

EVEN IF OSAMA LEAVES THE COUNTRY, THE LINE OF
AMERICAN EXCUSES WILL STILL REMAIN LONG

[This op-ed takes aim at the policies of the United States (and by extension the United Nations, who had just levelled sanctions against the Taliban's government). This reflects a common idea at the time—one that seems to have gained currency with Mullah Mohammad Omar—that bin Laden was just one demand among many by the United States. Even if they handed him over and complied with US demands, the argument runs, more requests would follow. In the end, the movement would be forced to compromise on their national character and religious beliefs to meet all these demands; and thus perhaps now, the article suggests, the better policy is to refuse to hand over bin Laden.]

Shariat, 31 October 1999

Ever since the Islamic system has taken over in Afghanistan and the dreams of the Eastern and Western colonial countries have been frustrated, a flame of fire consumes the body of international colonialism; and since that day, it has been busy making excuses, plans and pulling tricks in order to, God forbid, bring an end to the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. Their interference in the affairs of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan have even crossed the limits of disgrace. They are finding such [insignificant] excuses against the Emirate, and the top one is the presence of Arab mujahed, Osama bin Laden. The United States of America wants the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to hand over Osama for trial [unclear]. The United States has not hesitated from exerting all kinds of pressure, in contravention of international guidelines, on the Afghan nation of mujahedeen with regard to Osama. They imposed economic sanctions on this oppressed struggling nation, the very nation due to whose sacrifices they [the US] roam about with proud eyes and call themselves an unrivalled power in the world.

Despite all this, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan took appropriate, efficient and [unclear] steps to address the American demands and anxiety, and from the very first moment the Emirate presented various methods for a reasonable resolution of the

Issue, took appropriate steps and proved that the Emirate truly wanted to solve the Osama issue through dialogue and harmony, and believed that reason should not give way to emotion.

For example, as a first step, the Islamic Emirate declared to the whole world that if anyone thought Osama was a criminal, they should come to the Supreme Court of Afghanistan along with documentary evidence and testimonies, and the Emirate granted full powers and authority to the Supreme Court. But no one was there, no evidence was presented to the Supreme Court and not a single applicant appeared. The second step the Islamic Emirate took was that it put Osama under total restrictions and took away all sorts of communication resources from him. The Americans still remained unconvinced. In order to get rid of the prevailing critical situation and put an end American excuses, the Islamic Emirate suggested that religious scholars from Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and three more countries should sit down and decide the fate of Osama, but the United States did not [pay attention] to even this suggestion of the Esteemed Amir ul-Mu'mineen. The fourth proposal of the Islamic Emirate was that since the United States did not have any proof and documents to prove Osama guilty, and the US itself had said that Osama was not guilty but rather 'under accusation', the Islamic Emirate was ready to work in harmony with the United States to adopt a course which would satisfy the US with regard to what they call the Osama threat and that meant that the Islamic Emirate was ready to cooperate with the US in taking any course of action that it deemed satisfactory in protecting that country from what it called the Osama threat. Still, the United States [rejected] such flexibility and concessions offered by the Islamic Emirate and has, proverbially, shoved its feet into one shoe and keeps repeating its earlier stances.

Americans should give consideration to Afghan culture, national pride and their religious and national traditions and should chart a course of action which guarantees the protection of the aforementioned values. But it seems the cause of American enmity with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is not just Osama, and could it be that America 'holds half a bowl under another bowl' [a proverb, meaning 'has underlying objectives']. If this was the case, the United States would still be creating a hue and cry that the Islamic Emirate should expel Osama from Afghanistan. But when news sources reported on 30 October 1999 that Osama bin Laden had written in a letter to the Esteemed Leader of the Faithful that he wished to leave Afghanistan, instead of waiting for more details about the letter, US authorities very quickly and very ignorantly asserted that [this wouldn't lead the United States to offer official recognition to the Islamic Emirate]. It is clear from this remark by James Rubin that even if Osama got out of Afghanistan, they would still formally not recognise the Islamic Emirate and neither would Osama's departure put an end to their pretences. Based on James Rubin's comments, we can say that Americans do not consider Osama's departure from Afghanistan a solution either, therefore we wonder about what the solution could be.

THE TALIBAN READER

In the end, we hope once again that we must understand that even [unclear] religious and national traditions, not to mention time to solve issues through force. It would be found through understanding and dialogue.

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In the end, we hope once again that the US will act with tact and wisdom and it must understand that even [unclear] death cannot force Afghans to leave their religious and national traditions, not to mention economic sanctions. This is not the time to solve issues through force. It would be better if solutions to every issue could be found through understanding and dialogue in a friendly atmosphere.

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