

The attached contains a full text translation of the militant Islamic *fatwa* (religious ruling) calling for attacks on Americans and Jews. The first sheet is an unclassified CIA memorandum describing the *fatwa* and the magnitude of its threat.

23 February 1998

**SUBJECT: Fatwas or Religious Rulings by Militant Islamic Groups Against the United States**

1. This memorandum responds to your request for information about the recent fatwas issued by militant Islamic groups calling for attacks against the United States.

2. A coalition of Islamic groups in London and terrorist financier Usama Bin Ladin have issued separate fatwas, or religious rulings, calling for attacks on US persons and interests worldwide, and on those of US allies. Although referencing the current confrontation with Iraq, both fatwas call for attacks to continue until US forces "retreat" from Saudi Arabia and Jerusalem. The fatwa from the groups in London also calls for attacks until sanctions on Iraq are lifted.

3. These fatwas are the first from these groups that explicitly justify attacks on American civilians anywhere in the world. Both groups have hinted in the past that civilians are legitimate targets, but this the first religious ruling sanctifying such attacks.

4. While the religious clerics who issued these rulings are not named, the two groups consider the fatwas to be legitimate. The group in London made reference to unnamed religious authorities in Lebanon, Jordan, and "Palestine."

**Attachment**

**Text of Fatwa by Usama Bin Ladin's Organization**

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This memorandum was prepared by Cynthia Storer, DCI Counterterrorist Center. It was coordinated within the CIA. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to the Chief, Near East/South Asia Assessments Branch on 72974 secure or (703) 874-5009 nonsecure. (U)

UNCLASSIFIED

## TEXT OF FATWA URGING JIHAD AGAINST AMERICANS

London Al-Quds al-'Arabi in Arabic 23 Feb 98

"Text of World Islamic Front's Statement Urging Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders" -- Al-Quds al-'Arabi headline; in a front-page report, Al-Quds al-'Arabi says that the statement was "faxed to Al-Quds al-'Arabi and signed by Shaykh Usamah Bin-Muhammad Bin-Ladin (the prominent Saudi oppositionist); Ayman al-Zawahiri, amir of the Jihad Group in Egypt; Abu-Yasir Rifa'i Ahmad Taha, a leader of the [Egyptian] Islamic Group; Shaykh Mir Hamzah, secretary of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Pakistan; and Fazlul Rahman, amir of the Jihad Movement in Bangladesh"

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 [not further identified] 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."