

lated in Arabic to *Jihad*, or "my *jihad*"), he did not hesitate to portray his ultimate worldview. Yet, though the world was well aware of his book, it was not taken seriously—no doubt because many did not think that Hitler had the means to realize his wild visions of Teutonic domination. History proved otherwise, and millions died as a result of the world's indifference to Hitler's straightforward words. This book provides the world with al-Qaeda's ultimate vision. The same mistake should not be made twice.

AL-QAEDA'S DECLARATION OF WAR AGAINST AMERICANS



Praise be to Allah, who revealed the Book [Koran], controls the clouds, defeats factionalism, and says in His Book: "Then, when the sacred months have passed, slay the idolaters wherever you find them—seize them, besiege them, and be ready to ambush them" [9:5]. And prayers and peace be upon our Prophet, Muhammad bin Abdullah, who said: "I have been sent with the sword between my hands to ensure that no one but Allah is worshipped—Allah who put my livelihood under the shadow of my spear and who inflicts humiliation and scorn on those who disobey my commandments."

Never since Allah made the Arabian Peninsula flat, created its desert, and encircled it with seas has it been stormed by any force like the Crusader hordes that have spread in it like locusts, consuming its wealth and polluting its fertility. All this is happening at a time in which nations are attacking Muslims in unison—as if fighting over a plate of food! In face of this critical situation and lack of support, we are all obliged to discuss current events, as well as reach an agreement on how [best] to settle the matter.

No one argues today about three well-established facts, known to everyone; we enumerate them as a reminder, so that the one remembering may remember.

1. For over seven years America has been occupying the lands of Islam in its 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 with which it fights the neighboring Muslim peoples.

While some people may have argued in the past over the realities of the occupation, all the people of the Peninsula now acknowledge it. There is no clearer evidence than America's ceaseless aggression against the Iraqi people—all launched right from the Peninsula, though its rulers collectively refuse having their land used for this end. But they have been subdued.

2. Despite the awful devastation inflicted on the Iraqi people at the hands of the Crusader-Jewish alliance, and despite the astronomical number of deaths—which has exceeded 1 million—despite all this, the Americans attempt once again to repeat the horrific massacres, as if the protracted sanctions imposed after the brutal war, or the fragmentation and devastation, was not enough for them.

So now here they come [again] to annihilate what is left of this people and humiliate their Muslim neighbors.⁶

3. Now if the Americans' purposes behind these wars are religious and economic, so too are they also to serve the Jews' petty state [Israel], diverting attention from its occupation of Jerusalem and the murder of Muslims there. There is no better evidence of this than 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 mini-paper states, whose disunion and weakness will guarantee Israel's survival and the continuation of the brutal Crusader occupation of the Peninsula.

All these crimes and sins committed by the Americans are a clear declaration of war on Allah, His Messenger, and the Muslims. *Ulema* throughout Islamic history are unanimously agreed that the *jihad* is an individual duty whenever the enemy tears into the lands of the Muslims. This was related by Imam bin Qudama in *al-Mughni*; Imam al-Kisa'i in *al-Bada'i*; al-Qurtubi in his commentary; and the Sheikh of Islam [Ibn Taymiyya] in his chronicles, where he states: "As for defensive warfare, this is the greatest way to defend sanctity and religion.

This is an obligation consensually agreed to [by the *ulema*]. After faith, there is nothing more sacred than repulsing the enemy who attacks religion and life."

On that basis, and in compliance with Allah's order, we hereby issue the following decree to all Muslims:

The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual obligation incumbent upon every Muslim who can do it and in any country—this until the Aqsa Mosque [Jerusalem] and the Holy Mosque [Mecca] are liberated from their grip, and until their armies withdraw from all the lands of Islam, defeated, shattered, and unable to threaten any Muslim. This is in accordance with the Word of the Most High—"Fight the pagans all together as they fight you all together" [9:36] and the Word of the Most High, "Fight them until there is no more tumult or oppression, and [all] religion belongs to Allah" [8:39].

And the Most High said: "And why should you not fight in the cause of Allah and on behalf of those oppressed men, women, and children who cry out, Lord! Rescue us from this town and its oppressors. Give us from Your Presence some protecting friend! Give us from Your Presence some defender!" [4:75].

By Allah's leave we call upon every Muslim who believes in Allah and wishes to be rewarded to comply with Allah's order to kill the Americans and seize their money wherever and whenever they find them. We also call on Muslim *ulema*, leaders, youths, and soldiers to launch the raid on the Devil's army—the Americans—and whoever allies with them from the supporters of Satan, and to rout those behind them so that they may learn [a lesson].

Allah Most High said: "O you who have believed! Respond to Allah and the Messenger whenever He calls you to that which gives you life. And know that Allah comes between a man and his heart, and that it is He to whom you shall [all] be gathered" [8:24].

Allah Most High said: "O you who have believed! What is the matter with you? When you are asked to go forth in the cause of Allah, you cling so heavily to the earth! Do you prefer the life of this

world to the Hereafter? But little is the comfort of this life, in comparison to the Hereafter. Unless you go forth [and fight], He will punish you with a grievous torment, and put others in your place. But He you cannot harm in the least; for Allah has power over all things" [9:38–39].

Allah Most High said: "So do not lose heart, nor fall into despair. Have faith and you shall triumph" [3:139].

Sheikh Osama bin Muhammad bin Laden

Ayman al-Zawahiri, Commander of the Jihad Group in Egypt

Abu Yasir Rifa'i Ahmad Taha, Egyptian Islamic Group⁷

Sheikh Mir Hamza, Secretary of the Organization of Islamic ulema in Pakistan

Fazlur Rahman, Commander of the Jihad Movement in Bangladesh

This statement is more commonly known as The World Islamic Front's Declaration to wage *Jihad* Against the Jews and Crusaders, issued February 23, 1998, in the Arabic newspaper *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*.

PART I



THEOLOGY