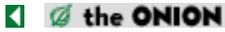


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 12 December 2001

# Starving, Bandaged Bin Laden Offers U.S. One Last Chance To Surrender

TORA BORA, AFGHANISTAN-An emaciated and heavily bandaged Osama bin Laden offered the U.S. a final chance to surrender Monday.

"Enemies of Allah, this is your last chance to leave Afghanistan alive," said a battered, soot-covered bin Laden in a videotaped statement broadcast on the Al Jazeera satellite network. "I mean it."

Staring directly into the camera with his good eye, bin Laden reiterated his vow to drive the U.S. from the country.

"You may have dozens of bases in Afghanistan. You may have thousands of bombs," bin Laden said. "But know this: We still have three or four guns and a full crate of bullets. And some knives, I think. You cannot hope to prevail."

A nearby goatherder then helped bin Laden brandish a rifle over his head.

"With every military advance you make, your forces become more spread out and weakened, while the Taliban's become more concentrated in an increasingly small space," bin Laden said. "You are practicing the mathematics of defeat. Give up now."

The videotape was accompanied by a written statement that explicitly laid out the Taliban's instructions for surrender.

"Men of the armies of Pakistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan; Americans of the 101st Airborne, 10th Mountain Division, 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit, 4th Special Operations Group, 8th Army Mechanized Battalion, SEAL Teams Four, Six, and Nine, and the Aircraft Carrier U.S.S. Carl Vinson... you are hereby required to report to the smoldering remains of our air base southeast of Kandahar," the statement read. "Turn your weapons over to Kamal and Azir, these two guys who should still be there. Kamal will be the one with the bad limp. After you have been processed by them and your surrender has been accepted, you will be released and sent home as soon as possible. Please, do not throw away any more lives in this useless struggle. Please."



Above: Speaking via satellite, bin Laden issues a final warning to the U.S.



Above: A Taliban soldier prepares to attack the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit.

"The noose is tightening," said Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar, gnawing on a dead horse's hoof. "With every Taliban soldier you capture or kill, your selection of enemies grows more limited. Our remaining soldiers, on the other hand, enjoy a virtually limitless array of Allied soldiers to shoot. Before long, it will be virtually impossible for you to find someone to engage on the field of battle. Then, victory will be ours."

Omar then closed his eyes and began to rock slowly back and forth.

According to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, American military leaders are having difficulty locating the few remaining pockets of Taliban personnel, hindering U.S. efforts to force a surrender.

"We are carefully analyzing bin Laden's videotaped message for any possible clues to his whereabouts," Rumsfeld said. "By analyzing the background vegetation and rock formations, the length and position of the shadows, and other subtle clues, we may be able to determine the location of the Taliban's temporary headquarters and send in a strike force for around-the-clock shelling."

"It's not yet clear where bin Laden was," Rumsfeld added, "but he seemed to be speaking from some sort of gigantic, bombed-out litter box."

Asked if he had considered or listened to the content of bin Laden's message, Rumsfeld said, "Why, no."



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