

Doctrinal Contradictions and Abuse of Quranic Interpretation Challenge to Socio-Political Propaganda in Osama Bin Laden Psyche

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Abstract

Osama bin Laden was a terrorist extremist who was believed to have masterminded the twin attacks on the World Trade Center with the intent on driving Western influence from the Muslim world. Suffice to put that Bin Laden had had western training and a whole lot of his life was spent with and among scholars of Islam where he had his Islamic training and a full study of the Quaran (which among other things is regarded as Sunnah of the Prophet Mohammed (SAW), but the later life of Laden was espoused to Westernization, where his whole psyche was touched and therefore, it will further suffice to put that his acts and actions in the concluding part of his life was as a result of his interaction and indeed immersion into western culture. The thrust of this article therefore would, among other things discuss the early life of Osama, his many beliefs and ideologies would also be considered. More so, his military adventures and machination would in this article receive attention.

Keywords: Religions Fanaticism, Adventure, Islam, Machinery, Early Life, Westernization.

Introduction

Bin Laden was raised as devout Sunni Muslim. From 1968 to 1976, he attended the elite secular Al-Thager Model School. He studied economics and business administration at King Abdulaziz University. Some reports suggest he earned a degree in civil engineering in 1979, or a degree in public administration in 1981. One source described him as "hardworking"; another said he left university during his third year without completing a college degree. At university, bin Laden's main interest was religion, where he was involved in both "interpreting the Quran and jihad" and charitable work. Other interests included writing poetry; reading, with the works of Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery and Charles de Gaulle said to be among his favorites; black stallions; and association football, in which he enjoyed playing at center forward and followed the English club Arsenal F.C.

Personal life

In 1974, at the age of 17, Bin Laden married Najwa Ghanem at Latakia, Syria; they were separated before September 11, 2001. Bin Laden's other known wives were Khadijah Sharif (married 1983, divorced 1990s); Khairiah Sabar (married 1985); Siham Sabar (married 1987); and Amal al-Sadah (married 2000). Some sources also list a sixth wife, name unknown, whose marriage to Bin Laden was annulled soon after the ceremony. Bin Laden fathered between 20 and 26 children with his wives. Many of Bin Laden's children fled to Iran following the September 11 attacks and as of 2010, Iranian authorities reportedly continue to control their movements.

The FBI described Bin Laden as an adult as tall and thin, between 1.93 m (6 ft 4 in) and 1.98 m (6 ft 6 in) in height and weighing about 73 kilograms (160 lb), although the author Lawrence Wright, in his Pulitzer Prize-winning book on Al-Qaeda, *The Looming Tower*, writes that a number of Bin Laden's close friends confirmed that reports of his height were greatly exaggerated, and that Bin Laden was actually "just over 6 feet (1.8 m) tall". Eventually, after his death, he was measured to be around 1.93 m (6 ft 4 in). Bin Laden had an olive complexion and was left-handed, usually walking with a cane. He wore a plain white keffiyeh. Bin Laden had stopped wearing the traditional Saudi male keffiyeh and instead wore the traditional Yemeni male keffiyeh. Bin Laden was described as soft-spoken and ill-mannered in demeanor.

Sociological Propaganda

Beliefs and ideology

A major component of Bin Laden's ideology was the concept that civilians from enemy countries, including women and children, were legitimate targets for jihadists to kill. According to former CIA analyst Michael Scheuer, who led the CIA's hunt for Osama Bin Laden, the al-Qaeda leader was

motivated by a belief that U.S. foreign policy has oppressed, killed, or otherwise harmed Muslims in the Middle East, condensed in the phrase, "They hate us for what we do, not who we are." Nonetheless, bin Laden criticized the U.S. for its secular form of governance, calling upon Americans to convert to Islam and "reject the immoral acts of fornication, homosexuality, intoxicants, gambling, and usury", in a letter published in late 2002. His vocal criticism of Western government and society, and his claims that they were dominated by Jews, earned him respect from various sectors of the far right in Europe and North America. Bin Laden believed that the Islamic world was in crisis and that the complete restoration of Sharia law would be the only way to "set things right" in the Muslim world. He opposed such alternatives such as secular government, as well as "pan-Arabism, socialism, communism, democracy." He subscribed to the Athari (literalist) school of Islamic theology. These beliefs, in conjunction with violent jihad, have sometimes been called Qutbism after being promoted by Sayyid Qutb. Bin Laden believed that Afghanistan, under the rule of Mullah Omar's Taliban, was "the only Islamic country" in the Muslim world. Bin Laden consistently dwelt on the need for violent jihad to right what he believed were injustices against Muslims perpetrated by the United States and sometimes by other non-Muslim states. He also called for the elimination of the Israeli state, and called upon the United States to withdraw all of its civilians and military personnel from the Middle East, as well as from every Islamic country of the world.

His viewpoints and methods of achieving them had led to him being designated as a terrorist by scholars, journalists from The New York Times, the BBC, and Qatari news station Al Jazeera, analysts such as Peter Bergen, Michael Scheuer, Marc Sageman, and Bruce Hoffman. He was indicted on terrorism charges by law enforcement agencies in Madrid, New York City, and Tripoli. Bin Laden was heavily anti-Semitic, stating that most of the negative events that occurred in the world were the direct result of Jewish actions. In a December 1998 interview with Pakistani journalist Rahimullah Yusufzai, bin Laden stated that Operation Desert Fox was proof that Israeli Jews controlled the governments of the United States and United Kingdom, directing them to kill as many Muslims as they could. In a letter released in late 2002, he stated that Jews controlled the civilian media outlets, politics, and economic institutions of the United States. In a May 1998 interview with ABC's John Miller, bin Laden stated that the Israeli state's ultimate goal was to annex the Arabian Peninsula and the Middle East into its territory and enslave its peoples, as part of what he called a "Greater Israel". He stated that Jews and Muslims could never get along and that war was "inevitable" between them, and further accused the U.S. of stirring up anti-Islamic sentiment. He claimed that the U.S. State Department and U.S. Department of Defense were controlled by Jews, for the sole purpose of serving the Israeli state's goals. He often delivered warnings against alleged Jewish conspiracies: "These Jews are masters of usury and leaders in treachery. They will leave you nothing, either in this world or the next. "Shia Muslims have been listed along with "heretics, [...] America, and Israel" as the four principal "enemies of Islam" at ideology classes of bin Laden's al-Qaeda organization.

Bin Laden was opposed to music on religious grounds, and his attitude towards technology was mixed. He was interested in "earth-moving machinery and genetic engineering of plants" on the one hand, but rejected "chilled water" on the other. Bin Laden's overall strategy for achieving his goals against much larger enemies such as the Soviet Union and United States was to lure them into a long war of attrition in Muslim countries, attracting large numbers of jihadists who would never surrender. He believed this would lead to economic collapse of the enemy countries, by "bleeding" them dry. Indeed, al-Qaeda manuals clearly express this strategy. In a 2004 tape broadcast by al-Jazeera, bin Laden spoke of "bleeding America to the point of bankruptcy". Bin Laden also believed climate change to be a serious threat and penned a letter urging Americans to work with president Barack Obama to make "a rational decision to save humanity from the harmful gases that threaten its destiny".

Militant Activity

Mujahideen in Afghanistan

After leaving college in 1979, bin Laden went to Pakistan, joined Abdullah Azzam and used money and machinery from his own construction company to help the Mujahideen resistance in the Soviet war in Afghanistan. He later told a journalist: "I felt outraged that an injustice had been committed against the people of Afghanistan." Under CIA's Operation Cyclone from 1979 to 1989, the United States and

Saudi Arabia provided \$40 billion worth of financial aid and weapons to almost 100,000 Mujahideen and "Afghan Arabs" from forty Muslim countries through Pakistan's ISI. Bin Laden met and built relations with Hamid Gul, who was a three-star general in the Pakistani army and head of the ISI agency. Although the United States provided the money and weapons, the training of militant groups was entirely done by the Pakistani Armed Forces and the ISI. By 1984, bin Laden and Azzam established Maktab al-Khidamat, which funneled money, arms and fighters from around the Arab world into Afghanistan. Through al-Khadamat, bin Laden's inherited family fortune paid for air tickets and accommodation, paid for paperwork with Pakistani authorities and provided other such services for the jihadi fighters. Bin Laden established camps inside Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Pakistan and trained volunteers from across the Muslim world to fight against the Soviet-backed regime, the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan; he would also participate in some combat activity, such as the Battle of Jaji. It was during this time that he became idolised by many Arabs.

1988 Gilgit Massacre

In May 1988 the Pakistan Army inducted Osama bin Laden to lead an armed group of Sunni tribes, from Afghanistan and the North-West Frontier Province, into Gilgit and its surrounding areas to suppress a Shia revolt, as the Shias of Pakistan's Gilgit-Baltistan region had been calling for a separate Shia state called the 'Karakoram State'. Osama bin Laden and his hordes massacred and raped several hundred Shia civilians in Gilgit. Formation and structuring of al-Qaeda by 1988, bin Laden had split from Maktab al-Khidamat. While Azzam acted as support for Afghan fighters, bin Laden wanted a more military role. One of the main points leading to the split and the creation of al-Qaeda was Azzam's insistence that Arab fighters be integrated among the Afghan fighting groups instead of forming a separate fighting force. Notes of a meeting of bin Laden and others on August 20, 1988 indicate that al-Qaeda was a formal group by that time: "Basically an organized Islamic faction, its goal is to lift the word of God, to make his religion victorious." A list of requirements for membership itemized the following: listening ability, good manners, obedience, and making a pledge (bayat) to follow one's superiors.

According to Wright, the group's real name was not used in public pronouncements because "its existence was still a closely held secret". His research suggests that al-Qaeda was formed at an August 11, 1988, meeting between "several senior leaders" of Egyptian Islamic Jihad, Abdullah Azzam, and bin Laden, where it was agreed to join bin Laden's money with the expertise of the Islamic Jihad organization and 'take up the jihadist cause elsewhere after the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan. Following the Soviet Union's withdrawal from Afghanistan in February 1989, Osama bin Laden returned to Saudi Arabia in 1990 as a hero of jihad. Along with his Arab legion, he was thought to have "brought down the mighty superpower" of the Soviet Union. He was angered by the internecine tribal fighting among the Afghans. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait under Saddam Hussein on August 2, 1990, put the Saudi kingdom and the royal family at risk. With Iraqi forces on the Saudi border, Saddam's appeal to pan-Arabism was potentially inciting internal dissent. Bin Laden met with King Fahd, and Saudi Defense Minister Sultan, telling them not to depend on non-Muslim assistance from the United States and others, and offering to help defend Saudi Arabia with his Arab legion. Bin Laden's offer was rebuffed, and the Saudi monarchy invited the deployment of U.S. forces in Saudi territory. Bin Laden publicly denounced Saudi dependence on the U.S. military, arguing the two holiest shrines of Islam, Mecca and Medina, the cities in which the Prophet Mohamed received and recited Allah's message, should only be defended by Muslims. Bin Laden's criticism of the Saudi monarchy led them to try to silence him. The U.S. 82nd Airborne Division landed in the north-eastern Saudi city of Dhahran and was deployed in the desert barely 400 miles from Medina. Meanwhile, on November 8, 1990, the FBI raided the New Jersey home of El Sayyid Nosair, an associate of al-Qaeda operative Ali Mohamed. They discovered copious evidence of terrorist plots, including plans to blow up New York City skyscrapers. This marked the earliest discovery of al-Qaeda terrorist plans outside of Muslim countries. Nosair was eventually convicted in connection to the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, and later admitted guilt for the murder of Rabbi Meir Kahane in New York City on November 5, 1990.

Bin Laden continued to speak publicly against the Saudi government, for which the Saudis banished him. In 1992 he went to live in exile in Sudan, in a deal brokered by Ali Mohamed. Bin Laden's personal security detail consisted of "bodyguards...personally selected by him." Their "arsenal included SAM-7 and Stinger missiles, 47s, RPGs, and PK machine guns (similar to an M60)

Contradiction and Qurannic Sojourn Sudan and Return to Afghanistan

In Sudan, bin Laden established a new base for Mujahideen operations in Khartoum. He bought a house on Al-Mashtal Street in the affluent Al-Riyadh quarter and a retreat at Soba on the Blue Nile. During his time in Sudan, he heavily invested in the infrastructure, in agriculture and businesses. He was the Sudan agent for the British firm Hunting Surveys, and built roads using the same bulldozers he had employed to construct mountain tracks in Afghanistan. Many of his labourers were the same fighters who, had been his comrades in the war against the Soviet Union. He was generous to the poor and popular with the people. He continued to criticize King Fand of Saudi Arabia. In response, in 1994 Fand stripped bin Laden of his Saudi citizenship and persuaded his family to cut off his \$7 million a year stipend. By that time, bin Laden was being linked with Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ), which made up the core of al-Qaeda. In 1995 the EIJ attempted to assassinate the Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. The attempt failed, and Sudan expelled the EIJ. The U.S. State Department accused Sudan of being a "sponsor of international terrorism" and bin Laden of operating "terrorist training camps in the Sudanese desert". According to Sudan officials, however, this stance became obsolete as the Islamist political leader Hassan al-Turabi lost influence in their country. The Sudanese wanted to engage with the U.S. but American officials refused to meet with them even after they had expelled bin Laden. It was not until 2000 that the State Department authorized U.S. intelligence officials to visit Sudan.

The 9/11 Commission Report States

In late 1995, when Bin Laden was still in Sudan, the State Department and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) learned that Sudanese officials were discussing with the Saudi government the possibility of expelling Bin Laden. CIA paramilitary officer Billy Waugh tracked down Bin Laden in Sudan and prepared an operation to apprehend him, but was denied authorization. U.S. Ambassador Timothy Carney encouraged the Sudanese to pursue this course. The Saudis, however, did not want Bin Laden., giving as their reason their revocation of his citizenship. Sudan's minister of defense, Fatih Erwa, has claimed that Sudan offered to hand Bin Laden over to the United States. The Commission has found no credible evidence that this was so. Ambassador Carney had instructions only to push the Sudanese to expel Bin Laden. Ambassador Carney had no legal basis to ask for more from the Sudanese since, at the time, there was no indictment outstanding against bin Laden in any country.

The 9/11 Commission Report Further States

In February 1996, Sudanese officials began approaching officials from the United States and other governments, asking what actions of theirs might ease foreign pressure. In secret meetings with Saudi officials, Sudan offered to expel Bin Laden to Saudi Arabia and asked the Saudis to pardon him. U.S. officials became aware of these secret discussions, certainly by March. Saudi officials apparently wanted Bin Laden expelled from Sudan. They had already revoked his citizenship, however, and would not tolerate his presence in their country. Also Bin Laden may have no longer felt safe in Sudan, where he had already escaped at least one assassination attempt that he believed to have been the work of the Egyptian or Saudi regimes, and paid for by the CIA. Due to the increasing pressure on Sudan from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the United States, bin Laden was permitted to leave for a country of his choice. He chose to return to Jalalabad, Afghanistan aboard a chartered flight on May 18, 1996; there he forged a close relationship with Mullah Mohammed Omar. According to the 9/11 Commission, the expulsion from Sudan significantly weakened bin Laden and his organization. Some African intelligence sources have argued that the expulsion left bin Laden without an option other than becoming a full-time radical, and that most of the 300 Afghan Arabs who left with him subsequently became terrorists. Various sources report that bin Laden lost between \$20 million and \$300 million in Sudan; the government seized his construction equipment, and bin Laden was forced to liquidate his businesses, land, and even his horses. In August 1996, bin Laden declared war against the United States. Despite the assurance of President George H. W. Bush to King Fand in 1990, that all U.S. forces based in Saudi Arabia would be

withdrawn once the Iraqi threat had been dealt with, by 1996 the Americans were still there. Bush cited the necessity of dealing with the remnants of Saddam's regime (which Bush had chosen not to destroy). Bin Laden's view was that "the 'evils' of the Middle East arose from America's attempt to take over the region and from its support for Israel. Saudi Arabia had been turned into 'an American colony'".

He issued a fatwa against the United States, which was first published in *Al Quds Al Arabi*, a London-based newspaper. It was entitled "Declaration of War against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places. "Saudi Arabia is sometimes called "The Land of the Two Holy Mosques" in reference to Mecca and Medina, the two holiest places in Islam. The reference to "occupation" in the fatwa referred to US forces based in Saudi Arabia for the purpose of controlling air space in Iraq, known as Operation Southern Watch. In Afghanistan, bin Laden and al-Qaeda raised money from "donors from the days of the Soviet jihad", and from the Pakistani ISI to establish more training camps for Mujahideen fighters. Bin Laden effectively took over Ariana Afghan Airlines, which ferried Islamic militants, arms, cash and opium through the United Arab Emirates and Pakistan, as well as provided false identifications to members of bin Laden's terrorist network. The arms smuggler Viktor Bout helped to run the airline, maintaining planes and loading cargo. Michael Scheuer, head of the CIA's bin Laden unit, concluded that Ariana was being used as a "terrorist taxi service".

Early Attacks and Aid for Attacks

It is believed that the first bombing attack involving bin Laden was the December 29, 1992, bombing of the Gold Mihor Hotel in Aden in which two people were killed. It was after this bombing that al-Qaeda was reported to have developed its justification for the killing of innocent people. According to a fatwa issued by Mamdouh Mahmud Salim, the killing of someone standing near the enemy is justified because any innocent bystander will find a proper reward in death, going to Jannah (Paradise) if they were good Muslims and to Jahannam (hell) if they were bad or non-believers. The fatwa was issued to al-Qaeda members but not the general public. In the 1990s, bin Laden's al-Qaeda assisted jihadis financially and sometimes militarily in Algeria, Egypt and Afghanistan. In 1992 or 1993 bin Laden sent an emissary, Qari el-Said, with \$40,000 to Algeria to aid the Islamists and urge war rather than negotiation with the government. Their advice was heeded. The war that followed caused the deaths of 150,000-200,000 Algerians and ended with the Islamist surrender to the government. It has been claimed that bin Laden funded the Luxor massacre of November 17, 1997, which killed 62 civilians, and outraged the Egyptian public. In mid-1997, the Northern Alliance threatened to overrun Jalalabad, causing bin Laden to abandon his Najim Jihad compound and move his operations to Tarnak Farms in the south. Another successful attack was carried out in the city of Mazar-e-Sharif in Afghanistan. Bin Laden helped cement his alliance with the Taliban by sending several hundred Afghan Arab fighters along to help the Taliban kill between five and six thousand Hazaras overrunning the city. In February 1998, Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri co-signed a fatwa in the name of the World Islamic Front for Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders, which declared the killing of North Americans and their allies an "individual duty for every Muslim" to "liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque (in Jerusalem) and the holy mosque (in Mecca) from their grip". At the public announcement of the fatwa bin Laden announced that North Americans are "very easy targets". He told the attending journalists, "You will see the results of this in a very short time." Bin Laden and Al-Zawahiri organized an al-Qaeda congress on June 24, 1998. The 1998 U.S. Embassy bombings were a series of attacks that occurred on August 7, 1998, in which hundreds of people were killed in simultaneous truck bomb explosions at the United States embassies in the major East African cities of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and Nairobi, Kenya. The attacks were linked to local members of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, brought Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri to the attention of the United States public for the first time, and resulted in the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation placing bin Laden on its Ten Most Wanted list. In December 1998, the Director of Central Intelligence Counterterrorist Center reported to President Bill Clinton that al-Qaeda was preparing for attacks in the United States of America, including the training of personnel to hijack aircraft. At the end of 2000, Richard Clarke revealed that Islamic militants headed by bin Laden had planned a triple attack on January 3, 2000, which would have included bombings in Jordan of the Radisson SAS Hotel in Amman and tourists at Mount Nebo and a site on the Jordan River, the sinking of the destroyer USS *The Sullivans* in Yemen, as well as an attack on a target within the United States.

The plan was foiled by the arrest of the Jordanian terrorist cell, the sinking of the explosive-filled skiff intended to target the destroyer, and the arrest of Ahmed Ressam.

September 11 Attacks

God knows it did not cross our minds to attack the Towers, but after the situation became unbearable—and we witnessed the injustice and tyranny of the American-Israeli alliance against our people in Palestine and Lebanon—I thought about it. And the events that affected me directly were that of 1982 and the events that followed—when America allowed the Israelis to invade Lebanon, helped by the U.S. Sixth Fleet. As I watched the destroyed towers in Lebanon, it occurred to me punish the unjust the same way: to destroy towers in America so it could taste some of what we are tasting and to stop killing our children and women. After his initial denial, Osama bin Laden in 2004 finally claimed responsibility for the September 11, 2001, attacks in the United States. The attacks involved the hijacking of four commercial passenger aircraft - United Airlines Flight 93, United Airlines Flight 175, American Airlines Flight 11, and American Airlines Flight 77- and flying two into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, and the third into the Pentagon in Arlington County, Virginia, destroying the former, and severely damaging the latter, while the fourth, either intended to target the United States Capitol or the White House in Washington, D.C., crashed in a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, with no survivors. The attacks resulted in the deaths of 2,996 people, including 2,192 civilians, 343 firefighters, and 71 law enforcement officers who were in the World Trade Center and in the surrounding area; 70 civilians and 55 military personnel who were in the Pentagon; and 245 civilians, a law enforcement officer, and 19 hijackers on board the four airliners. In the wake of the attacks, bin Laden announced, "what the United States is tasting today is nothing compared to what we have tasted for decades. Our umma has known this humiliation and contempt for over eighty years. Its sons are killed, its blood is spilled, its holy sites are attacked, and it is not governed according to Allah's command. Despite this, no one cares". In response to the attacks, the United States launched the War on Terror to depose the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and capture al-Qaeda operatives, and several countries strengthened their anti-terrorism legislation to preclude future attacks. The CIA's Special Activities Division was given the lead in tracking down and killing or capturing bin Laden. The Federal Bureau of Investigation has stated that classified evidence linking al-Qaeda and bin Laden to the September 11 attacks is clear and irrefutable. The UK Government reached a similar conclusion regarding al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden's culpability for the September 11 attacks, although the government report noted that the evidence presented is not necessarily sufficient to prosecute the case.

Bin Laden initially denied involvement in the attacks. On September 16, 2001, bin Laden read a statement later broadcast by Qatar's Al Jazeera satellite channel denying responsibility for the attack. In a videotape recovered by U.S. forces in November 2001 in Jalalabad, bin Laden was seen discussing the attack with Khaled al-Harbi in a way that indicates fore knowledge. The tape was broadcast on various news networks on December 13, 2001. The merits of this translation have been disputed. Arabist Dr. Abdel El M. Hussein stated: This translation is very problematic. At the most important places where it is held to prove the guilt of bin Laden, it is not identical with the Arabic. "In the 2004 Osama bin Laden video, bin Laden abandoned his denials without retracting past statements. In it he said he had personally directed the nineteen hijackers. In the 18-minute tape, played on Al-Jazeera, four days before the American presidential election, bin Laden accused U.S. President George W. Bush of negligence in the hijacking of the planes on September 11. According to the tapes, bin Laden claimed he was inspired to destroy the World Trade Center after watching the destruction of towers in Lebanon by Israel during the 1982 Lebanon War. Through two other tapes aired by Al Jazeera in 2006, Osama bin Laden announced, "I am the one in charge of the nineteen brothers. [...] I was responsible for entrusting the nineteen brothers [...] with the raids", (May 23, 2006). In the tapes he was seen with Ramzi bin al-Shibh, as well as two of the 9/11 hijackers, Hamza al-Ghamdi and Wail al-Shehri, as they made preparations for the attacks (videotape broadcast September 7, 2006). Identified motivations of the September 11 attacks include the support of Israel by the United States, presence of the U.S. military in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the U.S. enforcement of sanctions against Iraq.

Conclusions

On March 16, 1998, Libya issued the first official Interpol arrest warrant against bin Laden and three other people. They were charged for killing Silvan Becker, agent of Germany's domestic intelligence service, the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, in the Terrorism Department, and his wife Vera in Libya on March 10, 1994. Bin Laden was still wanted by the Libyan government at the time of his death. Osama bin Laden was first indicted by a grand jury of the United States on June 8, 1998 on a charges of "conspiracy to attack defense utilities of the United States" and prosecutors further charged that bin Laden was the head of the terrorist organization called al-Qaeda, and that he was a major financial backer of Islamic fighters worldwide. On November 4, 1998, Osama bin Laden was indicted by a Federal Grand Jury in the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York, on charges of Murder of U.S. Nationals Outside the United States, Conspiracy to Murder U.S. Nationals Outside the United States, and Attacks on a Federal Facility Resulting in. Death for his alleged role in the 1998 United States embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania. The evidence against bin Laden included courtroom testimony by former al-Qaeda members and satellite phone records, from a phone purchased for him by al-Qaeda procurement agent Ziyad Khaleel in the United States. However, the Taliban ruled not to extradite Bin Laden on the grounds that there was insufficient evidence published in the indictments and that non-Muslim courts lacked standing to try Muslims.

Bin Laden became the 456th person listed on the FBI Ten Most Wanted Fugitives list, when he was added on June 7, 1999, following his indictment along with others for capital crimes in the 1998 embassy attacks. Attempts at assassination and requests for the extradition of bin Laden from the Taliban of Afghanistan were met with failure prior to the bombing of Afghanistan in October 2001. In 1999, U.S. President Bill Clinton convinced the United Nations to impose sanctions against Afghanistan in an attempt to force the Taliban to extradite him. Years later, on October 10, 2001, bin Laden appeared as well on the initial list of the top 22 FBI Most Wanted Terrorists, which was released to the public by the President of the United States George W. Bush, in direct response to the September 11 attacks, but which was again based on the indictment for the 1998 embassy attack. Bin Laden was among a group of thirteen fugitive terrorists wanted on that latter list for questioning about the 1998 embassy bombings. Bin Laden remains the only fugitive ever to be listed on both FBI fugitive lists. Despite the multiple indictments listed above and multiple requests, the Taliban refused to extradite Osama bin Laden. They did however offer to try him before an Islamic court if evidence of Osama bin Laden's involvement in the September 11 attacks was provided. It was not until eight days after the bombing of Afghanistan began in October 2001 that the Taliban finally did offer to turn over Osama bin Laden to a third-party country for trial in return for the United States ending the bombing. This offer was rejected by President Bush stating that this was no longer negotiable, with Bush responding "there's no need to discuss innocence or guilt. We know he's guilty." On June 15, 2011, federal prosecutors of the United States of America officially dropped all criminal charges against Osama bin Laden following his death in May.

In April 2011, various intelligence outlets were able to pinpoint bin Laden's suspected location near Abbottabad, Pakistan.[citation needed] It was previously believed that bin Laden was hiding near the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas, but he was found 160 km (100 mi) away in a three-story mansion in Abbottabad at 34°10'9.51"N 73°14'32.78"E. Bin Laden's mansion was located 1.3 km (0.8 mi) southwest of the Pakistan Military Academy. Google Earth maps show that the compound was not present in 2001, but it was present on images taken in 2005. Website of the Federal Bureau of Investigation listing bin Laden as deceased on the Most Wanted List on May 3, 2011. Osama bin Laden was killed in Abbottabad, Pakistan, on May 2, 2011, shortly after 1:00 am local time (4:00 pm eastern time) [note 1][222][223] by a United States military special operations unit.

The operation, code-named Operation Neptune Spear, was ordered by United States President Barack Obama and carried out in a U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) operation by a team of United States Navy SEALs from the United States Naval Special Warfare Development Group (also known as DEVGRU or informally by its former name, SEAL Team Six) of the Joint Special Operations Command, with support from CIA operatives on the ground. The raid on bin Laden's compound in Abbottabad was launched from Afghanistan. After the

raid, reports at the time stated that U.S. forces had taken bin Laden's body to Afghanistan for positive identification, then buried it at sea, in accordance with Islamic law, within 24 hours of his death. Subsequent reporting has called this account into question—citing, for example, the absence of evidence that there was an imam on board the USS Carl Vinson, where the burial was said to have taken place.

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