

The World Trade Center 1993 Attack vs. Osama Bin-Laden's Fatwa as Causes of the September 11, 2001 Terror Attack

Jessica Bland • Sacred Heart University • College of Arts and Sciences • blandj4874@mail.sacredheart.edu

Research Question: Which event was a more major cause of the September 11, 2001 terror attacks: The World Trade Center bombing in 1993 or Osama Bin-Laden's fatwa, issued in 1998?

Abstract:

It is important to study the causes of the September 11 attacks because knowing the root cause of a problem is the best way to fix it. In this study, I will research the question: Was the 1993 World Trade Center bombing more or less of a cause of the September 11, 2001 attacks than Osama Bin-Laden's fatwa, issued in 1998? I will be using the case study method to conduct this research by looking at previous research done on both topics and coming to a conclusion as to which event was a more major cause. This study is going to help researchers uncover the extent to which both the World Trade Center bombing of 1993 and Osama Bin-Laden's fatwa caused al-Qaeda to want to attack the United States on September 11, 2001 and it will also give researchers a better idea of how jihad and Sharia law play a role in terrorism.

Introduction:

- This study allows researchers to understand how the concept of jihad changes when the West is involved
- Terrorists do not appreciate that Americans have been occupying the Muslim Holy Lands
- The conspirators behind the 1993 World Trade Center attack gave Al Qaeda more minds to work with, which helped expand their jihadist ideology
- It is clear that without the 1993 attack, the September 11, 2001 attacks would not have taken place
- Muslims feel that it is their duty to overthrow non-Muslim regimes, which is why they want to overthrow Western regimes in Muslim lands
- After this study, people will have a better understanding of why the events of September 11 took place

Literature Review:

- Ideology is crucial to Islam because without the jihadist ideology, there would be no acts of violence
- The jihadist ideology is that there is a clear division between Muslims and non-Muslims
- Muslims are suffering at the hands of non-Muslims
- This supposedly justifies acts of violence and terrorism
- There is actually no religious basis for this because it ignores other rules that are laid out in the Quran for violence
- Defense approach to jihad: Jihad should be used to defend Muslims from the "infidels"
- Modernist approach to jihad: Islam should only try to expand under the parameters of international law
- Revivalist approach/new-jihad: Calls for Islamic revolution
- The media plays a large role in radicalizing young Muslims
- Ramzi Yousef and the other conspirators in 1993 had not pledged loyalty to Al Qaeda at the time of the attack
- Their goal was to bomb the towers from underneath and topple one tower into another, which would kill 250,000 people at once
- The World Trade Center was their target because it symbolized the financial power of the West
- The conspirators, the "Liberation Army" sent a letter to the Daily News saying that the World Trade Center would continue to be a target unless the United States met the demands of the terrorists
- 1995: Yousef is hiding in the Philippines and Osama Bin-Laden gets there as well
- When Yousef is arrested, Bin-Laden is able to take over Yousef's plans and mobilize large groups of people in favor of Al Qaeda
- 1998: Bin-Laden issues his fatwa, in which he lists his grievances towards American and threatens them

Methodology:

- Case study
- First case: The 1993 World Trade Center bombing
- Second case: Osama Bin-Laden's Fatwa, which was issued in 1998
- The chain of events that led up to each of these cases was examined
- A comparison of the circumstances of each case in relation to the September 11, 2001 attacks was done in order to determine which was more of a catalyst

Results and Discussion

- It is clear that the 1993 World Trade Center bombing was more of a catalyst for the September 11, 2001 attacks than Bin-Laden's fatwa
- The Liberation Army made it clear to the Americans that if they did not meet the terrorists' demands, then they would target the world trade center again and they did just that
- Without the 1993 attack, there would not have been a project for Bin-Laden to take over from Yousef
- They were able to connect because Al Qaeda was connected with Abu Sayyaf, who was connected with Khalifa
- Khalifa was connected to Al Qaeda because he was Bin-Laden's brother-in-law
- Khalifa was also connected to Ramzi Yousef, which allowed the two to connect

Conclusion:

- Modern terrorists follow the neo-jihadis model, where their goal is to kill as many people as possible
- The 1993 World Trade Center attack was the main catalyst for the September 11, 2001 attacks
- The motivation for terrorists disliking America is that they feel as though Americans have been disrespecting the Middle East for years and this will make them stop