

**Excerpts from Peter Arnett's interview of Osama bin Laden**  
**This was a CNN Article**

Emphasis, by color green, added. (Comments: in blue, added.)

Osama Bin Laden was interviewed in eastern Afghanistan in late March 1997. Questions were submitted in advance. Bin Laden responded to almost all of the questions.

ARNETT: Mr. Bin Laden, could you give us your main criticism of the Saudi royal Family that is ruling Saudi Arabia today?

MR. BIN LADIN: Regarding the criticisms of the ruling regime in Saudi Arabia and the Arabian peninsula, the first one is their subordination to the US. So, our main problem is the US government while the Saudi regime is but a branch or an agent of the US.

REPORTER: Mr. Bin Laden, if the Islamic movement takes over Saudi Arabia, what would your attitude to the West be and will the price of oil be higher?

BIN LADIN: As for oil, it is a commodity that will be subject to the price of the market according to supply and demand. We believe that the current prices are not realistic due to the Saudi regime playing the role of a US agent and the pressures exercised by the US on the Saudi regime to increase production and flooding the market that caused a sharp decrease in oil prices.

REPORTER: Mr. Bin Laden, you've declared a jihad against the United States. Can you tell us why? And is the jihad directed against the US government or the United States' troops in Arabia? What about US civilians in Arabia or the people of the United States?

BIN LADIN: We declared jihad against the US government, because the US government is unjust, criminal and tyrannical. It has committed acts that are extremely unjust, hideous and criminal whether directly or through its support of the Israeli occupation of the Prophet's Night Travel Land (Palestine). And we believe the US is directly responsible for those who were killed in Palestine, Lebanon and Iraq. The mention of the US reminds us before everything else of those innocent children who were dismembered, their heads and arms cut off in the recent explosion that took place in Qana (in Lebanon). This US government abandoned even humanitarian feelings by these hideous crimes. It transgressed all bounds and behaved in a way not witnessed before by any power or any imperialist power in the world. They should have been considerate that the qibla (Mecca) of the Muslims upheaves the emotion of the entire Muslim World. Due to its subordination to the Jews the arrogance and haughtiness of the US regime has reached, to the extent that they occupied the qibla of the Muslims (Arabia) who are more than a billion in the world today. A reaction might take place as a result of US government's hitting Muslim civilians and executing more than 600 thousand Muslim children in Iraq by preventing food and medicine from reaching them. So, the US is responsible for any reaction, because it extended its war against troops to civilians. This is what we say. As for what you asked regarding the American people, they are not exonerated from responsibility, because they chose this government and voted for it despite their knowledge of its crimes in Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq and in other places and its



support of its agent regimes who filled our prisons with our best children and scholars. We ask that may God release them.

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REPORTER: Mr. Bin Ladin, what was the significance of the Afgan war for the Islamic movement? Veterans of that war are fighting for Islamic movements and conflicts from the former Soviet republics such as Chechnya to Bosnia to Algeria. Can you explain that phenomemon to us?

BIN LADIN: The influence of the Afghan jihad on the Islamic world was so great and it necessitates that people should rise above many of their differences and unite their efforts against their enemy. Today, the nation is interacting well by uniting its efforts through jihad against the US which has in collaboration with the Israeli government led the ferocious campaign against the Islamic World in occupying the holy sites of the Muslims. As for the young men who participated in jihad here, their number, by the grace of God, was quite big, Praise and Gratitude be to Him, and they spread in every place in which non-believers' injustice is perpetuated against Muslims.

Uniting  
against  
the US

REPORTER: Can you tell us now about your expulsion from Saudi Arabia and your time you spent in Sudan and your arrival here in Afghanistan?

BIN LADIN: I was, by the grace of God, Praise and Glory be to Him, in the great spot that is dear to God, Praise and Glory be to Him, al-hijaz, especially Venerable Mecca, where is God's Ancient House. However, the Saudi regime imposed on the people a life that does not appeal to the free believer. They wanted the people to eat and drink and celebrate the praise of God, but if the people wanted to encourage what is right and forbid what is wrong, they can't. Rather, the regime dismisses them from their jobs and in the event they continued to do so, they are detained in prisons. I have rejected to live this submissive life, by God's favor, Praise and Gratitude be to Him, that is not befitting of man let alone a believer. So, I waited for the chance until, God, Praise and Glory be to Him, has made it possible for me to leave the country of the Two Holy Places. I hope God, Praise and Glory be to Him, would confer upon me His favor to return one day when God's law rules in that country. I went to the Sudan and stayed there for about five years during which I visited Afghanistan and Pakistan to work against the Communist government in Kabul. When the Saudi government transgressed in oppressing all voices of the scholars and the voices of those who call for Islam, I found myself forced, especially after the government prevented Sheik Salman al-Awdah and Sheik Safar al-Hawali and some other scholars, to carry out a small part of my duty of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. So, I collaborated with some brothers and established a committee for offering advice and we started to publish some declarations. (The Advice and Reformation Committee). However, the Saudi regime did not like this and started to exercise pressure on the Sudanese regime. The US government, the Egyptian government and the Yemeni government also helped in doing so. They requested me explicitly from the Sudanese regime and the pressure continued. Saudi Arabia dropped all of its conditions put to the Sudanese regime in return that I be driven out of the Sudan. The US government had already taken the same stance and pulled out its diplomatic mission



from Khartoum and put forth their condition to return only after I have left. Unfortunately, the Sudanese government was in some difficult circumstances and there was a tendency inside the government that was inclined to reconciliation or surrender. Then, when they insisted initially that I should keep my mouth shut, I decided to look for a land in which I can breathe a pure, free air to perform my duty in enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. I ask God, Praise and Glory be to Him, for increase in prosperity for this great land, the Land of Khurasan (Afghanistan) in order to carry on this duty. So, we implore God, Praise and Glory be to Him, that He accept (our deeds) from us and the Muslims.

Now, the United States government says that you are still funding military training camps here in Afghanistan for militant, Islamic fighters and that you are a sponsor of international terrorism; but others describe you as the new hero of the Arab-Islamic world. Are these accusations true? How do you describe yourself?

BIN LADIN: After the collapse of the Soviet Union in which the US has no mentionable role, but rather the credit goes to God, Praise and Glory be to Him, and the Mujahidin in Afghanistan, this collapse made the US more haughty and arrogant and it has started to look at itself as a Master of this world and established what it calls the new world order. It wanted to delude people that it can do whatever it wants, but it can't do this. It leveled against me and others as many accusations as it desired and wished. It is these (accusations) that you mentioned. The US today as a result of the arrogant atmosphere has set a double standard, calling whoever goes against its injustice a terrorist. It wants to occupy our countries, steal our resources, impose on us agents to rule us based not on what God has revealed and wants us to agree on all these. If we refuse to do so, it will say you are terrorists. With a simple look at the US behaviors, we find that it judges the behavior of the poor Palestinian children whose country was occupied: if they throw stones against the Israeli occupation, it says they are terrorists whereas when the Israeli pilots bombed the United Nations building in Qana, Lebanon while was full of children and women, the US stopped any plan to condemn Israel. Wherever we look, we find the US as the leader of terrorism and crime in the world. The US does not consider it terrorism when hundreds of thousands of our sons and brothers in Iraq died for lack of food or medicine. So, there is no base for what the US says and this saying does not affect us, because we, by the grace of God, are dependent on Him, Praise and Glory be to Him, getting help from Him against the US. As for the last part of your question, we are fulfilling a duty which God, Praise and Glory be to Him, decreed for us. We look upon those heroes, those men who undertook to kill the American occupiers in Riyadh and Khobar (Dhahran). We describe those as heroes and describe them as men. They have pulled down the disgrace and submissiveness off the forehead of their nation. We ask Allah, Praise, and Glory be to Him, to accept them as martyrs.

Q) Do you think there will be more bombing attacks on American troops in Saudi Arabia? or attacks on American civilians in Saudi Arabia? or will there be assassination attempts on the Saudi Arabian ruling family?

BIN LADIN: It is known that every action has its reaction. If the American presence



Bin Laden Interview

Presence  
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continues, and that is an action, then it is natural for reactions to continue against this presence. In other words, explosions and killings of the American soldiers would continue. These are the troops who left their country and their families and came here with all arrogance to steal our oil and disgrace us, and attack our religion. As for what was mentioned about the ruling (Saudi) family those in charge, do bear the full responsibility of everything that may happen. They are the shadow of the American presence. The people and the young men are concentrating their efforts on the sponsor and not on the sponsored. The concentration at this point of Jihad is against the American occupiers.

Q) What are your views about Sheik Omar Abdul Rahman and have you ever met him? Do you know him?

BIN LADIN: Sheik Omar Abdul Rahman is a Muslim scholar well-known all over the Muslim world. He represents the kind of injustice that is adopted by the U.S. A baseless case was fabricated against him even though he is a blind old man. We ask Allah, The Almighty, to relieve him. The U.S. sentenced him to hundreds of years just to please its caprice and the whims of the Egyptian regime. He is now very badly treated and in no way fit for an old man like him or any Muslim scholar. (Comment: bin Laden here infers that the Egyptian government lacks legitimacy, that it serves the interests of the U.S. My thought, considering the billions of dollars which we lavish on them so that they will leave Israel alone, they better. Sorry Omar, in the grand scheme of things, you are just a pawn. Right and honor be damned.)

Q) The U.S. State Department quoting a Pakistani official says that Ramzi Yousef, a convicted bomber in the World Trade Center in New York City stayed in the house you funded in Peshawar, Pakistan for those receiving training during the Afghan conflict after the Trade Center bombing, is that true? Did Ramzi Yousef stay in your house in Peshawar?

BIN LADIN: I do not know Ramzi Yousef. What the American government and Pakistani intelligence has been reporting is not true at all. But I say if the American government is serious about avoiding the explosions inside the U.S., then let it stop provoking the feelings of 1,250 million Muslims. Those hundreds of thousands who have been killed or displaced in Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon, do have brothers and relatives. They would make of Ramzi Yousef a symbol and a teacher. The U.S. will drive them to transfer the battle into the United States. Everything is made possible to protect the blood of the American citizen while the bloodshed of Muslims is allowed in every place. With this kind of behavior, the U.S. government is hurting itself, hurting Muslims and hurting the American people.

Q) Mr. Bin Ladin, were you involved in financing the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York City? (Comment: Of course, this is not a fair question, the man is being asked to hand over his head, of course he did not. The answer is meaningless.)

BIN LADIN: I have no connection or relation with this explosion.

Q) Mr. Bin Ladin, in a recent interview with an Arabic newspaper, you said that Arabs who fought in the Afghan war killed U.S. troops in Mogadishu, Somalia. Can you tell us about that?

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**BIN LADIN:** The U.S. government went there with great pride and stayed there for some time with a strong media presence wanting to frighten people that it is the greatest power on earth. It went there with pride and with over 28,000 soldiers, to a poor unarmed people in Somalia. The goal of this was to scare the Muslim world and the whole world saying that it is able to do whatever it desires. As soon as the troops reached the Mogadishu beaches, they found no one but children. The CNN and other media cameras started photographing them (the soldiers) with their camouflage and heavy arms, entering with a parade crawling (on the ground) and showing themselves to the world as the "greatest power on earth". Resistance started against the American invasion, because Muslims do not believe the U.S. allegations that they came to save the Somalis. A man with human feelings in his heart does not distinguish between a child killed in Palestine or in Lebanon, in Iraq or in Bosnia. So how can we believe your claims that you came to save our children in Somalia while you kill our children in all of those places?

With Allah's grace, Muslims over there, cooperated with some Arab "Mujahideen" who were in Afghanistan. They participated with their brothers in Somalia against the American occupation troops and killed large numbers of them. The American administration was aware of that. After a little resistance, The American troops left after achieving nothing. They left after claiming that they were the largest power on earth. They left after some resistance from powerless, poor, unarmed people whose only weapon is the belief in Allah The Almighty, and who do not fear the fabricated American media lies. We learned from those who fought there, that they were surprised to see the low spiritual morale of the American fighters in comparison with the experience they had with the Russian fighters. The Americans ran away from those fighters who fought and killed them, while the latter were still there. If the U.S. still thinks and brags that it still has this kind of power even after all these successive defeats in Vietnam, Beirut, Aden, and Somalia, then let them go back to those who are awaiting its return.

**Q)** Mr. Bin Lladin, your family is a rich powerful family in Saudi Arabia. Have they, or the Saudi Arabian government asked you to stop your activities?

**BIN LADIN:** They have done that a lot. They have pressured us a lot, especially since a lot of our money is still in the hands of the Saudi ruling family due to activities of the our family and company (Saudi construction giant, the BinLadin Group). They sent me my mother, my uncle, and my brothers in almost nine visits to Khartoum (Sudan) asking me to stop and return to Arabia to apologize to King Fahd. I apologized to my family kindly because I know that they were driven by force to come to talk to me. This regime wants to create a problem between me and my family and in order to take some measures against them. But, with Allah's grace, this regime did not get its wish fulfilled. I refused to go back. They (my family) conveyed the Saudi government's message that if I did not go back, they'll freeze all my assets, deprive me of my citizenship, my passport, and my Saudi I.D. and distort my picture in the Saudi and foreign media. They think that a Muslim may bargain on his religion. I said to them do whatever you may wish. It is with Allah's bounty, we refused to go back. We are living in dignity and honor for whom we thank Allah. It is much better for us to live under a tree here on these mountains than to live in palaces in the most sacred

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1 land to Allah, while being subjected to disgrace not worshipping Allah even in the most sacred land on earth, where injustice is so widespread. There is no strength except with Allah.

2 Q) Mr. Bin Ladin, have Saudi agents attempted to assassinate you? Are you targeted by the U.S. government? Are you in fact in fear of your life?

3 BIN LADIN: The U.S. pressures are no secret to you. The Saudi pressures are also in response to American pressures. There were several attempts to arrest me or to assassinate me. This has been going on for more than seven years. With Allah's grace, none of these attempts succeeded. This is a proof in itself to Muslims and to the world that the U.S. is incapable and weaker than the picture it wants to draw in people's mind. A believer must assured that life is only in the hands of Allah, and sustenance is also in the hands of Allah, the Almighty. As for fearing for one's life, it is difficult to explain to you how we think of ourselves, unless you have full belief. We believe that no one could take out one breath of our written life as ordained by Allah. We see that we see that getting killed in the cause of Allah is a great honor wished for by our Prophet (PBUH). He said in his Hadith: "I swear to Allah, I wish to fight for Allah's cause and be killed, I'll do it again and be killed, and I'll do it again and be killed". Being killed for Allah's cause is a great honor achieved by only those who are the elite of the nation. We love this kind of death for Allah's cause as much as you like to live. We have nothing to fear for. It is something we wish for.

4 Q) What are your future plans?

5 BIN LADIN: You'll see them and hear about them in the media, God willing.

Q) Mr. Bin Ladin, if you had an opportunity to give a message to President Clinton, what would that message be?

BIN LADIN: Mentioning the name of Clinton or that of the American government provokes disgust and revulsion. This is because the name of the American government and the name of Clinton and Bush directly reflect in our minds the picture of children with their heads cut off before even reaching one year of age. It reflects the picture of children with their hands cut off, the picture of the children who died in Iraq, the picture of the hands of the Isrealis with weapons destroying our children. The hearts of Muslims are filled with hatred towards the United States of America and the American president The President has a heart that knows no words. A heart that kills hundreds of children definitely, knows no words. Our people in the Arabian Peninsula will sent him messages with no words because he does not know any words. If there is a message that I may send through you, then it is a message I address to the mothers of the American troops who came here with their military uniform walking proudly up and down our land while the scholars of our country are thrown in prisons. I say that this represents an a blatant provocation to 1,250 million Muslims. To these mothers I say if they are concerned for their sons, then let them object to the American government's

**policy and to the American president. Do not let themselves be cheated by his standing before the bodies of the killed soldiers describing the freedom fighters in Saudi Arabia as terrorists. It is he who is a terrorist who pushed their sons into this for the sake of the Israeli interest. We believe that the American army in Saudi Arabia came to separate between the Muslims and the people for not ruling in accordance with Allah's wish. They came to be in support of the Israeli forces in occupied Palestine, the land of the "Israa" of our Prophet (PBUH).**