

1 **World Islamic Front Statement**

2 Fatwa issued by Osama Bin Laden

3 February 23, 1998

Islamic religious  
decree

4 Praise be to Allah, who revealed the Book, controls the clouds, defeats factionalism,  
5 and says in His Book: “*But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay*  
6 *the pagans wherever ye find them, seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for*  
7 *them in every stratagem (of war)”*<sup>1</sup>; and peace be upon our Prophet, Muhammad  
8 Bin-'Abdallah, who said: I have been sent with the sword between my hands to  
9 ensure that no one but Allah is worshipped, Allah who put my livelihood under the  
10 shadow of my spear and who inflicts humiliation and scorn on those who disobey  
11 my orders.

divisions

non-Muslims  
harass

12 The Arabian Peninsula has never—since Allah made it flat, created its desert, and  
13 encircled it with seas—been stormed by any forces like the crusader armies  
14 <sup>2</sup>spreading in it like locusts, eating its riches and wiping out its plantations. All this  
15 is happening at a time in which nations are attacking Muslims like people fighting  
16 over a plate of food. In the light of the grave situation and the lack of support, we  
17 and you are obliged to discuss current events, and we should all agree on how to  
18 settle the matter. No one argues today about three facts that are known to everyone;  
19 we will list them, in order to remind everyone:

20 First, for over seven years the United States has been occupying the lands of Islam in  
21 the holiest of places, the Arabian Peninsula, plundering its riches, dictating to its  
22 rulers, humiliating its people, terrorizing its neighbors, and turning its bases in the  
23 Peninsula into a spearhead through which to fight the neighboring Muslim  
24 peoples. If some people have in the past argued about the fact of the occupation, all  
25 the people of the Peninsula have now acknowledged it. The best proof of this is the  
26 Americans' continuing aggression against the Iraqi people using the Peninsula as a  
27 staging post, even though all its rulers are against their territories being used to that  
28 end, but they are helpless.

commanding

armed rule by  
foreign power

29 Second, despite the great devastation inflicted on the Iraqi people by the crusader-  
30 Zionist alliance, and despite the huge number of those killed, which has exceeded 1  
31 million... despite all this, the Americans are once again trying to repeat the horrific  
32 massacres, as though they are not content with the protracted blockade imposed after  
33 the ferocious war or the fragmentation and devastation. So here they come to

long, drawn out

<sup>1</sup> All italicized words are direct quotations from the holy book of Islam, the Koran.

<sup>2</sup> Military expeditions undertaken by European Christians in the 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries to recover the Holy Land from the Muslims

34 annihilate what is left of this people and to humiliate their Muslim neighbors.

35 Third, if the Americans' aims behind these wars are religious and economic, the aim is  
36 also to serve the Jews' petty state and divert attention from its occupation of Jerusalem  
37 and murder of Muslims there. The best proof of this is their eagerness to destroy Iraq,  
38 the strongest neighboring Arab state, and their endeavor to fragment all the states of  
39 the region such as Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Sudan into paper statelets and  
40 through their disunion and weakness to guarantee Israel's survival and the  
41 continuation of the brutal crusade occupation of the Peninsula.

42 All these crimes and sins committed by the Americans are a clear declaration of war  
43 on Allah, his messenger, and Muslims. And ulema have throughout Islamic history  
44 unanimously agreed that the jihād is an individual duty if the enemy destroys the  
45 Muslim countries. This was revealed by Imam Bin- Qadamah in "Al- Mughni," Imam  
46 al-Kisa'i in "Al-Bada'i," al-Qurtubi in his interpretation, and the shaykh of al-Islam in  
47 his books, where he said: "*As for the fighting to repulse [an enemy], it is aimed at*  
48 *defending sanctity and religion, and it is a duty as agreed [by the ulema]. Nothing is*  
49 *more sacred than belief except repulsing an enemy who is attacking religion and*  
50 *life.*" On that basis, and in compliance with Allah's order, we issue the following  
51 fatwa to all Muslims:

52 The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies—civilians and military—is an  
53 individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible  
54 to do it, in order to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque and the holy mosque Mecca from  
55 their grip, and in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam, defeated  
56 and unable to threaten any Muslim. This is in accordance with the words of Almighty  
57 Allah, "*and fight the pagans all together as they fight you all together,*" and "*fight*  
58 *them until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in*  
59 *Allah.*" This is in addition to the words of Almighty Allah: "*And why should ye not*  
60 *fight in the cause of Allah and of those who, being weak, are ill-treated (and*  
61 *oppressed)?—women and children, whose cry is: 'Our Lord, rescue us from this town,*  
62 *whose people are oppressors; and raise for us from thee one who will help!'*"

63 We—with Allah's help—call on every Muslim who believes in Allah and wishes to be  
64 rewarded to comply with Allah's order to kill the Americans and plunder their money  
65 wherever and whenever they find it. We also call on Muslim ulema, leaders, youths,  
66 and soldiers to launch the raid on Satan's U.S. troops and the devil's supporters allying  
67 with them, and to displace those who are behind them so that they may learn a lesson.

68 Almighty Allah said: "*O ye who believe, give your response to Allah and His Apostle,*

Muslim law  
scholars  
holy war

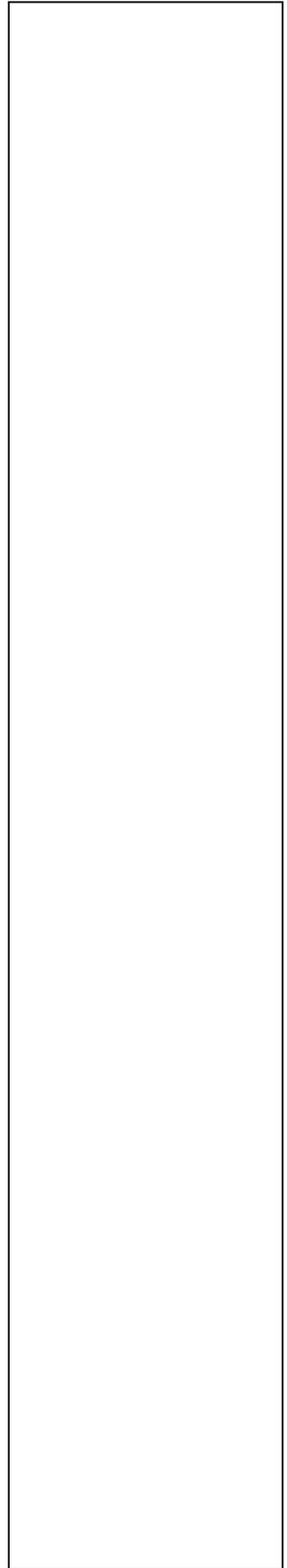
Muslim place of  
worship, holy city  
of Islam

violence, suffering

Prophet Muhammad

69 *when He calleth you to that which will give you life. And know that Allah cometh*  
70 *between a man and his heart, and that it is He to whom ye shall all be gathered.”*

71 *Almighty Allah also says: “O ye who believe, what is the matter with you, that when ye*  
72 *are asked to go forth in the cause of Allah, ye cling so heavily to the earth! Do ye*  
73 *prefer the life of this world to the hereafter? But little is the comfort of this life, as*  
74 *compared with the hereafter. Unless ye go forth, He will punish you with a grievous*  
75 *penalty, and put others in your place; but Him ye would not harm in the least. For*  
76 *Allah hath power over all things.” Almighty Allah also says: “So lose no heart, nor*  
77 *fall into despair. For ye must gain mastery if ye are true in faith.”*



# Teacher's Guide

**Name of Text:** World Islamic Front Statement – Osama Bin Laden's Fatwa

**Question Composers:** Mario Fitzpatrick and Jennifer Chandler

## **Teacher Background Information:**

World history students need to recognize tensions between the Arab and Western worlds. Hostilities between the world religions of Islam, Judaism and Christianity have existed for centuries but many students do not understand the depth and complexities of the situation. Bin Laden's fatwa clearly shows the intertwining of religion, culture and history in this world conflict. He mentions resentment towards the United States and notes his concern over holy sites controlled by The Jewish state. He clearly disapproves of Western occupation of Arab states. Bin Laden's fatwa demonstrates the willingness of extremists to go to any means possible to carry out fatwa. The speech contains powerful word choices that strengthen his claims and add support to his reasoning. An example of this is the term "crusader-Zionist" which embodies the deep cultural, almost cellular, memory of the Crusades by bringing it into the present day conflicts of the "ferocious war" (Operation Desert Storm). It exemplifies the political enmity that has existed for nine centuries. This speech is a founding document/groundwork for Al Qaeda's 9/11 attacks and further inspiration for splinter global terror groups. This became the blueprint for future terror attacks such as London, Madrid and Saudi Arabia.

Text Dependent Questions	Teacher Notes and Possible Textual Evidence for Student Answers
<p>Who is Allah? What evidence from the text suggests who he is?</p>	<p>Answer:            Line 5 – praise be to Allah, controls the clouds, defeats factionalism            Line 9 – worshipped            Line 13 – made Arabian peninsula flat and circled it with seas            Line 59 – Almighty            Line 66 – call on every Muslim who believes in Allah            Line 72 – Almighty Allah said: Oh ye who believe . . .            Line 80 – for Allah hath power over all things</p> <p>Response – god, deity, central figure of the religion of Islam</p> <p>Purpose: This question orients students to the name Allah.</p>
<p>What does Bin Laden mean in line 13 when he refers to “the crusader armies spreading in it like locusts, eating its riches and wiping out its plantations?”</p>	<p>Students should refer to the footnote referring to who the crusaders are;            Line 12 – have spread in the Arabian Peninsula</p> <p>Response – western armies taking resources and wiping out the Muslim people</p> <p>Purpose: This question is meant to 1) draw attention to the footnote giving historical context and 2) draw parallels between the crusaders of the 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries and the U.S. now.</p>
<p>Who is Bin Laden’s audience for the Fatwa? How do you know?</p>	<p>Line 7 – our Prophet            Line 12 – those in the Arabian Peninsula            Line 16-17 – we and you            Line 17 – we should all agree            Line 23-24 – neighboring Muslim peoples            Line 34 – Muslim neighbors</p> <p>Response – Arabs in the Arabian Peninsula, devout Muslims, those that hate the West – we should all agree how to settle this matter (matter – crusader armies – the West that has invaded Arab lands)</p> <p>Purpose: This question is designed to help students understand that Bin Laden is attempting to unite Muslims in an organized resistance against the west.</p>

Text Dependent Questions	Teacher Notes and Possible Textual Evidence for Student Answers
<p>On lines 18-19, Bin Laden introduces the significance of current events and reminds readers of three facts (claims) everyone knows. What are those three facts?</p>	<p>Line 20-21 – United States has been occupying the holiest lands of Islam...</p> <p>Line 33-34 – So they come to annihilate what is left</p> <p>Line 36 – serve the Jews’ petty state</p> <p>Purpose: This question is intended to draw students to the 3 claims so they can answer the following questions.</p>
<p>What is Bin Laden’s first claim? What evidence does he use to support it?</p>	<p>Claim :</p> <p>Line 20-21 – U.S. occupying the lands of Islam in the holiest of places</p> <p>Evidence:</p> <p>Line 21 – plundering its riches</p> <p>Line 21-22 – dictating to its rulers</p> <p>Line 22 – humiliating its people</p> <p>Line 22 – terrorizing its neighbors</p> <p>Line 22-24 – turning its bases in the Peninsula into a spearhead through which to fight the neighboring Muslim peoples</p> <p>Line 26-27 – Peninsula as a staging post</p> <p>Purpose: This question shows students how Bin Laden built his case around the perceived barbaric practices of Americans.</p>
<p>Bin Laden’s second claim addresses America’s aggression in the Middle East. What types of persuasive words and phrases does he use to make his claim more effective?</p>	<p>Line 29 – great devastation</p> <p>Line 30 – huge number</p> <p>Line 31-32 – horrific massacres</p> <p>Line 33 – ferocious war</p> <p>Line 33 – fragmentation, devastation</p> <p>Line 34 – annihilate and humiliate</p> <p>Purpose: By using persuasive words that a very incendiary, Bin Laden is inciting violence against the aggressor. This question is intended to show students the power of persuasive language.</p>

Text Dependent Questions	Teacher Notes and Possible Textual Evidence for Student Answers
<p>According to Bin Laden’s third claim what two countries are his enemies? What does he see as their motives?</p>	<p>Several lines cite – Americans            Line 36 – serve the Jews petty state            Line 36 – divert attention from its occupation of Jerusalem and murder of Muslims there            Line 37 - Eagerness to destroy Iraq            Line 38 - Fragment states of the region            Line 40 - Guarantee Israel’s survival            Line 41 - Occupy the Arabian peninsula</p> <p>Purpose: This question is designed to point out that this Fatwa is targeting the U.S. (Christian) and Israel (Jewish).</p>
<p>In line 50, what does “on that basis” refer to when Bin Laden issues the fatwa to all Muslims?</p>	<p>Line 42 – crimes and sins committed by the Americans            Line 42-43 – clear declaration of war on Allah, his messenger and Muslims            Line 43-44 – ulema unanimously agree            Line 44 – jihad is an individual duty if the enemy destroys Muslim countries</p>
<p>What religious references does Bin Laden use to motivate Muslims to respond to his fatwa?</p>	<p>Line 54 – liberate the mosques            Line 56 – unable to threaten Muslims            Line 56-57 – words of Almighty Allah            Line 63-64 – be rewarded            Line 64 – comply with Allah’s order to kill the Americans            Line 66 – Satan’s U. S. troops and devil’s supporters            Line 68 – who believe/apostles            Line 74-75 – punish you with a grievous penalty</p>
<p>In line 72, what two things make up Allah’s wishes?</p>	<p>Line 64 – kill the Americans and plunder their money wherever and whenever they find it</p>

## Text Dependent Questions

## Teacher Notes and Possible Textual Evidence for Student Answers

Bin Laden, in the final paragraph, quotes directly from the Koran (Muslim holy book). How might this motivate Muslims to carry out the fatwa? How do these words connect to previous portions of the text?

Lines 72-77 - Don't worry about what is happening on earth, you have nothing to lose as long as you are doing what Allah asks and you will be rewarded.

Line 53 - duty

Line 57-62 - fight the pagans, fight the oppression, prevail justice, why should you not fight for the cause of Allah

**Writing Prompt:**

In order to motivate his audience to respond to his directive, Bin Laden uses history, logic, religion, and word choice to justify his fatwa. Locate each by completing the graphic organizer. Once you have all the information, determine which technique is most effective by ranking your choices 1 – 4.

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Type of Claim</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Textual Evidence</b>	<b>Textual Evidence</b>
	<b>Historical Reference</b>			
	<b>Logic</b>			
	<b>Religion</b>			
	<b>Word Choice</b>			

**Teacher Key:**

Rank	Technique	Summary	Textual Evidence
	<b>Historical Reference</b>	Links current world situation to the Medieval Crusades Points to American presence in the Middle East/Iraq Identifies American support of the state of Israel/plight of the Jews	Line 13 – crusader armies Line 26 – Americans’ continuing aggression against the Iraqi people Line 41 – continued occupation of the Peninsula Line 20 – for over seven years the United States has been occupying the lands of Islam Line 36 – to serve the Jews’ petty state
	<b>Logic</b>	Muslims are under attack and must defend themselves The situation is bad It is our duty to respond We can call on others to help	Line 13 – encircled Line 14 crusader armies spreading in it like locusts, eating its riches and wiping out its plantations Line 16 – in light of the grave situation Line 52-53 – the ruling to kill is a duty Line 65-66 – we can also call on Muslim ulema, leaders, youth and soldiers
	<b>Religion</b>	Quotations from the Islamic holy book, the Koran Muslims are commanded by Allah to make sure no one is worshipped but Him Crimes and behaviors are a direct insult to Islamic beliefs Fight to defend places sacred to their religion Do it for an eternal reward or risk punishment from Allah	Lines 5-7 – portions of the Koran Line 9 – ensure that no one but Allah is worshipped Lines 54 – liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque . . . lands of Islam Lines 47-50 – portions of the Koran Lines 42-43 are a clear declaration of war on Allah, his messenger, and Muslims Line 63 – with Allah’s help . . . all who believe Lines 71-77 He will punish
	<b>Word Choice</b>	Bin Laden uses words of shame to motivate Muslims to rise up and defend their honor  Bin Laden uses many words of violence indicating that in his opinion violence is the only possible solution	Words of Shame Line 10 – humiliation and scorn Line 28 – helpless Line 33 – fragmentation and devastation Line 34 - humiliate Line 40 – disunion and weakness Line 59-62 – weak, ill treated and oppressed Violent Words Line 8 – sword between my hands Line 10 – shadow of my spear Line 21 – plundering

		<p>Bin Laden uses many words of persuasion, working to create a clear distinction between Arabs and the West and to challenge anyone who might question his reasoning.</p>	<p>Line 21 – dictating  Line 22 – terrorizing  Lines 22 – turning its bases into a spearhead through which to fight the Muslim peoples  Line 31-32 – horrific massacres  Line 33 - ferocious war  Line 34 – annihilate  Line 37 – murder of Muslims  Line 38 – endeavor to fragment  Line 41 – brutal crusade occupation  Line 42 - crimes and sins  Line 57 – fight</p> <p>Persuasive Words  Line 17-18 – we should all agree how to settle the matter  Line 18 – no one argues  Line 18 – that are known to everyone . . . everyone  Line 25 – all of the people have now acknowledged it  Lines 30-31 – despite . . .despite all this  Lines 37 – best proof  Line 42 – a clear declaration of war  Line 44 – unanimously agreed  Line 66 – Satan’s US troops and the devil’s supporters</p>
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## Checklist identifying key points that will assist in measuring student success and/or difficulty with the close reading and/or writing prompt

### *Measuring Student Success*

- Students recognize tensions exist between the Western world and the Arab world.
- Students work together collaboratively to evaluate Bin Laden's use of historical references, logic and religion to justify his claim.
- Students will understand the significance of a fatwa.
- Students will identify and analyze Bin Laden's deliberate word choices and their effectiveness.
- Students will learn that 9/11 was not an isolated event, but linked to a complex world situation deeply rooted in history.

### *Common Core State Standards*

- Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
- Determine the central ideas or information of a primary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
- Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims.
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

### *World History Nevada Social Studies Content Standards*

- Describe tensions in contemporary Islamic countries over reconciling traditional and Western influences.
- Analyze the political and religious factors that contribute to the instability in the Middle East.
- Describe how political and economic **alliances** affect peoples and countries.
- Analyze how the contemporary political climate has changed personal and national security within and among nations.