

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: SECRET
Current Handling: NODIS
Document Number: 1998ISLAMA09420

Page: 1

E2

Channel: n/a

SECRET

PTO2755

PAGE 01 ISLAMA 09420 01 OF 02 281318Z RELEASED IN FULL
ACTION NODS-00

INFO LOG-00 CCOE-00 SAS-00 /000W
-----913DB1 281318Z /38

O 281315Z DEC 98
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2553

SECRET SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 009420

NODIS DECAPTIONED

DEPT FOR P, SA, SA/PAB, S/CT, AND NEA; PLEASE ALSO PASS TO ABU
DHABI, CAIRO, LONDON, PESHAWAR, RIYADH, AND TEL AVIV

E.O. 12958: DECL: EXEMPT UNDER 1.6X4
TAGS: PREL, PTER, AF
SUBJ: USAMA BIN LADIN: BIN LADIN USES RECENT INTERVIEWS TO ASSERT
RIGHT TO USE WMD, AND TO THREATEN U.S. AND U.K. OVER IRAQ

REFS: (A) FBIS RESTON VA DTG 260911Z DEC 98
- (B) FBIS RESTON VA DTG 250732Z DEC 98
- (C) ISLAMABAD 9222, AND PREVIOUS

(U) CLASSIFIED BY CDA ALAN EASTHAM PURSUANT TO 1.5 (B) AND (D).
EXEMPT UNDER 1.6X4.

1. (C) THIS IS AN ACTION REQUEST -- PLEASE SEE PARA NINE.
2. (S) SUMMARY: IN HIS FIRST INTERVIEWS SINCE THE AUGUST 20 U.S.
SECRET

PAGE 02 ISLAMA 09420 01 OF 02 281318Z
AIR STRIKES, BIN LADIN WAS CITED AS ISSUING STATEMENTS THREATENING
THE U.S. MOST CHILLINGLY, BIN LADIN WAS QUOTED AS RESERVING THE
RIGHT TO USE WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION (WMD) (ALTHOUGH HE DENIED
TRYING TO PROCURE WMD). BIN LADIN ALSO REITERATED HIS PREVIOUS
CALLS FOR MUSLIMS TO KILL U.S., U.K., AND ISRAELI CIVILIANS, CITING
THE IRAQ MILITARY ACTION AS JUSTIFICATION. BIN LADIN DID NOT SAY
WHY HE CHOSE TO SPEAK TO THE PRESS AT THIS TIME, NOR DID THE
TALIBAN ANNOUNCE WHY THEY LET HIM. ACTION REQUEST: WITH THE
TALIBAN REPEATEDLY ASSURING THE U.S. IN PAST MEETINGS THAT BIN
LADIN WAS NOT ALLOWED TO SPEAK TO THE PRESS, WE SUGGEST THAT
DEPARTMENT CONSIDER APPROACHES TO THE TALIBAN ON HIS LATEST
THREATS. END SUMMARY.

Current Class: SECRET

Page: 1

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: ARCHIE M BOLSTER
DATE/CASE ID: 21 MAY 2004 200400827

UNCLASSIFIED

TWO RECENT INTERVIEWS

3. (C) IN CONTRAVENTION OF REPEATED TALIBAN CLAIMS THAT HE WAS NOT ALLOWED TO SPEAK TO THE PRESS (SEE PARA NINE), USAMA BIN LADIN HAS GIVEN HIS FIRST PRESS INTERVIEWS SINCE THE AUGUST 20 U.S. AIR STRIKES ON HIS TERRORIST NETWORK: ONE OF THE INTERVIEWS APPEARED IN THE DECEMBER 24 EDITION OF THE LONDON-BASED ARABIC LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER "AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT" (SEE REF B). THE TIMING OF THIS INTERVIEW WAS NOT GIVEN; IT REPORTEDLY TOOK PLACE IN HELMAND PROVINCE (IN SOUTHWESTERN AFGHANISTAN). BIN LADIN'S OTHER INTERVIEW WAS WITH RAHIMULLAH YUSUFZAI, A WELL-KNOWN PAKISTANI CORRESPONDENT WITH CLOSE LINKS TO THE TALIBAN. THIS INTERVIEW REPORTEDLY TOOK PLACE IN THE KANDAHAR AREA ON DECEMBER 22-23, AND PROVIDED THE FODDER FOR TWO ARTICLES BY YUSUFZAI IN THE DECEMBER 26 AND 27 EDITIONS, RESPECTIVELY, OF "THE NEWS," A PAKISTANI ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY (SEE REF A). (NOTE: WE UNDERSTAND THAT VIDEO-TAPE

SECRET

PAGE 03 ISLAMA 09420 .01 OF 02 281318Z
OF YUSUFZAI'S INTERVIEW WITH BIN LADIN ALSO APPEARED ON ABC NEWS ON DECEMBER 23. YUSUFZAI'S TWO NEWSPAPER ARTICLES AND AN ARTICLE CITING THE "AL-SHARQ" PIECE HAVE BEEN FAXED TO SA/PAB.)

THREATS AGAINST U.S., INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO USE WMD

4. (U) BIN LADIN USED THESE INTERVIEWS TO THREATEN THE U.S. THE MOST SIGNIFICANT OF THESE THREATS APPEARED IN THE "AL-SHARQ" INTERVIEW, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:

-- IN REPLY TO A QUESTION ABOUT REPORTS THAT HE SEEKS TO PROCURE WMD, BIN LADIN REPORTEDLY SAID: "THIS IS NOT A CHARGE TO BE LEVELLED AGAINST ANYONE. OUR NATION IS FACING AGGRESSION AND IT HAS THE RIGHT TO POSSESS WHAT IT CAN TO DEFEND ITSELF. IF WE SOUGHT -- AND THIS HAS NOT HAPPENED -- TO ACQUIRE SUCH WEAPONS, THEN THIS IS NOT A CHARGE. INSTEAD, IT MEANS PREPARATION AND THE FULFILLMENT OF A DUTY."

-- IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ABOUT THE U.S./U.K. MILITARY ACTION AGAINST IRAQ, BIN LADIN IS QUOTED AS STATING: "AMERICAN AND BRITISH PEOPLES STATED WIDELY THAT THEY SUPPORT THEIR LEADERS' DECISION TO ATTACK IRAQ. THIS MEANS THAT ALL INDIVIDUALS OF THESE TWO NATIONS, AS WELL AS JEWS IN OCCUPIED PALESTINE, ARE BELLIGERENT PEOPLE AND EVERY MUSLIM MUST STAND AGAINST THEM AND MUST KILL AND

Current Class: SECRET
 Current Handling: NODIS
 Document Number: 1998ISLAMA09420

Channel: n/a

FIGHT THEM. ANYTHING THAT CAN BE TAKEN AWAY FROM THEM BY FORCE IS CONSIDERED BOOTY FOR THE MUSLIMS."

SECRET

PAGE 04 ISLAMA 09420 01 OF 02 281318Z

-- ASKED WHETHER OR NOT HE WAS INVOLVED IN THE AUGUST 7 EAST AFRICA BOMBINGS, BIN LADIN REPORTEDLY DENIED ANY CONNECTION, BUT ADDED THAT HE SUPPORTED "ANYONE WHO CARRIES OUT MILITARY ACTION (AGAINST THE U.S.)."

5. (U) IN THE "AL-SHARQ" INTERVIEW, BIN LADIN ALSO WAS CITED AS AFFIRMING THAT HE KNEW "MAMDUH MAHMUD SALIM," WHO IS SAID TO BE THE INDIVIDUAL RECENTLY EXTRADITED FROM GERMANY TO THE U.S. IN REFERENCE TO THIS INDIVIDUAL, BIN LADIN STATED: "(SALIM) IS ONE OF THE BEST MEN I EVER MET -- HE LED PRAYERS AT PESHAWAR MOSQUE FOR THE ARABS AND ALSO WORKED WITH THE RELIEF GROUPS. BUT HE LEFT SUDAN FOR GERMANY FOUR YEARS AGO."

 A SAUDI HIT SQUAD

6. (C) COMPARED TO PARA FOUR COMMENTS REPORTED IN "AL-SHARQ," BIN

SECRET

SECRET

PTQ8119

PAGE 01 ISLAMA 09420 02 OF 02 281318Z
 ACTION NODS-00

INFO LOG-00 CCOE-00 SAS-00 /000W
 -----913DBB 281318Z /38

O 281315Z DEC 98
 FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2554

S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 009420

NODIS

DEPT FOR P, SA, SA/PAB, S/CT, AND NEA; PLEASE ALSO PASS TO ABU DHABI, CAIRO, LONDON, PESHAWAR, RIYADH, AND TEL AVIV

E.O. 12958: DECL: EXEMPT UNDER 1.6X4
 TAGS: PREL, PTER, AF
 SUBJ: USAMA BIN LADIN: BIN LADIN USES RECENT INTERVIEWS TO ASSERT RIGHT TO USE WMD, AND TO THREATEN U.S. AND U.K. OVER IRAQ

Current Class: SECRET

LADIN'S CITED REMARKS IN YUSUFZAI'S NEWSPAPER ARTICLES WERE SOMEWHAT MORE TAME. (NOTE: WE HAVE NOT SEEN THE ABC NEWS PIECE AND DO NOT KNOW WHAT SORT OF COMMENTS BIN LADIN MADE TO YUSUFZAI IN IT.) THE DECEMBER 26 ARTICLE FOCUSSED MAINLY ON BIN LADIN'S TWISTED TALE THAT THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT HAD SENT A HIT SQUAD TO MURDER HIM IN KANDAHAR. THE PURPORTED ATTACK FAILED AND THE MEMBERS OF THE HIT SQUAD WERE SAID BY BIN LADIN TO BE LODGED IN A KANDAHAR JAIL. (NOTE: A DECEMBER 28 PAKISTANI PRESS PIECE CLAIMED THAT THE SAG HAS DENIED BIN LADIN'S ASSERTION THAT IT TRIED TO KILL HIM.) IN THIS ARTICLE, YUSUFZAI ALSO ASSERTED THAT HE HAD SPOKEN

SECRET

PAGE 02 ISLAMA 09420 02 OF 02 281318Z
 TO DR. AYMAN ZAWAHIRI, A WELL-KNOWN EGYPTIAN MILITANT WHO IS AN ASSOCIATE OF BIN LADIN'S, ABOUT THE PURPORTED HIT SQUAD.

 CLOSE LINKS TO THE TALIBAN

7. (C) YUSUFZAI'S OTHER ARTICLE, THAT OF DECEMBER 27, BASICALLY FOCUSSED ON BIN LADIN'S VIEW OF THE TALIBAN AND (HIS PERCEPTION OF) THEIR VIEW OF HIM. THE BASIC THREAD HERE WAS THAT BIN LADIN AND THE TALIBAN RESPECTED EACH OTHER BECAUSE THEY BOTH CONSIDER EACH OTHER GOOD MUSLIMS -- "THE TALIBAN (ARE) LIKE THE STATE OF MEDINA IN THE EARLY DAYS OF ISLAM," BIN LADIN OBSERVED. THE TALIBAN, BIN LADIN RELATED, HAVE BUCKED MASSIVE PRESSURE ON THEM TO EXPEL HIM; "FOR THE TIME BEING, I WANT TO STAY IN AFGHANISTAN," HE ADDED. BIN LADIN WAS ALSO CITED AS COMMENTING THAT THE PAKISTANI GOVERNMENT IS "UNDER PRESSURE FROM THE CHRISTIAN-JEWISH COALITION TO EXPEL ME (BIN LADIN) FROM AFGHANISTAN." THE SUBTEXT OF ALL OF BIN LADIN'S COMMENTS IN THIS ARTICLE WAS THAT HE WAS NOT TO BLAME FOR THE PRESSURE ON THE TALIBAN OR PAKISTAN TO EXPEL HIM -- THE PRESSURE FROM THE WEST ON ISLAM WAS THERE ALREADY, HE CLAIMED. INTERESTINGLY, IN THIS ARTICLE BIN LADIN WAS CITED AS REFERRING TO AN INCIDENT INVOLVING ISRAELI FORCES IN LEBANON LAST WEEK, WHICH TENDS TO INDICATE THAT HE IS KEEPING UP-TO-DATE ON AT LEAST SOME INTERNATIONAL EVENTS.

 COMMENT AND ACTION REQUEST

8. (S) IN THE INTERVIEWS DISCUSSED ABOVE, BIN LADIN DID NOT
 SECRET

PAGE 03 ISLAMA 09420 02 OF 02 281318Z
 ADDRESS WHY HE CHOSE TO SPEAK TO THE PRESS AT THIS TIME. ONE SOURCE SPECULATED THAT HE DID SO IN ORDER TO CAPITALIZE ON ANY

Current Class: SECRET

Page: 4

Current Class: SECRET
Current Handling: NODIS
Document Number: 1998ISLAMA09420

UNCLASSIFIED

Page: 5

Channel: n/a

ANTI-AMERICAN FEELINGS CAUSED BY THE IRAQ MILITARY ACTION. WE FIND THE COMMENTS CONCERNING WMD PARTICULARLY CHILLING. IT IS NOT THE FIRST TIME HE HAS MADE PUBLIC STATEMENTS PURPORTING TO LEGITIMIZE ATTACKS ON AMERICANS ANYWHERE.

9. (S) ACTION REQUESTED: WE HAVE NOT AS OF YET HEARD OF ANY TALIBAN REACTION TO BIN LADIN'S INTERVIEWS. IN CONVERSATIONS STRETCHING BACK A NUMBER OF MONTHS (SEE REF C, FOR DECEMBER 19 TALIBAN COMMENTS ON THIS SUBJECT), TALIBAN OFFICIALS HAVE REPEATEDLY ASSERTED THAT BIN LADIN HAS BEEN TOLD NOT TO MEET THE PRESS. IF AUTHORIZED BY THE DEPARTMENT, WE COULD APPROACH THE TALIBAN TO HIGHLIGHT BIN LADIN'S LATEST THREATS, PARTICULARLY HIS REFERENCES TO WMD, AND TO REITERATE THAT THE TALIBAN WILL BE HELD STRICTLY ACCOUNTABLE FOR ANY FUTURE TERRORIST INCIDENTS TIED TO BIN LADIN. DEPARTMENT MIGHT ALSO CONSIDER EXPRESSING CONCERN TO TALIBAN "PERMREP-DESIGNATE" ABDUL HAKIM MUJAHID IN NEW YORK. END
COMMENT AND ACTION REQUEST.
EASTHAM

SECRET

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

Current Class: SECRET

Page: 5

UNCLASSIFIED