

Osama bin Laden's son wants to work for UN

Omar bin Laden has said he wants to be in a "position to promote peace" and that working for the United Nations would be "ideal".

In an interview with the New Statesman, the fourth eldest son of the world's most wanted man said that he "passionately wants to try to stop violence".

Asked whether he plans to enter politics or public life, Mr bin Laden said: "I do not believe that I would be a good politician – I have a habit of speaking the truth, even when it does not serve me well. But I would like to be in a position to promote peace. I believe that the United Nations would be ideal for me."

He said he ended contact with his father in April 2001 but that he was once asked to take up arms at a meeting with his fighters.

"His sons were in attendance, although none of us was a fighter," he said. "He spoke of how it is a great honour to give one's life for Islam and said anyone who wanted to give their life should put their name on a paper in the mosque."

"He never asked me to join al-Qaeda, but he did tell me I was the son chosen to carry on his work. He was disappointed when I said I was not suited to that life. I do not like disagreement or violence."

Mr bin Laden also described his memory of the 11 September 2001 attacks in America that his father is said to have carried out.

"I had been sound asleep and was woken by my uncle yelling: 'Look what your father has done!'," he said.

"I went into the sitting area and my family were gathered around the television. I soon learned that America was under attack. It was a very sad day."

"I did not agree with my uncle's reaction. I never thought my father was capable of the carnage in America – it was too big for his small organisation."

"I cannot speak for my father's family. This topic is too painful for us to talk about. We were all so shocked by the suffering of those poor people that, after that morning, none of us ever had a conversation about it."

Mr bin Laden's experiences have been documented in a book *Growing Up Bin Laden, Osama's Wife and Son take us Inside their Secret World*. He coauthored the book with his mother, Najwa, and best-selling writer Jean Sasson.

In the book, which was published last month by St Martin's Press, he describes his childhood as "sad and lonely" because of his father's "passion for supporting the Afghan people against the Russians".

He added: "Although my father was stern and did not hesitate to use his cane, there were good times when he stopped his war plans and played with us."

"My father could be very kindly and he was very close to his mother. I remember his face glowing with happiness when he was with her."