In the centre of the great limestone plateau, the Nejd, that dominates Saudi Arabia, the city sprawled before us. Riyadh literally means 'gardens' and the concrete was well endowed with greenery. The main mosques and palaces were easily located. Through binoculars, we scanned the city and located the objective. I pointed out the disused oil pumping station where our heavy weapons were stored. It was two kilometers from the secret police headquarters. We waited for nightfall before making the next move.

In ones and twos, we walked the few kilometers to the secret base. I was first to arrive and had keys to open the gate. I closed the gate, but left it unlocked. I was still outside the city limits and saw nobody. Dirty oil had greatly contaminated the site and ground was black and stinking. Perfect. We would not be discovered in such a filthy, forgotten place. Pipes and pumps lay in different states of repair and sizable weeds grew all around. Behind a clutter of small buildings, a large, low warehouse building sat quietly. I unlocked the door to our logistics base and slipped inside.

The space measured about 20 meters by 40 and 10 high. It was dark, we could not risk using the lights, but boxes could be seen stacked against the side walls. In the centre were four trucks and two jeeps. I used my night vision goggles to inspect the crates. There was plenty of C4 and Semtex explosives, as well as large quantities of home made explosives. There were half a dozen of my old friend, the Stinger and 30 wire-guided anti-tank missiles. Along with an assortment of RPGs, grenades and 7.62mm ammunition, it was a powerful arms cache. There was also plenty of diesel for the trucks and food and water. My comrades drifted in quietly and I placed a guard rota in operation.

Over the next few days, the rest of my team arrived. Time passed quickly as we prepared the truck bombs, prepared the missiles and reconnoitered the target. The safe houses near the HQ entrances would be used to launch the ambushes and we moved the missiles into position. The streets around the target were monitored by TV cameras and there were regular mobile patrols, but our spies had been observing the base for years and we knew how to avoid all its security systems.

At last, the eve of the attack came. The royals would be killed at some time after 2am. When news of the attack reached us, we would have a few minutes to position all the ambush assets. Then our assault would be unleashed, along with 30 other such operations in Riyadh and dozens more in Jiddah, Mecca and other key cities. By dawn, the uprisings in Iraq and Afghanistan would have begun and the Pakistani coup could follow at any time. All depended on the killing of the royals.

It was the Crown Prince's birthday on the day of Allah's Rage and it was indeed fitting that he should die while engaged in lewd acts. On the eve of his birthday, his fellow royals brought the Crown Prince to a house of ill repute, a brothel, in the centre of Riyadh. It was the most exclusive and expensive brothel in the kingdom, with the most beautiful of women and girls from all over the world. It was the favourite of the royals and of every wealthy Saudi businessman, bureaucrat and technocrat and only those who used it knew of its existence. The brothel was a very successful business, with annual profits in the millions, it was involved in the international slave trade and the sexual exploitation of minors. It was a front for the illegal alcohol trade and was also used as a cocaine distribution centre. And it was ours. The Crown Prince's birthday party had taken months to organise. There were many cases of the finest Dom Perignon champagne on ice, caviar, prawns, exotic fruits, Cuban cigars and, of course, the women. The birthday boy would be treated to a display of fine young slaves, brought from Africa, Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia, just for his delectation. He would have sex with one or

maybe two of the girls that took his fancy and he would sleep off the champagne in one of the sumptuous, exotically decorated bedrooms. The King himself would partake of the same evil pleasures. We are confident that he himself will be in the building tonight because we have located girls suitable for his unusual tastes. As the cream of the Saudi royal family enjoyed the rich fruits of the illicit brothel, 10,000 kilos of explosives lay in the basement, more than enough to destroy the entire four storey building and kill everyone inside. One of our agents worked in the brothel and carried the remote control bomb trigger. He would judge when to explode the device and more agents waited outside to alert all units when the event took place.

I waited in an alleyway with my missile team. I carried an RPG and my AK. I had Stinger missiles ready for use and my encrypted walkie-talkie to my ear. Tense hours passed. It reached 2.34am and it happened. Before I received any message on my radio, I heard the blast. It would have been no more than 4 kilometers away from our position, but it still sounded very powerful. It was powerful enough to shake the ground where we stood. The call came through. The attack had been successful; the brothel was leveled and the royals were inside at the time. We rejoiced quietly and primed our missiles.

The main entrance to the police headquarters was at the end of the street, 200 meters from our position. Missile and RPG teams took up positions on both sides of the street. A truck laden with explosives was parked just past our position. This would cut off the head of the convoy and then we would cut its body to pieces. Other teams were at the rear of the building.

15 minutes after we destroyed King Fahd and his closest minions, the secret police went, as they thought, to his rescue. The convoy was led by two APCs. They were followed by eight jeeps and two trucks. The truck bomb exploded and destroyed the APCs. In the seconds of silence that followed, 14 RPGs were primed and sighted on the remaining vehicles. A truck had stopped outside my position, just 20 meters from the alley. As I placed the truck in the centre of my sights, I heard a mighty explosion from the middle distance and assumed that a convoy leaving by the rear entrance had been engaged. I squeezed the firing trigger. The grenade shot from the launch tube and its rocket ignited. The rocket was enough to propel its 10 kilo charge 500 meters. It slammed into the truck and blew it pieces. It was packed with men and many died. The survivors were cut down with machine gun fire from both sides of the street. The other RPG launchers also spat fire and, within seconds, the entire convoy was destroyed. I looked back towards the police base and spotted another APC which had stopped at the base exit and was desperately trying to reverse back. I called to the guided missile team, who fired from their tripod-mounted launcher and destroyed the APC. Still watching the entrance, I noticed a truck approach it at speed. Crashing through the security barriers and pushing the burning APC aside, the truck mounted the steps to the main doorway and exploded in a blinding white flash. I gathered my team and ran towards the building.

Enemy snipers had made it to the roof of the building and began firing at us, cutting down two brave members of my unit. RPG teams and heavy machine gun squads took up positions and fired back, allowing the attack teams to continue forward. Distant rumbling could be heard, which I knew to be the explosions from our attacks all over the city and suburbs.

We reached the building's main entrance. It was devastated from our truck bomb. Shattered bodies and broken glass lay everywhere. The fortified guard house was burning fiercely and fire had spread into the main building. But our way was clear. About 40 of us entered the building in the first wave. We used the building assault techniques that we had practiced so well, with small teams leapfrogging each other, cover always given to the lead unit. There was sporadic resistance, but we used



RPGs to clear all enemy resistance that slowed our assault. With the entrance lobby area and most of the ground floor secure, the rest of our assault teams entered. A heavy presence was maintained outside, in case of police reinforcements and the missile units positioned their weapons around the entrance. As it happened, nobody came to the aid of the secret police, all loyalist forces were being kept busy or were being destroyed elsewhere.

We split into our prearranged search teams and fanned out into the building. Squads cleared every floor of resistance. I ordered an assault team to the roof immediately to kill the snipers and set up Stinger positions. Designated search teams sought out intelligence and computer specialists were brought to the computer centres once they were cleared. I took my team of 20 men to the basement, unaware of the horror that awaited us.

We used a stairwell to descend to what the internal signage referred to as the 'Interrogation Suites'. At the bottom of the stairs was a security door. We pressed the buzzer but got no response. I shouted that Al-Qaeda was in control of the building and that the door should be opened in the Name of Allah. There was no response. Our demolitions experts placed shaped charges on the door's hinges and we retreated up two flights of stairs. The charges were detonated and we returned below to find the door in pieces on the floor. As the smoke cleared, all lights went out. Emergency lighting kicked on after a few seconds, but its low power only added to the gloom. Beyond the door was a long hallway, with corridors leading from it on each side. At the end was an administrative area, with desks and computers. We cautiously entered the hallway, the sounds of the fighting upstairs echoing through the building.

A hand grenade came from the far office, bouncing off the walls and coming to rest at our feet. We jumped back, expecting death, but one of my men jumped forward onto the grenade. His body absorbed most of the blast. He died, I and those nearest me suffered minor shrapnel wounds. His martyrdom saved my life. We immediately charged forward, firing as we ran. When we reached the office, two men were escaping through a fire exit door. We shot them both. We found one more police agent cowering behind a desk. He begged for mercy, knowing none would be shown. But we didn't kill him. I ordered him to take us to the Al-Qaeda cells. As my men fanned out into all the dark corridors, the prisoner told me that all prisoners here were Al-Qaeda suspects or sympathizers.

I stuck my AK into his back and told him to start opening doors. The first door he opened revealed a filthy, dark cell. It was no more than two meters by three and the stench was overpowering. One man was inside. He was filthy, wearing little more than rags and had nothing but a bucket for a toilet and a wooden chair.

- You are free, brother, I said.

- May Allah give thanks, he replied. I knew this day would come.

- We are Al-Qaeda, come to liberate this viper pit. Who are you?

- I am your comrade. I have been languishing here since the attacks on the infidel compounds in 2003. I was arrested immediately after the attack, even though my cell was not involved. I do not know who betrayed us. Can we go now, please? I want to leave this place.

I asked him for a password, which he gave me. Then I told him that we were not there simply to rescue prisoners, but that this was but one element in the liberation of the entire country. When I told him that the royals had been killed, he wept for joy. I sent our enemy prisoner on with my comrades and every cell was opened. All our imprisoned comrades were released and shepherded upstairs to a meeting room, where they were briefed on the uprising and armed. Power was restored and our technicians began to sift through the computers in the cell block.



- Find Osama's brother, I commanded. And find him fast.

I gave my liberated comrade a pistol and asked him to show me to the torture rooms. As he led me down one of the long corridors, he told me of the many times he had been tortured. It was mainly CIA-taught emotional torture that the Saudi police had used on him, but he also showed me scars on his back and arms, where he had been lashed repeatedly. Even with the overhead lights back on, this corridor seemed shadowy and full of foreboding. A door at the end was slightly ajar. Holding my rifle in firing position, I moved slowly to the doorway. The smell from the room was of blood, stale and fresh. I could also smell the ozone associated with electrical discharge in the stale air. The room was fully dark, so I got my night vision goggles from my backpack and put them on. I peered cautiously into the room. To my right was a large, heavy chair with fitted manacles. It looked like an electric chair. Beyond it was a bank of electrical controls, some desks and filing cabinets. I looked to my left and my heart froze when I saw another torture chair, but with a person in it. His head was bent forward, as though he were unconscious. I edged forward into the room and saw movement beyond the torture victim. A man was hiding under a desk.

- Freeze or die, I shouted. - Al-Qaeda controls this base now.

- Don't shoot, sir, came the reply. - I am but a prisoner here myself. I heard shooting and hid here. I thought the guards had started shooting the prisoners.

I moved to him, keeping my gun trained on his chest. My comrade found the light switch and the harsh fluorescents flickered to life.

- That's the torturer! He shouted.

- Are you sure?

- He tortured me twice. I'll never forget his face. He is evil, truly evil.

The man looked at me with a puzzled expression on his face. I hit him in the face with my rifle barrel. He began to bleed. I took a plastic cable tie from my chest pocket and bound his hands behind his back. I told him to kneel, facing the wall and ordered my comrade to keep his gun aimed at the torturer's head, but not to kill him, yet. I went to the man in the torture chair and was shocked to discover that I knew him. It was Osama's brother, Ibn.

- Ibn, can you hear me? I shouted, as I lifted his chin.

He began to blink, in discomfort. I noticed wires leading from his chair to another bank of electrical controls and assumed that he had been electrocuted. I pulled my water container from my backpack and poured some into his mouth.

- I recognise you now, he said. - Am I dreaming or have you come to free me?

- This is no dream. We have taken this base and are now taking the kingdom. Come, let's contact Osama. He will be very pleased.

I unshackled Ibn and he got unsteadily to his feet. I brought Osama's brother to the torturer, handed him my AK and he shot him twice in the face. It was fitting that his blood should be spilt over the blood of so many of our comrades. We moved upstairs and I contacted Osama on my walkie-talkie.

- We have him. Ibn is safe, I cried.

- Praise be to Allah. Thank you, he shouted joyously. - I feared they would kill him once we began our attack. How goes it there?

- The building is ours. The prisoners are free. I don't know if it's fully secure yet. There is still some shooting upstairs. I will contact you as soon as I can confirm our complete success. What news have you?

- Everything goes well. The royals are dead. Even their children at boarding school in England

have been killed by one of our British cells. The National Guard is with us. Much of the American forces at the air base have been destroyed. Riyadh and King Khalid airports are in our control. There is fighting at the main palace and at the Al Faisaliah hotel. A fierce battle is raging at the TV centre. The western compounds are being eliminated one by one. I have reports of helicopters heading in your direction. Be prepared. I will contact you with news in one hour.

I sent my liberated comrades to the room with the other ex-captives, where they were given food, water and guns. I checked our defensive positions at ground level and reinforced them where necessary. I passed word to all units that a counterattack could be imminent and hurried to the roof.

From my high vantage point, the scene of battle encompassed the entire city. Immediately below me, the remnants of the police convoy was still smoking. Towards the city centre, plumes of dirty smoke rose into the sky. Power had been cut in parts of the city and leaping flames provided dancing light in the darkness. Dawn was still a couple of hours off. It was our intention to control the city by then. Far off in the distance, powerful explosions lit up the sky. The capital's main air force base was rocked again and again by blasts. It was from that direction that the sound of helicopters came to my ears.

- Stinger teams ready! I shouted. - Helicopters approaching!

I alerted the ground level defence teams to the helicopters' approach, as a simultaneous ground assault would be likely, if the crown had sufficient forces. I scanned the sky with my night vision goggles and spotted them. There were two Blackhawk troop carriers and two Apache gunships. The Blackhawks dropped from sight. Doubtless they would drop their troops at a safe distance while the Apaches attacked. I prepared my Stinger, fixing the battery coolant unit and scanning the sky for an Apache heat signature. They began to circle our position at a range of a kilometer, scanning our positions. After a minute, one helicopter peeled away from its orbit and came towards us. Though its exhaust ports were shielded with heat dissipaters, I got the target acquisition tone. I fired my missile. As it streaked towards its target, the Apache fired a Hellfire missile at us. It struck the parapet 25 meters from my position, killing three of my men and destroying a heavy machine gun. Worse for us, the Apache had dropped flares and my missile was attracted away from its target, exploding uselessly in the sky. I quickly changed missile tubes. The Apache flew right over our position, strafing the roof with its cannon. It was in the same relative position as the Hind in Afghanistan all those years before. I acquired it and launched. Its exhaust ports were directly in my missile's path and the flares were not enough to deflect it this time. The missile struck home and the Apache fell to earth with a thunderous blast. The other Apache was engaged with our other heavy machine gun and it kept its distance. Its missiles were still a serious threat to us, so it had to be destroyed. I ordered RPGs to be readied and prepared another Stinger. If it came to within half a kilometer, it would be in range of the RPGs, which were proven to be excellent anti-helicopter weapons in Somalia.

My walkie-talkie clicked to life. The enemy troops were approaching the main entrance below. I sought them out with my goggles and saw about 20 heavily-armed men cautiously sneaking up behind the burning convoy. I saw that they wore American uniforms. I passed this information to the teams below. A missile was launched from our defensive positions below. It slammed into a destroyed APC beside the enemy and killed four of them. Then our fighters on each of the floors below me opened up with AKs, RPGs and machine guns. The Americans were cut down in a hail of deadly fire. What had they hoped to achieve with such a maneuver? I could only deduce that our attacks had caught them with complete surprise and their forces were in disarray. A Blackhawk came too close to us as it attempted to give covering fire to the troops with its door-mounted machine guns. An RPG struck it

and it collapsed to the ground. The remaining Apache came closer, attempting to strafe our ground level missile positions. I fired a Stinger, which was again deflected by its flares, but an RPG struck its tail, causing it to spin out of control. It crashed into an office block and exploded. I checked to our rear, wondering if the ground attack was just a diversion, but there was no sign of enemy activity. With dread, I heard the low rumble of attack jets and feared that they were coming to obliterate us. Two F-16s screamed into view, but flew past us, in the direction of the American air base. Probably they were from a different base and had come to lend support to their comrades. They were gone before I could reload my Stinger launcher, but I saw a missile rise in the distance and follow the jets before falling back to earth.

The remaining Blackhawk fled. I left the roof defence teams in place and returned downstairs. At the main entrance, our missile teams and snipers were in position, seeking out targets. We had suffered no casualties in the enemy assault, except for those on the roof. I sent more RPG units upstairs, as well as replacement Stinger rounds and BCUs. As we stood in the lobby area, a rocket struck one of our missile teams outside. Clearly, some of the Americans had survived. I ordered a dozen men to come with me to destroy the last remnants of the enemy force. We carefully climbed out a shattered window at the side of the building and moved towards our enemy's flank. We sheltered behind some parked vehicles and planted two Claymore mines. These mines are the perfect ambush weapons. They are detonated by wire from a safe position and they incorporate a curved steel plate to deflect the blast in any chosen direction. The Americans moved forward, not having seen us. When they were in line with the mines, I pushed the detonation switch and they were cut to pieces. Our snipers in the base opened fire also. After a few seconds I gave the command to hold fire and we cautiously approached the enemy. All were dead, save one who suffered a severe leg injury. I ordered two men to take him to the base and give him first aid, as per Osama's orders. He would give us useful intelligence on the state of the opposition. We checked the rest of the street and found little but bodies.

I returned to the base, where all was secure. Dawn was beginning to break over Riyadh as Osama contacted me again.

- Has the enemy counter-attacked? He asked.

- Yes, a light force of American troops with some helicopters. We have held our position. What was their game plan, do you know?

- I believe there is information or some other asset in the secret police headquarters that means a lot to them. Probably they wish to cover their involvement with the brutal royals? Have your men continue searching. I also want a list of informers as quickly as possible. They will be cleansed from this Islamic nation starting today.

- Do you want me to remain here, I asked.

- No, put your second-in-command in charge of the search and defence. Come to me now. Bring my brother. Did you suffer many casualties?

- Praise be to Allah, but our losses were very light.

- Good. Bring 20 men with you. We have a fight here that requires more resources. Are the prisoners capable of fighting?

- Yes, they are weak from their captivity, but well able to shoot. They are now bolstering our defences. Do you expect further counter attacks?

- I don't think so. The battle for Riyadh is nearly won. Come quickly.

I checked all defensive positions, confirmed that lists of informers and traitors were being compiled accurately, and selected the 20 men who would travel with me into central Riyadh. We

traveled in three jeeps, as the journey was a few kilometers. The city was quiet, save for the sounds of gunfire from the middle distance. The air was smoky and the unique, acidic smell of cordite was on the morning breeze. The streets should have been bustling, millions rushing to prayers, to business, to help support the despicable regime. But they stayed at home today, glued to their televisions, computers and radios. They waited to be told what to do, feeling both horror and excitement at the fierce struggle to control the city. It felt strange. But I smelled victory.

My walkie-talkie crackled to life constantly, picking up communications between units. The chatter was generally positive. The enemy's advantages in air superiority and artillery could not be easily used in a city; we had destroyed much of his air power and our hundreds of American and Soviet surface-to-air missiles made his remaining helicopters easy prey. Our meticulous planning had paid off. Each key objective was falling to us, one after the other. The domino effect began to work in our favour, with the weight of our success causing further success. As enemy barracks were cut off, so the supply chain was cut. His tanks began to run low on fuel. Ammunition became scarcer. But our supply dumps were unknown to the enemy forces.

After driving for a few uneventful minutes, three enemy jets screamed low over us, but they made no effort to attack. We rounded a corner to find the remains of an American/Saudi checkpoint. A dozen bodies lay on the road and two APCs were burning tombs to ten more. A few of our men also lay dead. I said a quick prayer to them. We expected to lose a thousand men that day. Then we saw a middle-aged woman clutching her dead teenage son's body as she sat against a lamp post. He must have been killed in the crossfire. Her face was blackened from the smoke of battle, but her eyes were bright with anger. She looked closely at us, but made no comment.

Many more civilians lay dead in our path. As we neared Osama's command centre, which was in a central office block, I called ahead on my walkie-talkie to confirm our ETA. A checkpoint manned by our own men barred our path. I identified myself to the commander. Three large trucks were parked end to end across the street. The middle vehicle drove out of our way and we passed through a hundred men with missiles, mortars and four captured APCs. The sound of gunfire was suddenly much closer. We were close to the TV broadcasting centre and I took that to be the location of battle. Another American jet roared overhead, this time dropping bombs on a target we couldn't see.

We reached the office, which was surrounded by fighters, trucks, jeeps and missiles. I put my men in a sheltered position and took Ibn to see his brother. His personal protection fighters stood at every doorway. I walked up the stairs to the first floor and was admitted to a large, open plan office. City maps and computer screens. A dozen men spoke to field commanders on walkie-talkies or satellite phones. When they had news of an operation, they wrote a note and pinned it to objective markers that stood on a huge map of the city which lay on the floor in the centre of the room. Osama paced across the map, reading notes and uttering commands to two communications officers that walked at his side. He spotted us and rushed over to embrace his brother. Then he thanked me for my good work and immediately pointed to the map.

- Look, we have most of our objectives in our control or surrounded. The enemy is in disarray. It is time to announce to the people that they are witnessing the birth of a new nation, so that they will be patient and assist us.

- What of the American forces? Are they sending any reinforcements? What about heavy bombers?

- All in due course, my friend. We know that there are B52s and Stealth bombers in the air. They may strike at any moment. We must focus on remaining objectives and consolidate our defenses around

the city.

- And how can I help, I asked.

- The broadcasting centre is stoutly defended. We must have it intact. I am eager to transmit a message of hope to the people, but it appears to be defended by American special forces. They are proving difficult to remove. There are over 100 men waiting for you outside and two helicopters at your disposal. Use your leadership to bring them victory and to clear my path. May Allah be with you.

- I will contact you as soon as we have control of the building.

My assault team was in motion in minutes. The main force continued to the TV centre, with orders to launch an immediate frontal assault on all sides. I went to rendezvous with the helicopters at a sports ground. With six of my best men, I would be dropped onto the roof and we would fight our way into the building, taking its defences from behind. We met no resistance on the way to the sports field, the streets were still deserted. Two National Guard Huey helicopters awaited us, their rotors spinning idly. The pilots would radio the TV centre's defenders, saying they had orders to pick them up from the roof, as the building is to be destroyed by B52s. The pilots had the day's codewords and the Americans would assume that the fog of war led to their direct commands being lost. We would cut them down as they looked to us for rescue.

The plan worked well. We approached the main building in the complex and saw a dozen men crouching behind cover. Some were at the edge of the roof, firing at my main force as it approached the entrance the building. The enemy soldiers waved to us. As the helicopters landed on the roof, we opened the side doors and killed them with our rifles and with the helicopter's door guns. We jumped to the roof, checked the bodies and entered the building. There was no resistance inside. We joined the main force, posted defences and searched the building. I contacted Osama with the good news.

- Your ploy worked, he said happily.

- Another 12 dead Americans who should have stayed in their own land, I replied.

- Is the broadcast equipment ok? Most stations are still broadcasting, mostly patriotic music with still images of the royals.

- Yes, our technicians are getting a studio ready for you. We can broadcast at any time. Is it safe for you to travel here now?

- I will wait until nightfall, which is just a couple of hours away. I will travel by jeep. This part of the city is entirely in our hands. Civilians have started to venture out and are exclaiming that the corrupt royals have been overthrown. Don't concentrate all your men in the buildings, as you may be bombed. Allah be with you.

We ended the discussion and sent most of the men to the streets outside, while I went to a control room to look at the TV broadcasts. Al-Jazeera, CNN, Sky News and a dozen other channels lit up screens in the cramped, dim room, which a glass wall separated from a small studio with green couches and a neutral background. Others watched with me and men came and went constantly, delivering more immediate news of battle. The impact of all the footage and reports was dizzying. Some of the battles that I had been involved in that long day were there on the screen. At least maps and footage of the aftermath were there. Reporters stood on different rooftops, massive palls of smoke rising behind them. But this was not Baghdad, this was Riyadh. The journalists and the studio commentators all shared the same expression of shock and confusion. Stock markets were collapsing as they opened. I saw that the American Dow Jones and NASDAQ indices had lost about 30 percent of their values and trading was suspended. The money lenders in New York saw their riches erased because they realised that we could win this war and they saw that we controlled the world's largest oil



reserves. The coverage on the Arab news channels was more upbeat. There were scenes of jubilation in the streets of the West Bank and Gaza. There was rejoicing in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Oman, Sudan, Egypt, Syria and many, many other countries. We would soon have control of Riyadh, Jiddah and Mecca, and Osama's TV broadcast would unite all the Muslim anger into the force that would create the Islamic World Nation. The Pakistan coup was to be launched at any moment and the battles for Afghanistan and Iraq seemed to be going our way. The hammer blows lay in wait for the enemy in his homeland and his crooked Saudi business partners were dead. All looked well for us as dusk fell, while I stared in awe at the televisions. Then things began to go wrong.

As I watched a report of the battle at the Americans' air base, which showed dozens of enemy aircraft burning on the tarmac, my mind drifted. I was tired and realized I hadn't eaten a morsel all day. I began to rise from my seat, having decided to look for the staff canteen, when the first bombs hit.

In an instant, I was on my knees, the ceiling in pieces on my shoulders and my mouth full of dust. Mighty explosions shook the ground and all was black. We had been hit four 2,000lb JDAM bombs. The B52s had made it to Saudi Arabia and their satellite-guided bombs were America's attempt to snuff out the revolution on its first day. The upper floors had collapsed, but I was in the basement studio. Most in the control room with me had survived and we made our way to an exit, unsure of our bearings. We made it to an exit which led up and outside and it was unobstructed. The broadcasting centre was burning and more bombs struck the surrounding support buildings. The shards of glass were shaken from their shattered frames and we dived for cover. When the smoke had cleared somewhat, we made our escape. Running towards the street where our main force was waiting, I turned to look behind me. The transmission towers had collapsed and lay over the heaps of flaming rubble and twisted girders; the building was completely decimated. We had been very lucky to escape. I contacted Osama and told him to stay as he was. He reported that bombs had fallen on his command post also. Many were dead. The Americans had also struck 10 other targets around the city and had managed to hit most of our strongholds, including the secret police headquarters. We would hold our positions until morning, regroup and plan the next phase of the attack. The broadcast by Osama would still go ahead and a TV crew from Al-Jazeera was ordered to await collection from a quiet part of the city. I went to him with my remaining men. We had lost 25 in the bombing and all looked a little disheartened. Night fell, casting a gloomy silence over our convoy.

Osama had been slightly injured in the attack. A bomb had fallen on the street outside his command post. The target had probably been the vehicles that had gathered earlier for my mission. The enemy hadn't known of the true importance of the position, or more than one bomb would surely have fallen. Still, they had killed over 50 men and caused cuts to Osama's face. He sat on ammunition boxes while dressings were applied to his cuts.

- You know we're not allowed to shave, I joked. My heart felt heavy but to show that would do no good.

- I wasn't shaving, he replied. - The Crusaders tried to help me on my way to Allah. Praise be to Allah that he saw fit to let me finish my mission.

- Can you still go on air? Is the TV crew here yet?

- They're on their way. If I go on air like this, will people think that we are suffering losses? Would it give our enemy more hope?

- I think it best that you read the message. If the bleeding can be stopped, possibly we could apply makeup to hide the wounds? Or just give them an audio recording. Or I will talk, or one of the other commanders.

- I must think.

I left him and sought some food, the American bombs having prevented my previous search from bearing fruit. My arms ached and were badly bruised from the attack. I had insignificant cuts to my hands and face and, when I caught my reflection, saw that my face was blackened. I found a box of cold kebabs and some bottles of water, which were being taken as needed by hungry troops. The simple pitta bread, lamb and salad snack was like manna from heaven to my starving stomach and my mood lightened considerably. The night was quiet, though jets could be heard at all times. The bombing had stopped, though. Reports kept coming in of heavy casualties and strategic assets being destroyed. They had gone after bridges and highways as well as military targets. The electricity network and the water system hadn't yet been hit. In the 45 degree summer heat, there would be chaos and massive civilian casualties if that came to pass. But everything else stood still. The enemy meant to show the citizens of Riyadh that what Al-Qaeda proposed as a better society would be bombed into the stone age. They announced to the excited news cameras that the battle to retake Riyadh had begun and that oil from Saudi Arabia would be blockaded. With the infrastructure in ruins and no means of financing a recovery, the Pentagon strategists had figured that there would be no popular approval of an Al-Qaeda-led government.

After a time, Osama came to me and asked me to read the declaration. I was humbled at being the one who would declare the birth of Islamic Arabia and the Caliphate that would rule its citizens with justice under Shari'a. I washed my face and said a quick prayer to Allah.

The TV crew arrived and its two members were searched. Their camera was scanned and sniffed and they confirmed that they would record the speech, instead of generating a live broadcast that could be pinpointed by satellite. An enemy drone buzzed overhead as we entered the partially destroyed office building. We found a room which was unscathed. A banner proclaiming Islamic victory was pinned to the wall behind a desk. I sat at the desk, my AK before me, the declaration in my hands, on two sheets of paper. The camera began recording and I spoke.

- Greetings to fellow Muslims everywhere. Allah has given us a great gift this day. The corrupt kingdom of Saudi Arabia is no more. Instead, the Land of the Two Holy Places is henceforth to be known as Islamic Arabia. Our law will be the Qur'an and we will be led by the Caliph bin Laden. The Caliph has decreed that the wealth of Islamic Arabia will be shared equally among its people and that the Crusaders will not benefit from our vast oil reserves. While this may cause some difficulties in the days and weeks ahead, he asks that all citizens help to conserve energy and water. Our enemy is weakened but still poses a threat. Have no doubt, if the Crusaders choose to attack us, they will pay many times over. We call on all Muslims around the world to support us in our God-given right of self-determination. We also call on all Muslims around the world to overthrow the traitor regimes that support the Crusaders and unite with us in a World Islamic Nation. Our first duty is to protect Islamic Arabia from the enemy and traitor forces that continue to engage in combat against us. There are major battles yet to be fought but, Allah willing, we will persevere. Allahu-Akbar.

The camera crew left quickly and we decided to move our command post immediately. One of the dead royals' minor palaces was unscathed from the first day's battles and, as it was in a densely populated area, it would be a difficult target to bomb. As Osama began ordering our men to disassemble our communications gear, a Cruise missile slammed into the building followed, a second later, by another. I was knocked to the ground, amid scenes of bloodshed and chaos. I lost consciousness.

In my frantic dreams, the enemies of Islam surrounded me. There were American children with

bombs strapped to their bodies, Jews with Muslim heads on spears and the ghosts of the Saud royals, oil spurting from their wounds. As they closed on me, they chanted 'Die disbeliever' and I had nowhere to turn. I woke with a start, my body covered in sweat. I was in a dark room, a small incandescent bulb suspended from the ceiling a few meters away. Its dim light wasn't enough to make out any detail of my surroundings. I tried to talk, but my voice was gone; my throat felt as dry as the sands of the Empty Quarter. My head was full of pain. I put my hand to my forehead and felt damp bandages. I was wearing the same clothes that I had worn on the day of our victory in Riyadh, still dusty and ragged and I lay on a blanket on the ground. As my eyes grew accustomed to the low light, I noticed a jug of water and a glass beside me. With difficulty, I poured some water and drank it greedily. My throat felt better. I noticed a saline drip, hanging from a hook in the rough rock wall and fixed to my left forearm. I tried to rise, but could not. I called out for help and then heard voices from nearby. A man came to my side, a man I did not know.

- Where am I? What happened? Where is Osama? I asked.

- All in good time, my friend. You are safe and Osama is safe. That is all that matters. Your morphine has worn off. I will give you some more now.

- I don't want morphine. I want to know what happened, I insisted.

- I am sorry, he said as he filled a syringe from a small glass bottle. - I have orders to keep you sedated until your injuries heal.

He injected the drug into my right forearm, where I saw a dozen needle marks. Then I faded away, back into my fitful sleep, haunted once more by my legions of enemies.

When I next awoke, I felt considerably better. My throat was moist and my head was less pained. I called out and my medic returned.

- Do you feel strong enough to eat? He asked.

- I would like some fruit, I replied.

- Very good.

He left and returned after a few moments with a plate of dates, bananas and grapes. I ate all the fruit and asked to be taken from my sickbed. He agreed and helped me to my feet, which were very unsteady. He supported me and we walked from the small room into a larger room. There were more lights hanging from the ceiling and about a dozen men, some known to me, sitting on the floor at the far end.

- Praise be to Allah, called a voice. - You are still with us.

- Yes Osama, I answered. Now can you tell me where I am and what happened?

- Come join us, he motioned.

The medic helped me forward and I sat beside Osama, my back resting against the rock wall.

- We are in a cave, west of Riyadh, he began. - The battle has gone against us and Islamic Arabia is plunged into crisis. The Crusaders and their traitor allies have taken the upper hand. But all is not yet lost.

- How did this happen? I asked.

- We were struck by Cruise missiles. Our position was betrayed by the Deputy Crown Prince. I fear he felt that we would kill him after our need of his National Guard was met. He made a deal with the Americans. They installed him as the new king and his forces fought against us. As we were being rescued from our command post, the Americans used mini-nukes on our key positions in Riyadh. They also bombed the water desalination plants and electricity substations. Then they struck the Empty Quarter and destroyed two of our bases in the Afghan mountains. They feared that we were close to

total victory, so they used their nuclear weapons. Many thousands of innocent Muslims have died. The coup in Pakistan was postponed as news of the nuclear strikes reached the outside world.

- When did this happen? I asked.

- That was one week ago. You have been unconscious since. We escaped the city in jeeps and made it here to our fallback position. I ordered our men to disengage as the battle was one we could no longer win. The oil facilities were destroyed as we made our way here. There are 30 of us here now, some wounded, all demoralized.

Osama looked grey and shaken by these events. I could tell by his voice and the disposition of the other fighters in the cave that we had been defeated.

- Some of our men are fighting on, he continued. - Jiddah and Mecca still shake with the sounds of battle. The Americans brought their forces across the Red Sea from Sudan and they have encircled Jiddah. Even worse, the Israelis have invaded from the north. Their armored force is making its way towards us now.

- The Jews are here? I exclaimed in shock. - How could the Jews also enter the Land of the Two Holy Places? Surely every Muslim will rise up against them?

- They are here because the Americans still don't have the strength to reclaim the land. The population is incensed, yes, but any demonstrations against this disgraceful development have been put down with brutality. I fear the new king we have helped to create likes the Americans and Jews more than any who have gone before. His spies are everywhere. The desert sky above us is busy with spy planes and bombers. Any movement is attacked mercilessly. A curfew is in force throughout the land.

I was stunned at this news. The discussion continued on around me as I tried to come to terms with what had happened. My head still ached and, though I was groggy from the morphine, the anger burnt brightly inside me. It was decided that we would leave the country. The Americans and their Jew and Saud allies would not stop until they had flushed us out. Any suspicion they had as to our position would be followed by a mini-nuke. They had dropped an average of one nuclear bomb a day and insisted to the enraged world that they would continue to use their nuclear weapons until Osama and the leadership of Al-Qaeda was no longer a threat to their status quo. All agreed that dispersal was the safest option. It was decided that I and two strong fighters would travel to southern Egypt with Osama, where we would hide out and plan our next moves.

- What of our men at Mecca? I asked.

- They have been ordered to fight to the death in defence of our Most Holy Place. Their example will live long after this defeat and they will be the ones who will give us final victory, by showing Muslims everywhere that it is our duty to give our blood in defence of Islam and the memory of the Prophet Muhammad.

The discussion ended and Osama brought me outside the cave. The sun blinded me, but its life-giving warmth gave me more energy. We lay on a rocky outcrop. He handed me his binoculars.

- Look there, towards Riyadh, he commanded.

I took the binoculars and scanned the horizon. Plumes of black smoke hung low on the horizon. Vast fires engulfed the oil facilities that we destroyed during our retreat and smaller fires raged in many buildings.

- Look there, further to the right, he said.

I panned across and saw, to my amazement, a voided area, a kilometer in diameter, which should have been within Riyadh's city limits, but now looked like nothing more than blackened desert.

- That was the secret police headquarters which your brave men took, he said. It was the first

location to be destroyed by their nuclear weapons. All your men died and all the secrets of the Saud regime died also.

I continued to scan the city. Many helicopters were in the air. As I looked at one, it turned and began to head in our direction.

- A Predator, coming our way! I shouted.

We ran back into the cave, ordered the generator to be turned off and called for complete silence. The spy plane's buzzing came nearer and it appeared to circle our position for a few minutes. I felt like a man in a submarine with enemy ships above, waiting for death to rain down at any second. The buzzing faded.

- We must prepare to move now, said Osama. - I fear they may be aware of our position.

We packed our weapons, food and water and waited for nightfall. We would travel on foot through the desert. There were enemy checkpoints on every road and we could not risk traveling by jeep. We wore thermal insulating material inside our robes so that the enemy's heat sensors would not pick up our body heat. We would travel only by night. We knew that we had sufficient supplies until we reached a supply point 50 kilometers away. We set off after sunset, heading west towards Mecca.

The journey was difficult for me. I felt well, but weak. I had been ordered by my medic to change my head wound dressings every night and I had a course of antibiotics to complete. I did not want to slow my group down, so pushed myself forward, every step of the way. The desert sand kept our progress slow. We saw many patrols in the desert and enemy spy planes were as thick as flies. There were some oases along the way and their waters greatly boosted our morale. We came across bands of Bedouin, but could not risk making contact. We did not know who to trust in this twisted land of traitors, Jews and Crusaders.

We were in the desert for many months. When we reached the Red Sea coast, we had little knowledge of what had happened behind us in Riyadh or how the battle had gone in Mecca. It was late December when we saw the blue waters of the sea that stood between us and Egypt. It was decided that we would stay at a safe house outside a small fishing village near Yanbu al Bahr before we planned our escape from what was, briefly, Islamic Arabia. With Allah's help, it would become Islamic Arabia again some day soon.



## 20. MARTYRDOM IN THE DESERT

“By the declining day,

“Lo! Man is in a state of loss,

“Save those who believe and do good works, and exhort one another to truth and exhort one another to endurance.”

Surah 103. Al-Asr, The Declining Day. Vv. 1-3

Egypt, 2007

The safe house had been secure and met our needs perfectly. The man who owned the house was a fisherman and his boat would be our means of escape. We crossed the Red Sea on a night with no moon and safely disembarked in Egypt late the next day. A small, rocky beach south of the town of Berenice in Foul Bay gave us good cover as we unloaded our weapons and supplies. Having had a complete communications blackout as we crossed the Arabian desert, Osama had been supplied with a satellite phone by our comrade. We would use this to make contact with the Doctor and our Egyptian allies as we made our way north towards Cairo.

Our comrade had also informed us of developments in the months that we were in the desert. Mecca had fallen to the Saudi National Guard after a bloody conflict that lasted weeks. Even the Americans were not stupid enough to send the Israelis into Mecca, which is a pity as that would have triggered a mass uprising across the Muslim world. The Americans had brought tens of thousands of reservists into Arabia and had extinguished most of the oil fires. Oil was once again flowing to feed their insatiable demand for energy. The uprising in Iraq continued and the battles in Afghanistan had not abated. All was not lost. The worst news was of a traitor in our Pakistani cells who had led the Americans to our coup planners within the Pakistani military. They had been executed without mercy. It was feared that the same traitor had supplied the locations of our Afghanistan bases that were annihilated by American nuclear bombs.

Osama's plan was to move north cautiously. This was new terrain to us. We had no supply dumps here and the enemy would likely have forces stationed in our path, aiming to cut off fighters fleeing Arabia to a safe haven in Egypt. We made good progress through the night. When dawn began to break, we took shelter on a rocky outcrop and surveyed the desert ahead. To our dismay, three American Blackhawk helicopters were bearing down on our position.

- Can they know that we are here? I asked in shock.

- Not unless our boatman has betrayed us, answered Osama. - Take cover, quickly.

We scrambled down into a canyon that was littered with large boulders. As we took shelter behind the rocks, the helicopters swooped low over us and circled our position. Out of sight, they landed.

- We have been betrayed, said Osama. - It is time to fight or die. Don't shoot until I do.

We moved down the canyon and found a good ambush position. There were caves on either side and few boulders to offer shelter outside them. Myself and Osama entered one cave and our two comrades the other. We took position and assessed our weapons stocks. We each had an AK, four full magazines and three grenades. That was all. I reckoned our enemy force to be composed of at least 24 heavily-armed commandos. As soon as the firing started, they would call in support, if not more soldiers then perhaps a nuclear bomb. My throat was dry and fear gripped my stomach. Our comrades across the canyon signaled to our right. We looked down and saw the first group of Americans

cautiously make their way towards us. I had the lead soldier in my sights. He was a young black man, possibly 30 years old. His desert fatigues and Heckler & Koch sub machine gun showed him to be a member of one of the special units that had been created to hunt us down. He was closer to his quarry than he imagined. The six Americans drew closer, still unaware of our position. When they were in line with us, not more than 25 meters away, Osama fired.

The soldier in my sights died when I squeezed off my first shot. His head exploded from the power of my round at such close range. Our comrades also opened fire and all the enemy died. We looked back down the canyon for the rest of the enemy force, when a hail of gunfire hit our comrades' position. This was followed by two M70 rifle grenades and we feared that we were now on our own. An enemy unit was at the opposite end of the canyon and we had not detected them. A further force came from the direction of the first and a helicopter rose behind them, spraying the canyon with its machine guns.

- Grenades, said Osama. I'll throw right, you throw left. Then we run.

We pulled the pins and threw the grenades. Both landed on their targets and exploded, killing or injuring many of our enemies in clouds of dust. We sprang from our hiding place and clambered up the hill behind. The loose surface was hard to negotiate and, as we neared the crest, a helicopter rose ahead of us, its door-mounted machine gun spitting fire in our direction. We were in the open, with no cover.

- Roll! Shouted Osama.

We clutched our rifles tight to our chests and rolled down the far side of the hill. The helicopter kept firing at us and, as we reached the floor of the canyon, enemy soldiers on the crest of the hill behind us began to fire also. We sheltered behind some rocks and I shot at the helicopter, which peeled away, while Osama fired at the commandoes. Suddenly, the soldiers fell to the ground in a hail of bullets. At least one of our comrades had survived. A huge firefight erupted on the other side of the hill, as the Americans pounded our comrades' cave with rifles, grenades and rocket launchers.

We took advantage of this distraction and made our way down the canyon. We could hear the enemy helicopters, but could not see them. We scrambled up a high slope and found a good position, protected from behind by large boulders, but with a clear view into the canyon below and also the canyon where we had laid our ambush. We took the opportunity to regain our breath. We were both breathing heavily and were covered in perspiration and desert sand. Osama passed me his water bottle and I drank gratefully.

- What do we do now? I asked.

- We wait. I think we made it here without being detected. They possibly believe that we are still in the ambush canyon.

We lay quietly for a few minutes until our full strength returned. The sounds of gunfire rattled through the canyons, echoing away to silence, save for the ever-present buzzing of the choppers.

- They are firing at shadows now, I smiled.

- If I know our enemy, they will call in an air strike and retreat to a safe distance, attempting to cut off our escape routes while we burn beneath their bombs. Let's move.

We retreated further north and found a mountain goat trail that led down the far side of the steep hill, giving us a good footing and some cover. A helicopter swooped low ahead of us, but we managed to conceal ourselves in time. We continued along the trail and, when we were almost a kilometer from the initial contact location, heard the thudding rotors of more helicopters approaching from the distance.

We watched in awe as a dozen helicopters, some were gunships but most were heavy troop carriers, emerged from the hazy sky to the north. A sense of fear was building inside me and I felt that the enemy knew for sure that Osama was their quarry and that we would be killed.

- They smell us, he said. But they will not take us alive. They plan to throw a cordon around us.

To our great relief, the fresh forces flew over our heads and circled the point of first contact at a radius of half a kilometer. They thought we were still holed up there and this gave us great hope. We heard the helicopters landing and listened as the Apaches fired missiles into the canyon. We continued on, sensing that we would actually escape this deadly trap. After a few minutes, a distant rumbling grew louder.

- Watch the skies, said Osama. - The bombers are coming.

From the east, four fast-moving grey shapes shot into view. They were AV-8 VTOL, vertical takeoff or landing attack bombers, laden with 2,000 pound bombs. They had probably been sent from a marine task force carrier in the Red Sea. There was a truly mighty force hunting us. The jets screamed low over our heads and swept around us in a wide arc. The ground forces would have retreated to a safe distance and set up laser target designators to guide the bombers in.

After a few moments, they began their bombing runs. A massive blast shook us as the first bomb hit. We were at a safe distance, but we still felt the concussion and rocks above us were dislodged, creating an rockslide that narrowly missed us. Seven more detonations followed in quick succession, pounding the canyon behind us into rubble. The jets swooped over us again as they made their way back to their carrier, doubtless to rearm and return.

The helicopters, which had left the target zone after dropping their troops, returned to continue sweeping the area from above. There was an open plain ahead of us, perhaps a kilometer wide. Beyond the plain was a large mountain range. That range would offer us a safe haven. The Americans could bomb the rocks there with all their weapons and it would take a very lucky impact to hurt us.

- We will be exposed as we cross the plain, said Osama, but it is our only hope of escape. Can you manage it?

- Truly Allah is pointing the way, I replied. - The mountains will protect us as did the mountains of Afghanistan.

- Good. There is some bit of cover there and there, he said, pointing to small, rocky outcrops that dotted the otherwise empty sands. - We will aim for those and pray that the helicopters are busy looking for our bodies.

We waited until the helicopters' noise was at its lowest level, then set off across the plain. Dusk was beginning to fall and, as we made fast progress, it seemed that we would escape. We reached the first rocky outcrop and rested for a few minutes. Looking back, we could see a swarm of helicopters, making circuits of the bomb site. Their circles were becoming wider, which alarmed us. We moved on. We reached the final shelter, just 200 meters from the mountain range's first hills and canyons. The mighty peak of Jabal Hamatah towered in the distance. From there, it was 200 kilometers west to Aswan and safety.

We ran across the final stretch of open desert. The sound of a helicopter grew louder. I turned to look and saw a troop carrier traveling low, directly towards us at top speed.

- We've been spotted, I shouted.

- Keep running! Allahu-Akbar! he replied.

We ran as fast as we could over the soft sand. I tripped over a boulder and fell heavily, pain shooting through my right shoulder. Osama stopped but I shouted at him to keep running. The noise

from the helicopter was now deafening. A door gunner opened fire and a storm of bullets hit the sand around Osama, who still hesitated. He fell to the ground. I raised my AK and fired at the helicopter. Thick smoke began to billow from its engines and it landed heavily ahead of Osama's motionless form. I was filled with fury and ran forward, throwing my remaining grenades and emptying a magazine into the enemy aircraft. I reached the helicopter and found that its two pilots were dead and the door gunner who had shot Osama lay mortally wounded. I unlocked his restraining harness and dragged him out onto the desert ground.

- Infidel! I shouted at his blank face. He was bleeding heavily from a bullet wound in his chest. - How dare you shoot my friend! I was enraged. He feebly moved his right hand towards his holstered pistol and I slapped it aside. I took my dagger from its scabbard and cut his throat. His last breath gurgled in bloody bubbles from the cut and he went to hell. A million curses on him. I ran back to Osama. A bullet had torn half his neck away. I could see into his throat and blood spurted from a shattered artery. I put my hand on the wound to apply pressure.

- Come, I said. We are near safety. Then I can stop the bleeding.

With difficulty, I raised him to a standing position, his right arm over my shoulder, my left arm supporting him around the waist. My AK was slung over my right shoulder, Osama's was lost in the confusion. We stumbled forward and reached a canyon. We continued up the canyon until we reached a small recess off it. There was an open space, shielded on three sides by rock and a small cave in the mountainside. We fell heavily inside the cave. I lay Osama on his back and shook him, but he lay in silence. His face had the look of death. I gave him the kiss of life and beat on his chest for many long minutes. It was useless, he was dead. The downed helicopter exploded and the sound of the other enemy aircraft grew louder. I sat with my back against the cave wall and became aware of an intense pain in my lower back. I felt around and brought my hand back before my face to find it covered in dark blood. I too had been shot by the infidel. I reached into my backpack and found my morphine injector. I took a dose into my thigh and began the painful task of burying my friend.

I cried bitter tears as I dragged his body to the rear of the cave and covered him with rocks. I took the Holy Qur'an from Osama's backpack and recited many verses over his grave. I felt so low that I simply sat and read aloud to him. I didn't care if I was caught by the Americans. What hope now for Al-Qaeda? What hope for me? What hope for all Muslims?

## EPILOGUE

"1. Say: he is Allah, the One!

"2. Allah, the eternally Besought of all!

"3. He begetteth not nor was begotten.

"4. And there is none comparable unto Him."

Al-Qur'an. Surah 112. Al-Ikhlās, The Sincerity. Vv 1-4.

The sun is rising over the horizon, towards Mecca. I have prayed to Allah for guidance and my pain and fever have eased. The Americans are drawing closer now. I can hear their helicopters sweeping the canyons and plains. I have achieved greatness, without knowing it. I am now leader of Al-Qaeda. This truth struck me during the night. Maybe this is not my time to die.

I pray to Allah to show me the path. He will let me live or He will let me die. But I am now leader. Will the next President of the United States be more moderate? Do we make peace with the Crusaders? Can we build a worldwide, just peace which recognizes the power of Islam? Or do we continue the Jihad with more hammer blows? There are so many decisions to be made, I don't believe that I can shirk these responsibilities. If I sit here to die or be captured, do I not betray the many thousands of martyrs who died for our cause? Can Osama's great achievements be forgotten so quickly by me? Will our grandchildren too be condemned to a life of war and destruction? I look at the pile of rocks that covers my friend's dead body and I cry tears. But not tears of sorrow, tears of revenge. I will avenge his martyrdom. I alone can tell our comrades of Osama's bravery and dedication and avenge his death. But then what? Can there be a peaceful co-existence between Islam and Christianity and Judaism? Is war the answer any more? Was it ever?

I end this message to you in hope, under Allah. May Allah guide me to the righteous path and you, my American brothers. Allahu-Akbar.

THE END

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