



INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM RESEARCH

A Centre of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

Message to The People of Europe



DETAILS

Video Code		Date of Download	30 September 2009
Main Voice	Osama bin Laden	Date of Video	25 September 2009
Website	YouTube http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V2MOQJib9JU	Duration	4 minutes 48 seconds
Producer	As-Sahab Media Production	Language	Arabic Subtitles in English and German

DESCRIPTION

This audio video released on 25 September 2009 is relatively short (under 5 minutes). The main speaker is Osama bin Laden (OBL), and the video features a picture of him in the background. It begins and ends with the recitation of a verse from the Qur'an. The main message is to urge the European Nations to withdraw their troops from Afghanistan.

ANALYSIS

In this audio video, Osama speaks in Arabic with subtitles in both English and German, indicating the intention of addressing the German people. Although Germany is not mentioned specifically in the video, the timing of the release clearly intended to coincide with the upcoming German elections scheduled to take place on Sunday, 27 September 2009. This could suggest the intention to create fear and to influence German electorate opinion.

Moreover, of the 4,000 troops Germany has as part of the international force in Afghanistan, 35 have died. This was undoubtedly a factor in a recent poll which showed that 55% of Germans want their troops to withdraw.

OBL also briefly mentions the Madrid bombing in 2004 which was perpetrated three days before the Spanish election, suggesting Germany could suffer the same fate in retaliation for the coalition force's treatment of thousands of Taliban in Afghanistan.

The video also contains threats against Germany when OBL mentions, *'you won't find a trace of any American...and just us and you will remain, for the oppressed to retaliate from his oppressor.'* OBL is aware of the German participation in Afghanistan. Al Qaeda may have been plotting an attack against Germany or perhaps simply hoping that the threats would induce Germany to withdraw their troops from Afghanistan which could then spark the withdrawals of other major European coalition members.

Finally, the aim of this video could also be to inspire jihadists-wannabes in Europe to perpetrate acts of violence in their own countries.

Clearly, this is a propaganda video taking on a different tone. This time OBL does not explicitly call out for Muslims to wage jihad, nor does he recite verses from the Quran or quote sayings from the Prophet. Rather, OBL attempts to impact the Europeans psychologically by questioning European justice and human rights. It also attempts to provide a justification of the attacks perpetrated in Madrid and London in 2004 and 2005 respectively by saying that it was a reaction to the event that took place in Afghanistan.

In Stuttgart, Germany, 25-year-old Turkish man suspected of posting this video on the internet was arrested on Friday, 25 September 2009. He is believed to be an Islamist activist. This video is released in addition to the series of videos posted by a member of al-Qaeda in Germany, Bekkai Harrach.