Reaction to 9/11

Audio letter October 28, 2001

Assalamu-alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa barakatuh!

My greetings to you and your comrades, Ilyas! I sent you a cassette on which I outlined the situation outside Chechnya and other things regarding it, and also what I think about the negotiations. On the cassette that I sent to Akhmed [Zakayev], I asked him to get in touch with me more often through messengers, as long as there is no way to communicate through telephone or the Internet. He told me that Udugov and his men are again making noise about some captured lieutenant-colonel and making statements regarding him on our behalf, and that worries you. I'll tell you what. There's absolutely no doubt that this activity is being carried out purposefully and by order of the Russians. And this isn't the first time when you can see that it's being done at the right time for Russians and not for us. During his attack on Dagestan, he [Udugov] said that the combatants that invaded were Chechens, and afterward, with the war here [in Chechnya] he said that the guys fighting here are Arabs.

When the Russian delegation was deprived of the right to vote in PACE, he made statements that we had stabbed to death eight captured OMON [Special Russian Police] fighters from Perm, and later on, when they were making a decision [in PACE] whether to return the Russian delegation the right to vote, Kenneth Gluck was kidnapped and they took responsibility for it. And now, as they’re afraid of any positive signals or contacts abroad, they specially and purposely found that lieutenant-colonel and made all that fuss about it. For all of us,
it’s again and again obvious that these people [Udugov and other radicals] are being led by someone, and they have no choice but do what they’re doing, even we all die or burn in flames. And these men are called traitors even by Russians. And what Kadyrov and what they [Russians] are doing about it, everything is orchestrated by the same master. One [Kaydrov] is playing one part, the other [Udugov] one is playing the other part. And we should understand that.

Second: About this prisoner and some other things. There are really big problems here. In what respect? The Russians capture our fighters, and if they can’t capture a fighter they break into his house and take away a brother or a father. We even know of five or six commanders and emirs whose wives they captured and these women disappeared without trace. If they kill someone during the arrest, they take the corpses with them, and later when we contact them and offer them a lieutenant-colonel, a colonel and even a general with ten soldiers into the bargain, they just ignore these offers. “Why on earth do we need that general? Give us money! Give us ransom!” And the rates are out of sight, and each day they become higher. First, it was 500 dollars, then 1,000, then 2,000, then 3,000, then 5, then 10, then 15. This is the level to which they [the Russians] raised these stakes. Accordingly, I have no means to pay them, if they captured a fighter or his wife or his brother. I don’t have so much money. I tell them to capture officers and soldiers and exchange them for their relatives, but the problem is that Russians don’t want to have any exchanges. When you share the information or give an interview, you should mention this problem. Just imagine a fighter whose wife was captured: he becomes hysterical, doesn’t know what to do, he doesn’t have any money [for ransom]. So, he captures an officer and tries to work an exchange with the Russians, but they refuse. So he says that he’ll kill him, that is, they [the Russians by their refusal] push him to do it.

What Udugov and his guys are really doing is provocation. And I want you to see the real picture here in connection with this problem. If our fighter falls into their hands [Russian hands], and if we succeed in ransoming him for 10,000 dollars, he is not a fighter any more, he isn’t even a human being. They put him through the wringer, reduce him to such a condition that he will never be able to take up arms, and then sell him for a sky-high price. This is what we must be talking about everywhere. These Russians kill our women and children by the thousands, scalp them, burn them, break their ribs, but they don’t have an Udugov who glorifies these actions. And we capture some colonel and following a call from Russians, we turn it into a