

# Beyond Prevent:

Achieving Security and Challenging Extremism

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**Conference Report**

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## Background

Prevent, part of the UK counter-terrorism strategy, was designed to complement and reinforce all elements of the CONTEST strategy to reduce the terrorist threat to the UK and our overseas interests.

In July 2010, the Home Secretary announced a review of key counter-terrorism and security powers, including a review of the Prevent strand of CONTEST, with a clear separation between Prevent (Home Office lead) and integration (Communities and Local Government lead). The outcome of the review will be published in January 2011.

The conference, ***'Beyond Prevent: Achieving Security and Challenging Extremism'*** was set up to generate ideas and contributions from key stakeholders in the Muslim and faith communities on the best way of bringing communities on board to challenge narratives of extremists and terrorists.

- The conference posed the question, 'In what areas has Prevent failed and in what areas do you think it has succeeded and therefore should be maintained?'
- The conference explored the failures and successes of the programme to date and considered what changes could be made to best attain the stated purpose of tackling radicalisation.

## Summary

- Despite its limitations and failures, Prevent provided strong and positive examples of community cohesion and inter-faith dialogue through its more successful projects.
- The Prevent strategy should continue to exist in some form – though with considerable remodelling and fresh thinking.
- A balance needs to be struck between individual liberty and collective security
- The exponential growth in Islamophobia post 9/11 and 7/7 has provided oxygen to Muslim extremists
- Growing Islamophobia has also encouraged and perpetuated far right extremism and terrorism against Muslims
- That a place exists for radical politics in a liberal democracy
- Prevent also fomented community tensions between state and Muslim groups, in particular around perceived state interference in the dynamics of these communities via direct sponsorship of rival Muslim groups.
- Several Prevent initiatives have caused alienation amongst Britain's BME and Muslim communities, around funding, and interventions in project aims

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## Recommendations

### State and Islam

There is a growing perception amongst Muslims that they are being unfairly targeted by the police and security services. Security groups are not the best judge of "safe" and "dangerous" theological interpretations of any faith group and civic authorities tend to make false distinctions between expressions of religious faith that aid community cohesion and those that question the accepted political order. All mainstream religions will combine both of these and "radical" expressions that call into question some of the principles of British culture and politics are more likely to be legitimate expressions of faith, rather than a call to acts of terrorism.

The preoccupation with theological issues means that government is interested in a social engineering of its own impression of Islam – the impression is that government wants to create their own version of Islam, and this is corrosive to community confidence.

Dr Waqar Azmi OBE, British Muslim Forum

Attendees at the conference suggested that to tackle terrorism effectively will require

- The creation of a climate of understanding that acknowledges British Muslims as part of the solution.
- The state to avoid religious interventions.
- The government's involvement in Iraq continues to cast a shadow over the public at large, and Muslim communities in particular; a public acknowledgement and apology would be a welcome and positive step towards discouraging radicalism in the UK.

### Prevent Funding and Agency Engagement

Prevent led to a breakdown in trust between Muslim groups and the police, but also between recipients of Prevent funding and non-recipient initiatives. Recipients were seen to be agents for government, which allowed non-recipient extremist groups to purport to be representative of an 'authentic' Islam.

Local governments and voluntary organisations which opted to be part of Prevent risk being seen as bodies collaborating in obtaining intelligence and infiltrating communities.

“With Prevent, we were used as service deliverers rather than strategic partners. If we could have been seen as shaping the agenda we could have acted as a broker with the community.”

– Community activist, interviewed for the Institute of Race Relations

To improve the effectiveness of Prevent funding and projects will require;

- More accurate identification of the causes that propel young people to criminality beyond radicalism.

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- More rigorous monitoring of Prevent grants.
- This needs to be balanced with the ability for grant recipients' to be seen to be entirely autonomous from, and independent of, government.

### **Prevent and Community**

For every few stellar training sessions and leadership projects funded by Prevent, there is an equivalent example of a project which utilised excessive surveillance and ended up shattering trust. Further, it is crucial to reduce the focus on internal politics and sectarianism, which has blighted several of the recipients of Prevent funding (as well as some of its detractors).

Now we need to invest in political and cultural leadership community, cultural, theatre, women's groups not just mosques. We need to respect the leadership of the Islamic community. We need to respect Diasporas: we live in a complicated globalised world and local communities deliver on a daily basis the welfare needs of others all across the world.

- Anwar Akhtar, Samosa

To build stronger community relations will require;

- Detailed knowledge of the local context as this is one of the keys to success in building strong community relations, as well as tackling social exclusion and radicalisation.
- Government to concentrate on making more funding available for inter-racial and inter-faith projects, based on addressing shared concerns.
- Educational projects which emphasise the commonalities between Muslim and British values as these are also beneficial to community cohesion.
- Clearer distinction between counter-terrorism initiatives for specific individuals, and more general work on social cohesion, with counter terrorism initiatives remaining the business of the Home Office, and social cohesion being the business of Communities and Local Government.

Leicester City Council – who are widely credited with administering one of the most effective Prevent schemes – testified to this in the DCLG Select Committee Inquiry into Prevent. They undertook social research and liaised with local universities in order to understand their Muslim communities better. Not only did they find that it was unhelpful to categorise Muslims as a homogenous group, they used their knowledge of these diverse communities to facilitate greater opportunities for cross-city dialogue.

– Tehmina Kazi, Director, British Muslims for Secular Democracy

### **Prevent and Radicalism**

It's vital to acknowledge and fully integrate in all strategic development the role and impact foreign policy affecting Muslim states countries will have on and within the UK Muslim society.

It is not part of the Muslim psyche to completely isolate itself from sharing the grief and plight of the fellow Muslims. Inevitably, the sufferings and the misery of Muslim in areas such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, Philippines, Kashmir and many other parts of the world is and will remain a cause for concern for Muslims in UK and beyond.

– Talha J Ahmad, Chair, Membership Committee of the MCB

To stop radicalisation and extremism we need to;

- Empower all our communities by identifying and addressing the barriers to integration.
- Reflect and identify policy areas which may feed into the anger and resentment that many in our communities, particularly young British Muslims feel
- Seek ways to address issues of economic deprivation, social marginalisation, educational underachievement, lack of political engagement – often identified as some of the causes that underlie these symptoms.
- Separate community empowerment, engagement, integration, dialogue and development from security concerns
- Build and increase civil participation in politics – this is one important way of building communities.
- Bring people together to tackle feelings of stigmatisation and alienation which provide a breeding ground for radicalisation.

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- Abandon the 'universality of approach'. Accurate and constantly reviewed mapping of extremist threats needs to be done on an area specific approach.
- Establish an Integration Commission – a quango where all can be supported in integration issues and projects. This can empower poorer communities, who are isolated, to participate in the decision-making process.
- Review foreign and domestic policy for their impact on extremist threats as well.

## Speeches in Full

### Welcome Speech – Murtaza Shibli, *Director, Rabita*

Parliamentarians, Excellencies, Ulema-e-Kiram, community leaders, academics, friends and supporters

Assalamu Alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatahoo – Peace be upon you all

I would like to begin by thanking Tom Brake MP and his office for his support in organising this event. Also many thanks to Keith Vaz MP for co-hosting today's event.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to what I believe is a very important event, talking about the Prevent, a programme that has raised controversies than I can remember. However, we must recognise the positive contribution of the programme as well. I believe the Prevent programme has supported some very useful initiatives. It has offered much-needed support to fledgling infrastructure of Muslim institutions, and helped them to organise and form a credible and cohesive response to the challenges from extremist fringe groups. The Prevent funding has also supported and spurred grass-roots initiatives among the Muslim community and beyond. It has created a valuable platform for Muslims and non-Muslims to engage through credible Islamic scholars and activists in pursuit of a world that respects and appreciates diversity in a European context – within and outside Islam.

Today's event seeks to recognise both sides of the debate and I am glad we have a very impressive line up of speakers from various backgrounds and disciplines. It is encouraging to note that the Coalition government is reviewing the whole Prevent strategy, something a large number of Muslim organisations have been demanding for a long time. We all hope and look forward to a strategy that is inclusive without being discriminatory and that tackles not only the security aspect of terrorism but also its causes.

Growing up in Kashmir on the Indian side, where I saw a large number of my friends, neighbours, relatives and acquaintances pick up guns against the state, I was also tempted to take that route to channel my frustrations like many others in my community. Later, as a journalist, I reported on these events and interviewed scores of resistance commanders and lived among them, as some of them were very close friends and remain to this day. My own understanding of terrorism is that it simply does not happen in vacuum. While we can blame Al Qaida and its ever expanding network, we need to look beyond. We may be able to deal with the immediate security challenges of terrorism, but there is no magic to stop it apart from addressing its root causes, thoroughly and comprehensively. I believe that we all can play our part in not only informing the debate but also perhaps influencing the policy prescriptions that must be determined by our national interest and not by narrow political interest or an agenda driven by a few, who seek to demonise Muslim and Islam as a radical ideology.

The most urgent issue today is the growing perception amongst Muslims that they are being unfairly targeted by the police and security services. So we must find ways to tackle terrorism and crime by creating a climate of understanding that acknowledges British Muslims as part of the solution. We also genuinely need to identify the causes that propel young people to criminality.

Equally, it is important that our politicians and civil society takes a strong note of Islamophobia that has grown out of proportion, given the securitisation of Islam and Muslims following 9/11 and 7/7. The exponential growth in Islamophobia is providing oxygen to Muslim extremists as it feeds their exclusive and rhetorical world vision. Growing Islamophobia is also encouraging Far Right extremists and terrorism against Muslims.

Today's conference has generated a lot of interest among various Muslim community groups and organisations who were excited to join us today, but some of them had to pull out at the last minute because some of the Muslims are celebrating Eid ul Adha today. Many others, including myself, are celebrating it tomorrow. Therefore I would like to wish Eid Mubarak to all of you and hope and pray that this Eid brings peace and harmony to us and all those around us.

I want to thank all our speakers including Shabana Mahmood MP and Shadow Home Office Minister, Shami Chakrabarti, Director of Liberty, Fuad Nahdi from the Radical Middle way, Maulana Shahid Raza, Chairman of Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board, Yousef Dar, Jonathan and all other distinguished guests.

Thank you very much for being here with us today and I hope you find this conference useful and purposeful.

***Introduction by Tom Brake, Co-Chair of the Liberal Democrat Backbench Committee on Home Affairs, Justice and Equalities Co-Chair, LibDem Backbench Committee on Home Affairs, Justice and Equalities***

Thank you for coming; I welcome the opportunity for open and honest debate that this conference offers. Currently in parliament the debate on freezing of terrorist assets is taking place; the government is also in the middle of reviewing their policy on counter-terrorism.

I am scheduled to discuss control orders with the Home Secretary this afternoon: there is some debate playing out in the press about the value or otherwise of control orders; my role is to ensure we deliver on the coalition's pledge to remove control orders and if there are moves to introduce other orders that look like control orders I will be opposing them too.

I had hoped to have representation from the Home Office or Communities and Local Government speaking at today's conference, but as they are in middle of their review their feeling was that anything they came and said here may in a month or so become irrelevant.

It's clear that there's a threat; the level of the terrorism threat at moment in the UK is severe –my hope is that the review may help government work out where to target resources better, and where the threat may come from next.

At the moment Northern Ireland presents a significant threat, and any policy needs to take this into account too as well as other sources.

We'll also get a clearer picture of where the split is between community cohesion and prevention of terrorism; my view is a clearer delineation will be made on this with policy.

**Keith Vaz, Chair of the Labour Party's Ethnic Minority Taskforce**

I hope that the message of what we say today will get out to the community – Tom Brake has played and continues to play an important role in the select committee and as spokesperson for home affairs.

The reviews over the last few months will allow the government to look at what it wants to achieve with a strategy people understand and which works.

There have been many criticisms of how the last government handled Prevent, and I would like to replace the use of the word 'prevent' with the word 'engage', as it is too ambitious or arrogant for any government to assume it can prevent radical extremism in the community - engagement with the community itself is a vital key.

There's a need for the community to come forward and engage with government and members so that it has the solutions. I don't know the mechanisms on this, but the community itself knows how to do this, so the responsibility is on the government to listen engage and work with these organisations - and this is how I think Prevent ought to be taken forward.

350 million pounds have been spent on Prevent and devolved to local councils – though I'm not sure what the outcomes have been. Legislation is in place for the asset seizing of terrorists – but achievements have been modest so far.

The challenge to the community is not to leave it to government but to address the issue of how to prevent the radicalisation of young Muslims, and even should we be doing this at all? We don't want to stop young people being radical. Radicalisation is fine but when people adopt ideas and methods that will lead us into the 'terrorist camp' that's where we have to draw the line. Facilitation of this and organisations that do this is key.

On our last body of work together Tom Brake and I recommended the formation of a national Security Council. This council would ideally meet regularly to discuss what's the best way forward, forming a stakeholder organisation bringing together Muslim community groups to work with government.

Success in the prevention of terrorism is community dependent and success is based on and in the Muslim community – it is up to the community to put in place these structures and engage with government.

## **Shabana Mahmood, Shadow Home Office Minister**

The government's review on counter terror legislation is timely and is a valuable opportunity to take stock and learn lessons from the Prevent strategy.

The threat of terrorism remains high so the prevention of radicalisation should stay on the agenda but we should also recognise that important lessons need to be learnt especially around differentiation and ownership of the 2 streams of work:

The first stream of work is in implementing the Prevent strategy: being focused on information gathering, liaising with communities, breaking up criminal networks and prosecuting – this should be the work and domain of the Home office

Operation Champion took place in my neighbouring constituency. When the real purpose and intention of the cameras came to light there was a huge outcry and much of the police's excellent work with communities was undone.

This case isn't commonplace but it serves as a valuable cautionary tale as it shows the frailty of the bonds of trust between police and communities and how years of hard work by the police in improving relationships with community can be undone overnight. Police need to work in partnership with communities.

The second work stream is in building stronger, more cohesive and united communities. Feelings of stigmatisation and alienation provide a breeding ground for radicalisation - bringing people together is an important tool in preventing radicalisation.

Feelings of isolation, disaffection and fear are preyed on in the same ways by extremist groups – changing this should be grassroots lead.

An important element is that local government and the department of communities and local government work in way that is fair and seen to be fair. No one group should feel disadvantaged compared to others.

We need to build and increase civil participation in politics – this is one important way of building communities. The focus on terrorism and radicalisation with Muslims creates an impression that this is all British Muslims care about. We have the same concerns as all of Britain – we care about housing, education, their community, jobs. It's important to ditch this idea of 'Muslim issues'

No doubt there is much to learn from Prevent and it's important to feed into the strategy as it is important to strengthen all communities.

**Fuad Nahdi, Executive Director, *The Radical Middle Way***

Radical Middle Way was set up after the 7/7 bombing. We were formed months before the Prevent strategy was launched, but we've also been funded by Prevent. The organisation has received a lot of media attention and mention from the government in discussing Prevent.

The task force was formed 2 months after the bombings. 68 recommendations came from this. Only 4 have been put forward from this (Radical Middle Way is one of them).

One recommendation was to bring charismatic scholars from abroad to engage with young British Muslims. Also the Muslim advisory board grew from this as one of the recommendations.

I travelled extensively to talk to Muslim scholars about British Muslims' relationship with their government. They agreed there was no problem or conflict of interest as long as there is no element of engagement that opposes the teachings of Islam; nor should we be a source of conflict in society. We can't be selective in our engagement. But how can we engage with a government who according to our young people are doing everything wrong?

Initially the issue of security was clear and affecting all of society. One issue for consideration was around public funding – we are (like others now) a religious organisation funded by a secular society. We had to explore the shared values that the government would like Radical Middle Way to promote.

My response was to open up the Muslim community - to strengthen the mainstream to prevent radicalisation. A major criticism of the Prevent strategy was how it focused on Muslims. There's been a historical lack of investment in Muslims - in Britain most work in the Muslim community is run and maintained by the Muslim community. Funding has not traditionally come from the state which means they are independent from the state. New thinking is needed on how to empower these communities.

Muslims have not been visible recipients of state funding prior to Prevent funding (unlike other faith communities). Part of the issue with Prevent has been that other communities now feel that the Muslim community has been given precedence in funding considerations.

Moslems need to be involved integrally in the debates and strategy: we want a society that's safe, tolerant and just, but want to be treated just like any other peoples – British Moslems are now one of the most dynamic communities in the UK.

**Shami Chakrabarti, Director, Liberty**

There is a clear conflict of message created by government involvement with Guantanamo detainees at the same time as forwarding the Prevent strategy. There is a need to have moral authority when dealing with terrorism at root and branch level: the Prevent agenda was doomed in the light of government departing from the rule of law with detainees.

Care needs to be taken with the role of government in building communities. Putting the same people in charge of social engagement who are also in charge of intrusive surveillance and security leads to a blurring of distinct lines. At Liberty we received so many queries and complaints along the lines that people felt money that was supposed to build a civil society was used to build a surveillance society.

There has been a fatal blurring of important work with the increased surveillance that's taken place. In some cases funding seemed to be conditional on passing on information and reporting on others as potential terrorists.

Security services do vital work but that's wholly different from that of youth workers and community leaders. There's been too much government engagement and not enough political engagement: in the run up to the general election I saw positive examples of effective political engagement – the BNP threat was dealt with through engaging in heated democratic debate, talking to people about issues they cared about – housing, unemployment.

Prevent should not be all about faith and grants funding – funding for good community projects is positive, but the suggestion that it is conditional on an anti-terrorism agenda is difficult if not doomed.

Mistakes have been made but now is a good moment to learn from these mistakes. I have concerns about the review being undertaken by those who were complicit in the mistakes but I welcome the review in good faith.

**Maulana Shahid Raza OBE, Chair, Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board - MINAB**

I'd like to begin by thanking the organisers for holding this conference. There has been much discussion in the media and in public debate about the frequently negative portrayals of Muslims as a whole.

We need to recognise the extremist elements within the Muslim community as distinct from the community as a whole, and avoid treating the entire community in the same way.

The Prevent strategy has achieved some successes, however despite the announcement of its review by the Home Office I have no knowledge of prior consultations. I hope that prior consultation of stakeholders and others in the Muslim community will take place before the review is published, so that members of the community don't feel that it is imposed on them, which would lead to further feelings of alienation and stigmatisation.

Care needs to be taken with terminology which may lead to conflict, for example, the use of the phrase 'supporting the mainstream voices' has led to diverse groups claiming to

represent the mainstream voice. We should engage the whole community, not all strive to be representing the 'mainstream'.

I have noticed an enhanced engagement with young Muslims and Muslim women as a result of Prevent, and there's also improved levels of interfaith activities as result too.

The community felt in a noticeable way the need for engagement and improved interfaith relations.

As part of my duties sitting on the executive board of the inter faith network, I've heard members express disquiet about the distribution of the Prevent funding. I agree with this concern and believe extremist threat can only be handled and resolved with a wider joint mechanism where faith communities, politicians, media, other stakeholders all join hands. Extremism is a national not a Muslim issue.

Outside factors have pushed Muslims towards extremism and to resolve this we need to work collectively. So if the review is leading to wider engagement then this will be welcomed by the Muslim community.

The community is committed to a partnership in working together to defeat extremism and make a safer and secure UK.

I hope the review is transparent inclusive and constructive.

**Dr. Jonathan Githens-Mazer, Co-Director, European Muslim Research Centre, University of Exeter**

Home Office Minister Theresa May recently announced that a review of the Prevent Policy. This review represents the moment of truth for the Coalition's views on engaging with Muslim communities. May framed Prevent as a process to 'stop radicalisation' – something she stated hinged on 'an integrated society' that would help to 'defend British values and speak out against the false ideologies of the extremists'. For some this has been interpreted as a coded message to expect a rolling back of engagement with various Muslim organisations because they play too much of a 'gatekeeper' role. They rejoice at what they understand as the Government's support for their populist right mantra that claims that 'multi-culturalism' has been a sham and failure. This position posits that counter-terrorism or counter-radicalisation (often undistinguished) is a battle for the hearts and minds of British Muslims because Islam can pose an inherent threat to European identity, and that threats will be persistent unless they become more like 'us' (white non-Muslim European that is) – a theme echoed by Geert Wilders and Chancellor Merkel.

There are, undeniably, real and scary examples of what happens when false ideologies are put into operation. Omar Bakri, Abu Hamza, Abdullah al Faisal Abu Qatada, and more recently organisations like Islam-4-UK not only demonstrably threatened the security of the British state, but they also irreparably tainted perceptions of Islamic political engagement in the UK. Even now, unrepresentative but vociferous demagogues like Anjem Choudry are regularly taken up by the tabloids as symbols of what happens when Islamic faith inspires politics. Yet it was Islamically inspired political activism that confronted Abu Hamza at the North London Central Mosque, when his removal was organised by the Muslim Council of Britain. It was also Islamic faith, belief and practice that was at the core of the outing of the

un-Islamic nature of the thinking of al Faisal in the streets of Brixton by its Salafi community. Both cases are examples where Muslims found strength through Islam to confront a real threat to British society. They are clearly distinct from the terrorist threat – yet such incidents do not neatly follow the suppositions about Islam outlined above.

Prevent itself was a reaction to 7/7 – it was a policy reaction that took pre-existing initiatives such as the Muslim Contact Unit, and created a policy platform that initially proposed rolling out partnership between communities and the Police, local authorities, and other agencies. In its inception, it wasn't about stigmatising communities or surveillance, it was about institutionalising partnership. Pre-Prevent, there was a sense that communities were best placed themselves to identify and address threats of Islamically inspired terrorism – and this was at the original heart of the policy's development.

Increasingly, however, the policy drifted from this original thinking into the realm of counter-radicalisation and community cohesion. A policy that was, at first, based on partnership, increasingly came to represent an agenda that sought to address 'ideological vulnerabilities' and increase 'resilience' to such ideas. Partners from Muslim communities, initially keen on Prevent, were now thoroughly confused – was this a policy about partnering to prevent terrorism, or was it a policy about controlling what people could or should think – or was it something even more sinister, as Kundnani pointed out in his IRR report 'Spooked', a way for the Government to spy on who was thinking what?

Part of the problem with Prevent was that politicians assumed that 'radicalisation' was sufficient to explain terrorism. If someone held radical (later rebranded 'extremist') ideas, then they were assumed to be a potential terrorist. But who defined radical? Should it have been the Blair Government – for whom Muslim communities' opposition to interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq could equate to radical? Organisations that said Islamically inspired political engagement was inherently un-British (and/or illiberal or undemocratic) and by default radical? And there is a question of quantification: how radical is enough to participate in violence?

The problem is that the Prevent policy was a presumed answer for a question never properly posed: what is the precise nature of the relationship between or 'radicalisation' or holding a 'radical idea' and participation in violence? This is a fundamental yet unanswered question. Despite this gap in our knowledge, organisations and think tanks continue to produce glossy case studies, allegedly documenting how a single terrorist attended x meeting, and watched y video, and – hey presto – through the magic of radicalisation produced a terrorist. What they always fail to mention is that for every one 'positive' case, there are thousands if not tens or hundreds thousands of British Muslims who were equally exposed to similar meetings and ideas and who completely rejected terrorism as un-Islamic, immoral, illegal and counter-productive and disloyal to their home, Britain.

Will the Prevent review be dominated by politically inspired presumption, or the complexity of fact? Will it be about denigrating multi-culturalism or resuscitating effective counter-terrorism? You can expect this debate to be bloody - too many organisations and think tanks have a financial stake in the unproven claim that radicalisation causes terrorism –the prevent industrial complex thrives on the narrative of counter-radicalisation, and there is a feedback loop between think tanks which buttress political claims and manifesto commitments, so that, in turn, politicians feel comfortable funding them. Here's hoping that the Home Office can

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see beyond these unproven claims and that it will listen carefully to the voices of practitioners, civil servants, and members of British Muslim communities who know better.

**Yousef Dar, Vice Chair, National Association of Muslim Police**

I'd like to focus on the lessons we need to learn from Prevent. Prevent needs to be seen as part of the CONTEST strategy as originally devised, and there is an overlap: the 'Pursue' strand of that strategy overlaps with Prevent and some aspects of it, such as stop and search, and elements of foreign policy, should have been looked at as part of Prevent.

Phyllis Starkey's summary on Prevent is pertinent and useful: the single focus on Muslims in Prevent has been unhelpful, as a programme that focuses on one section of the society is stigmatising and alienating.

There has been a lot of criticism but Prevent has done some good work in the regions - the strategy was good at addressing some of the issues, but its development so far has changed from where it started. It has now been widened to beyond Muslims. Also a de-radicalisation of individuals has taken place and this evidences good practice.

Engagement with communities has been successful too, for example with the Somali community in the Midlands.

The police Prevent unit has done some very good work and have listened to what we have to say - the National Association of Police Officers and its staff are in a good position to judge the benefits of engaging with communities.

Problems arise in defining extremism and radicalism: democracy relies on these elements and it is the right of any individual to challenge other views. The European report on counter terrorism highlights that Northern Ireland is a big threat - so far this year there have been 49 bombings in Northern Ireland and 32 shootings, and far right groups also remain a threat.

We need to look at the criminal definitions - as 'terrorist' or 'criminal extremism': we're not just pursuing individuals who aim at toppling the state; their actions target all of us.

Stop and search can have an impact on the route to extremism - it's worth noting that no stop and search arrests have been made as part of counter terrorism efforts.

The Muslim community has been mapped like no other section of community - why? Does it need it? Even 10 year olds have been subjected to Prevent agenda - this defies all logic.

How does this affect Muslims on a daily basis? The verbal and physical attacks can be seen as part of Prevent's legacy: Islamophobia. Muslims expect the same level of treatment as anyone else in the UK. Consultation is an important part of this review. We need to look at the whole community, at media portrayals of Muslims and Islamophobia. We need to work out a commonality of all communities against terrorism. So let's look at what the select committee says but let's be focused and rational, and be led by evidence and fact and not innuendo.

## **Harmander Singh, *National Sikh Security Forum***

Sikhs In England 2009 - The effect of the War on Terror on Asians in the UK

### Background and context setting

In Britain, just prior to 9/11, there was a major wave of public unrest which some refer to as 'Northern Disturbances'. In the aftermath three major reports were drafted - Cattle, Denham and Ousley. All three spectacularly failed to identify the role faith played in the Northern Disturbances focusing on issues such as poverty, unemployment and racism instead. The term Community Cohesion was coined and became common currency.

In 2006, a further Community Cohesion Review took place establishing an Institute for Community Cohesion (ICOCO).

In summary of the foundation laying work on Community Cohesion laid by the three reports there was a common and collective failure to acknowledge that Faith plays a central role for minority communities in Britain. SIE identified the Five F's of Failure in the Government's approach to Community Cohesion and later (after 7/7) Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) which was originally introduced as 'Preventing Violent Muslim Extremism'

The five 'F's identified as found wanting from the three reports (Cattle, Ousely and Denham) concerning public disorder (riots) in Burnley and adjoining areas in the summer of 2001 are:

**Faith** - not being identified as a major contributory factor to the causes of unrest

**Foresee** - while it was evident and almost predicted by many within the 'Asian' communities, the public sector and other relevant institutions failed to take heed of the warning signs. Sadly, the methods of analysis used then lacked the 'cultural nuances' required and have not improved to date.

**Forestall** - Whilst different techniques are experimented with now to guide the 'PREVENT' agenda, no such mechanisms were in evidence prior to the summer of 2001. It is maintained that the current PREVENT agenda in its widest context lacks two particular dimensions necessary to be of any practical or assured use. This is evidenced by the fact we in the UK remain at the current threat level.

**Fair(ness)** - The punitive sentencing of those involved from the Muslim community was meant to send a warning signal, the avoidance or at least an acknowledgement of the first three 'F's coupled with a different standard of dispensation of justice to non-Muslims at the time (and since) facing similar charges has not helped in reassuring a community that already felt marginalised in the run up to the unrest.

**Fund(ing)** - At the time, poverty and poor service provision was considered to be the cause and monies seemed to be simply 'thrown' at the problem. Since then, it is clear that the funds allocated to PREVENT are generating hostility from all fronts. A growing number from the Muslim community are uncomfortable with the label attached to PREVENT, while all other faiths perceive the ring fencing as divisive and indicative of favouritism. It is felt that as Muslims are part of society, issues affecting any interface with other sections of the community could be better resourced from within the current budget.

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## The SIE Project

SIE undertook to complete three projects during 2008/09 looking at how the public sector interfaced with different faiths. Preliminary feedback from pilot surveys indicated that the Government's approach was a failure without due regard to real equal partnership in engagement.

The effect of the War on Terror on Asians in the UK gathered evidence on the collective effect of the various anti-terrorism 'initiatives' that have been implemented to date since 9/11. Its purpose was to gain an understanding of how Asian communities are affected emotionally, socially experience and respond to the threat of terrorism. Its aim was to explore the emotional response of and perceived social consequences for Asian families to terrorism. The methodology is explained in the Appendix.

This study was carried out over an extended period of time due to lack of resources. It needs to be repeated as a snapshot, particularly after the change in central government.

## Summary of Findings

1. The three faiths had a set of shared common values.
2. Role of media was disruptive, unfair, incited racial hatred – who else is behind it?
3. London found to be most tolerant and resilient.
4. Far north had greater divisions and Muslims blamed more by Hindus than Sikhs.
5. Midlands expressed greater tensions openly – due to larger Hindu/Sikh communities.
6. Older people more unified across all three faiths.
7. Women most tolerant and unified in views across the faiths.
8. Majority blamed foreign policy mainly.
9. Intolerance/hypocrisy of host community second biggest reason by majority.
10. Ignorance used as excuse for general racism by host community.
11. Stereotyping by host community not welcomed by all three faiths.
12. Stereotyping by the three faiths of each other evident.
13. Mistrust based on historic and recent 'incitement' growing.
14. Western dispute resolution methods not trusted
15. Fairness in access to public and private sector demanded by all three faiths.
16. Even ethnic police officers not trusted by majority.
17. Politicians not trusted by greater majority – Hindus least averse to politicians..
18. Church seen as patronising and divisive in its approach to different faiths.
19. Judiciary seen as anti Muslim by some non-Muslims too.
20. Funding for Muslims resented – even by Muslims.

## Possible solutions

1. Honest brokers using traditional (Eastern) dispute resolution seen as a solution.
2. Real capacity building for faith leaders needed.
3. Faith literacy of Dharmic traditions needed for policy makers.
4. More that compensation alone for miscarriages of justice needed.
5. Notion of 'honour' needed to be understood and acknowledged as mitigation for reaction.
6. Community 'Gatekeepers' need to be replaced by Community Gateways.
7. Civil Servant's community contacts should be made more transparent.
8. Greater public recognition to the sacrifices made by the soldiers of Undivided India needed.
9. Bishops in the House of Lords should be joined by other faith leaders.

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10. Articles of faith, religious attire and choice of faith sensitive food needed to be respected.
11. Enforce the aggravated penalties for criminal activities against religions.
12. Appoint more role models from minority faiths to influential positions.
13. Introduce Faith Impact Assessments to public policy initiatives.
14. Help facilitate training of in-country faith leaders – will help job creation.
15. Create Faith Intra/Extranets to help wider and effective consultation.
16. Introduce 'faith contacts' in every government department.

### **Dr. Waqar Azmi OBE, *British Muslim Forum***

This conference, and the review of the Prevent strategy is timely, and I am largely supportive of that strategy. I am here representing the British Muslim Forum – the majority of British Muslims are traditional Sunnis. I have been working as chief advisor in the cabinet office on diversity as well as on Prevent projects. The Prevent approach has been a shambles. No other community has been treated in the way the Muslims were by Prevent. The main reason has been the universality of approach and locating the problem within 'muslimness'. The distortion of Islam to promote radicalisation should never be seen as Islamic. I have never supported the universality of approach.

Funding allocation was given to those areas that had a significant proportion of Muslims in their area. Funding based on the proportion of Muslims gives the impression that it is a Muslim problem, which is alienating. The preoccupation with theological issues means that government is interested in a social engineering of its own impression of Islam – the impression is that government wants to create their own version of Islam, and this is corrosive to community confidence.

Communities do need to develop, so having communities to look at how they themselves operate is no bad thing. Attitudes do need to move on. Our argument is how is this relevant to extremist terrorism and community safety and crime? As an example, though this hasn't happened in the UK, is the politicisation of wearing a veil. When clothing becomes a political issue then this is presenting Muslims as a problem, and dilutes the real issue, crime terrorism.

Dealing with organisations and people and shutting down others and people who don't share your viewpoint is very divisive, and this is something the previous government did quite well.

Forcing people to marry into your own views can shut down and isolate opposing views, which doesn't create a healthy community. To ignore those who don't agree with your own viewpoint is very unhealthy.

The combative attitude to community work that's been introduced as a by product of Prevent has been interesting – local authorities who'd been dealing with cohesion for decades had to change their way of operating, and they felt it left them in the uncomfortable situation of having to deal with Muslims in a different sense. This played into the hands of extremists by

legitimising them. It also played into the British far right who had previously not made it part of their mission to target Muslims.

Muslim community members are feeling under siege, and feeling monitored. They feel they can't say certain things, that their imams are at risk of being held and are being treated inappropriately – this has a big impact on the community as many people feel it inappropriate to treat their leaders in this way.

Many community leaders don't have confidence in the Prevent strategy– there is no evidence of what interventions have changed attitudes. It's been divisive too – other communities may feel that the Muslims are getting all the money for projects. I've seen no evidence of what has been achieved through projects as part of the Prevent strategy.

I call on the coalition to take the review strategy seriously and learn lessons from the past, and for Prevent to be part of the Home Office's strategy and not that of Communities and Local Government;

Let's take an area by area approach – for Muslims the threat is different dependent on where you are in the uk and local authorities and police need to do the mapping to work out which is appropriate – is it Al Qaeda, the far right or some other threat? A universality of approach is not helpful.

I'd like to suggest there should be quango of integration, an integration commission where white and other communities can be supported in terms of integrating. This can empower poorer communities who are isolated to participate in decision-making process. Both foreign and domestic policy needs to be reviewed in how we deal with extremist threats as well.

**The Revd. Alan Green, Area Dean of Tower Hamlets and Rector, St John on Bethnal Green**

The large Muslim population of Tower Hamlets is experiencing a mixture of prejudice and hatred that each immigrant group has suffered over 350 years here. Journalists in national media build on fear and ignorance to describe this area as "Britain's First Muslim Republic" and to label its largest, most active Mosque as radical and fundamentalist. The English Defence League has created a false impression that the Christians are out to get the Muslims. Local relations between the different ethnic and religious communities are very good - but fragile because of the culture of suspicion these things have created. Unsurprisingly Prevent, with its conflation of community-building with security issues, has added to the perception that all Muslims are to be treated with fear and suspicion.

This has been compounded by a simplistic understanding of the role of religion. Security groups are not naturally competent to judge between "safe" and "dangerous" theological interpretations of any faith group and civic authorities tend to make false distinctions between expressions of religious faith that aid community cohesion and those that question the accepted political order. All mainstream religions will combine both of these and "radical" expressions that call into question some of the principles of British culture and politics are more likely to be legitimate expressions of faith, rather than a call to acts of terrorism.

Instead of defining religious groups by theological interpretation it is more appropriate to judge by activity: those that are active with others in inter faith partnerships - both to be a

challenge to the status quo and to co-operate in projects of social engagement - provide an entry point for civic authorities to engage with faith groups in understanding theological discourse and in building healthy, safe and supportive communities for all.

**Mr. Talha J Ahmad, *Muslim Council of Britain***

Unfortunately, the philosophy underpinning Prevent is too simplistic, rather problematic and plainly alarming. The approach adopted in Prevent –

- Singles out the British Muslim community as perpetrators
- Creates, nurtures and legitimises hatred, prejudice and anger at the Muslim community
- Threatens to undermine the British Muslim community's ability to develop into a confident, proud and responsible community, able to engage in the affairs of the state on equal terms with others
- Creates resentment and thereby threatens community cohesion and greater integration
- Promotes division and disrespect for disadvantaged groups or communities

Perhaps the most negative aspect of Prevent is that it blurs the line between security and community cohesion. The task of local government, and indeed government generally, is to empower communities by providing leadership, initiative and opportunities.

Of course, there are times when some people fall foul of rules and the law. In every society there are fringe elements that may be prepared to break the law and commit criminal acts out of a misplaced sense of loyalty to something else. But these are essentially issues of security, law and order which must be dealt by specialist agencies with expertise and responsibilities in those areas. Their function should not be confused with social development and inter-community activities.

We believe that Prevent has fused together the issue of national security with that of integration of the second largest faith community in Western Europe. This is confusing and most unhelpful. Local governments and voluntary organisations which opted to be part of Prevent risk being seen as bodies collaborating in obtaining intelligence and infiltrating communities. This mistrust is a great loss for our society and a significant hindrance in creating a united country where different communities can live side by side as equal citizens. MCB certainly welcomes this review and will do its best to support the process to identify good ideas and recommendations which can achieve the set objectives effectively.

We argue that the issue of security, intelligence gathering and other counter terrorism measures must be the concerns of our security establishment, working within a transparent,

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legal and a fair framework. Community empowerment, engagement, integration, dialogue and development must not be allowed to be intertwined with the security concerns. This requires a complete paradigm shift, a different philosophical approach to that which the previous government adopted.

The Muslim community, for its part, feels and will continue to feel strongly against injustices across the world, particularly in Muslim countries. Commitment to justice is a fundamental aspect of the Muslim faith. Standing by the side of the oppressed and vulnerable is part of the faith. It is not part of the Muslim psyche to completely isolate itself from sharing the grief and plight of the fellow Muslims. Inevitably, the sufferings and the misery of Muslim in areas such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, Philippines, Kashmir and many other parts of the world is and will remain a cause for concern for Muslims in UK and beyond.

In stating this, I should remind my audience that the MCB, together with all other mainstream Muslim community organizations in the UK, have consistently and repeatedly condemned wanton acts of violence that kill or maim civilians, whether committed by co-religionists or anyone else.

In the aftermath of 9/11 and as part of Prevent, there have been attempts to reform and redefine Islam in theological terms. There were even attempts to promote certain brands of interpretation of Islam championed by obscure groups, often with little history and root in community, intent on “towing” the government line. Serious attempts were made to marginalise organisations like the MCB despite having an established presence and grass root following. These attempts have contributed to creating mistrust and suspicion of the authorities and sown the seeds of division within the Muslim community, making our communities more vulnerable to security risks and not less.

To move forward, we need to make a fresh start. We need to appeal to our good senses, accept mutual respect as the underpinning principle and allow all stakeholders of our society to express their views. We need to approach these problems in a manner which upholds the values of trust, dignity and freedom. We need to cherish these values more and not less. We need to empower the spirit of liberty and freedom for all, and not reduce it.

It is only good practice to reflect and identify policy areas which may feed into the anger and resentment that many in our communities, particularly young British Muslims, feel. Ironically, the terrorist attacks have provided an important and opportunity to have a health check as to the degree of cohesion in our society. The way forward is to empower all our communities by

identifying and addressing the barriers to integration. It must mean that we seek to enable our citizens to become more active and better able in participating in the affairs of the state.

Since the focus is on the Muslim community, it is important to make the point that there are issues that the Muslim Community feels very strongly about. The prevailing sense of fear, existence of discrimination, biased media and disengaged politicians seeking to make cheap and quick points, do not help. The answer to the so called radicalisation or “Islamic terrorism”, as it has come to be known in some quarters – is not to put the British Muslim community under the spotlight – not to make it answer for the crimes of a few. The way forward, surely, is to look for ways to address issues of economic deprivation, social marginalisation, educational underachievement, lack of political engagement – often identified as some of the causes that underlie these symptoms. The government needs to adopt policies which promote greater collaboration between communities, voluntary and statutory bodies – in order to achieve the common good and solve common problems. But these must be done in a spirit of equality and mutual respect. It needs to send the right signal to civic society as a whole, that the Muslims are as much part of Britain as the rest of the population.

The Muslim Council of Britain is committed to working for the common good of us all. It stands ready to respond to the call for rebuilding our society, to re-engage with all our communities and to build mutual trust and harmony. The MCB hopes that the experiences of Prevent will help us learn from our mistakes and that the review ordered by the Home Secretary will provide an opportunity to put to good use the lessons we have learnt and abandon those that have been counter-productive. It is our sincere hope that out of the review will flow a set of recommendations which will pave the way for making a new beginning in building a great British society.

### **Tehmina Kazi, *Director, British Muslims for Secular Democracy***

The instigators of the previous Government’s “Preventing Violent Extremism” (PVE) strategy must never have imagined that such a diverse array of organisations – from the [Institute for Race Relations](#) to the [Taxpayers’ Alliance](#) – would eventually publish such detailed critiques on its implementation. After all, what could be nobler than preventing violent extremism? Despite a well-intentioned start, which envisaged a community-led approach to tackling extremism, several Prevent initiatives have caused alienation amongst Britain’s BME and Muslim communities. As one community activist, interviewed for the Institute of Race Relations report, put it: “With Prevent, we were used as service deliverers rather than strategic partners. If we could have been seen as shaping the agenda we could have acted

as a broker with the community. Instead, we are being told what to do. The main impact of Prevent work locally has been greater mistrust of the police.”

Although the Prevent scheme was designed to facilitate communication between the statutory sector and the voluntary sector, several local initiatives could have done with receiving greater levels of support. For example, Manwar Ali from Jimas reported in September 2009 that his charity – which runs excellent Muslim-Christian dialogue sessions on democracy, governance and citizenship at Bury St Edmunds Cathedral – had not been invited to Government stakeholder events. It is clear that detailed knowledge of the local context is one of the keys to success in building strong community relations, as well as tackling social exclusion and radicalisation. Leicester City Council – who are widely credited with administering one of the most effective Prevent schemes – testified to this in the DCLG Select Committee Inquiry into Prevent. They undertook social research and liaised with local universities in order to understand their Muslim communities better. Not only did they find that it was unhelpful to categorise Muslims as a homogenous group, they used their knowledge of these diverse communities to facilitate greater opportunities for cross-city dialogue.

Prevent funding was allocated to some strong educational initiatives such as the **FATIMA Women's Network**, which trains Muslim women in policy development and financial management. Also, the Islam and Citizenship Education Project, which provides a citizenship curriculum for madrassahs and majority-Muslim schools that emphasises the commonality between British values and Islamic ones. Several of us sit on their advisory board. However, for every few stellar training sessions and leadership projects funded by Prevent, there is an equivalent example of a project which utilised excessive surveillance and ended up shattering trust. A pertinent example was recorded at a college in northern England, where a student who attended a Palestine meeting was reported by one lecturer as a “potential extremist.” He was found not to be. In one London borough, youth workers were told to add information to existing databases, in order to highlight which youths were Muslim. They were also asked to share information with the police about which streets and areas Muslim youngsters could be found on. Not only do these kinds of initiatives target young people purely by virtue of having a Muslim name, they threaten to undo all the genuinely positive bridge-building that has been carried out under the Prevent banner. Many Prevent-funded organisations have lost vital partners as a result of this breakdown in trust.

The other side-effect is that Muslim civil society organisations who advocate universal justice, and openly speak out against discrimination and violence committed in the name of religion, are assumed to be “parroting the Government’s line” on every issue under the sun. They are also assumed to be in receipt of Prevent funding at ANY given time, even when they are not! This gives greater credibility to hard-line groups, who are seen by certain people to be promoting a more “authentic” form of Islam.

Another development which has reduced confidence in the Prevent strategy is the lack of effective monitoring once the grants were disbursed. In 2008 to 2009, area-based grants were given to local authorities, but because the money was not ring-fenced, they were able to spend this money in different ways. Some councils simply moved it into their general budget, while others have not spent it at all.

In August 2009, the previous Government realised that they needed to broaden the scope of the Prevent strategy to far-right extremist groups. The OSCT had published updated

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guidance for local Prevent partners in this regard, and it is encouraging that the Coalition Government is also listening to feedback in their legislative review. Their announcement of a clearer distinction between counter-terrorism initiatives for specific individuals, and more general work on social cohesion, is a welcome one. Any work on the latter MUST emanate from a positive standpoint, as opposed to one that is better suited to policing and surveillance.

Further, it is crucial for us to reduce the focus on internal politics and sectarianism, which has blighted several of the recipients of Prevent funding (as well as some of its detractors). Instead, the Government should concentrate on making more funding available for inter-racial and inter-faith projects, based on addressing shared concerns. For example, the Barrow Cadbury Trust has run a grants scheme under the title of “Habits of Solidarity,” supporting groups that bring diverse communities together to tackle issues that affect them collectively. One such project in Birmingham used local mentors from different communities to encourage marginalised local women to participate in health, education and confidence-building programmes. In doing so, this project not only fostered close bonds between the different women, but also helped to address poverty and inequality. In addition, the Interfaith Youth Trust has funded a cemetery-cleaning project run by Christians and Jews, an arts festival in London for different faiths, and a youth inter-faith action guide involving young people from nine different belief systems. We will only be successful in the oft-repeated mantra of “winning hearts and minds” if we feel that a peaceful, cohesive society is something we ALL have a stake in, and take collective responsibility for.

### **Anwar Akhtar, *Director, Samosa***

Samosa is a cultural site pan global arts and cultural online site. I'd like to endorse what has been said today by other speakers.

Touching on causes of radicalisation and extremism, there's a perception gap between the west and Muslim world on what causes radicalisation. There was a clear agenda post cold war to invest in the radicalisation of Islam. There was a lot of incubation of bizarre interpretations of Islam that were funded well and is impacting on our lives now. Devastating damage has been caused in Pakistan as a result of this. It's worth remembering that that is the major cause of radicalisation. Interestingly, American representation has been in full force in Pakistan acknowledging their part in the post-war funding of radicals; I have yet to hear a British equivalent acknowledging their historic part in the radicalisation of Islam.

Multiculturalism comes with issues and difficulties just as human life does. The conflation of arts culture and welfare with counter terrorism was a big mistake. Difficulties exist around internationalisation and the global world. Multiple conflicts have race being brought into play on both sides.

Now we need to invest in political and cultural leadership community, cultural, theatre, women's groups not just mosques. We need to respect the leadership of the Islamic community. We need to respect diasporas: we live in a complicated globalised world and local communities deliver on a daily basis the welfare needs of others all across the world.

## Appendix

### Additional support material

#### 1. Sent by Maulan Shahid Raza About his speech

Please find the quote in respect of my contribution to the seminar on 16th November.

May I first of all convey the general concern of the Muslim community that whenever there is a review of a government policy or an action of political correctness, the Muslim community becomes a target. The community feels very strongly about it and feels quickly alienated. We accept that there is a fringe group of extremists within the Muslim community who seek violence as a means of resolving their problems but the vast majority of the Muslim community remains committed to cohesion and peace, and is committed to a partnership with all the stakeholders in defeating extremism and trying to achieve the goal of a safer and more secure Britain. The strategy of preventing violent extremism that was launched in the wake of the terrorist attacks of 7th July included the following four aims:

- a. Challenging the violent extremism ideology.
- b. Supporting mainstream voices.
- c. Increasing the resilience of communities to violent extremism.
- d. Addressing the grievances that are being exploited by the advocates of violent extremism ideology.

We may not agree with the term 'prevent', however in my opinion the strategy resulted in enhanced engagement of youths and women in public life and helped an improved level of cohesion within various communities. As a result of this strategy inter-faith relations were also enhanced.

However, this strategy also caused disquiet among other ethnic or faith communities who believed that the funding could have been distributed more evenly and fairly.

The Muslim community welcomes the review announced by the Home Secretary and hopes that this review will be transparent, inclusive and constructive. The media is stipulating that the review may result in a split of the initiative into two separate dimensions:

- a. Encountering the terrorism.
- b. Promoting cohesion between different communities.

In my opinion these two different objectives may still partially remain interdependent to each other.

Lastly may I say that encouraging greater participation by Muslims in British life is an ongoing process, any support in this respect preferably needs to be led by the community itself. I also hope that the Muslim community will do its homework appropriately and while dealing with these initiatives will not indulge in in-fighting and claiming or counter-claiming the leadership and representation of the Muslim community for any one single section/organisation.

Wassalam,

M. Shahid Raza.

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## 2. Sikhs In England – Project 3 – 2009 – Project details

**The effect of the War on Terror on Asians in the UK** - to gather evidence on the collective effect of the various anti-terrorism 'initiatives' that have been implemented to date since 9/11.

**Purpose** To gain an understanding of how Asian communities are affected emotionally, socially experience and respond to the threat of terrorism.

**Aim** To explore the emotional response of and perceived social consequences for Asian families to terrorism.

### Objectives

- To examine the dynamics and influences within and without families on different members of Asian families with regard to their individual perceptions and response to terrorism and how each individual's narratives fit into the family narrative
- To examine if there are any similarities and difference between families from diverse backgrounds and if so what are the reasons
- To explore the rationale and mechanisms employed by Asian families in their respective emotional and social response to terrorism.
- To consider what, if any factors such as Faith, socio-economic status, immigration status, experience of racism and oppression (here or elsewhere) may influence people's response
- To explore individual members and families perceptions of their community and others response to terrorism: dominant community, other Asian communities, Local and National Government and media
- To consider the short and long term impact and implications for the individual, family, social care and public health, education, community cohesion, integration, and exclusion due to terrorism.
- To consider if there are any pointers to combating terrorism

**Methodology** A narrative method of inquiry will be used in order to access direct and freely expressed feelings, thoughts, perceptions and decision-making processes of the participants. The use of questionnaire has only been used to compliment the study as it does not allow the means of an in-depth qualitative exploration of initially received responses. Chosen method allows/permits qualitative examination of multiple and complex meanings of the narratives relating to the response to terrorism.

This method is also preferable as a dialogue relating to a sensitive topic- taboo subject - terrorism requires confidence and trust to be built up between interviewee and interviewer before meaningful discourse can occur.

The qualitative method is based on the phenomenological tradition of exploring reality from a holistic perspective to create a broad system of meanings. Thus, all stories and comments concerned from the participants will be investigated using the thematic method of analysis.

Possible sampling process:

- Recruiting 45 families: 3 from each of the three largest ethnic groups in 3 regions.
- Conducting a series of interviews with each member of the family.

- By selecting families versus individuals - the research will automatically access all ages- elders, parents, children, female and male. (It will allow exploring differences within families and exploring the interrelationship of place of birth, age etc and how and why perceptions change or are reinforced in families).

Specific themes will facilitate the narrative experiences:

- What is terrorism who are the terrorists
- September 11th
- July 7th
- Shooting in Forest Gate
- Shooting of a man on the tube
- Killing of a Sikh in the USA
- Police response
- Government role and response
- How Faith/ culture informs their perceptions/ understanding
- Their views of others
- How is the response of terrorism shaped by family, community, school work life.
- Stereotypes or myths of self or the other

### **Comments**

Need to explore why people think the terrorists exist - one man's terrorist is another's freedom fighter.

Interviews need to be in two dimensions -Hindu Sikh Muslim etc and north, midlands and London - 5 members from five families in each faith in three locations - this would mean 225 interviews with two days for each family interview to be conducted and written up.

Total time can be reduced to two working weeks work per person per region plus collation and editing time of two working weeks leaving two working weeks of feedback from respondents to complete the work in ten working weeks.

The publication and launch can be done in the three weeks remaining of a three working month project. It is suggested that a suitable pricing structure be agreed that reflects expenses and a sensible day rate before bidding.

Need for a Muslim colleague to help with access - this could mean the work could be shared between three people

**Monitoring data** – please complete as much of the table below.

Faith

Practicing

(5 fully, 1 no)

Gender	Female	Male		
Age	Under 20	21- 40	41- 60	60+
Place of birth	UK	Elsewhere		
UK Settlement	1st generation	2nd generation	3rd generation	4th generation
Nationality	UK	Other		
Occupation	Employed	Unemployed	Student	Other
Location	London	Midlands	North	
Were you in the UK prior to	9/11	7/7		

**Questions** In your own words, what are your thoughts on the following?

1. What is terrorism, who are the terrorists?
2. September 11th
3. July 7th
4. UK police shooting in Forest Gate
5. UK police shooting of a man on the tube
6. The killing of a Sikh in the USA after 9/11
7. UK Police response
8. UK Government role and response
9. How does your Faith/culture inform your perceptions/understanding of such issues?
10. Your views of other Faiths
11. How is the response to terrorism shaped by your family, community, school, work life?
12. What stereotypes or myths of you, your community or other communities are there?
13. Anything else you think needing to be said regarding how your life has changed since 9/11?

## Biographies

### **Murtaza Shibli**

Murtaza Shibli is a trainer, writer and consultant on Muslim issues in Europe and South Asia. He has worked as a journalist, security consultant, and poet and song writer. In his recent role, he worked for the Muslim Council of Britain as Public Affairs and Media Officer. He is also the editor of *7/7: Muslim Perspectives*, a book that explores the British Muslim reaction to the London bombings.

As a journalist in Kashmir, he has campaigned for minority Hindu rights and spent time with scores of guerrilla resistance leaders and interviewed them along with some Afghan jihad veterans. He has written a monograph on Hizbul Mujahideen, the largest guerilla resistance group in Kashmir which was added to European Union's terrorist organisations in December 2005. He has an MA in Mass Communication and Journalism from the University of Kashmir and MSc. from the School of Oriental and African Studies, London.

**Tom Brake MP** has been an MP since 1997 and has served as Shadow Minister for Transport, International Development and Communities and Local Government, and the Home Office.

In June 2010 Tom was named Co-Chair of the new Liberal Democrat Backbench Committee on Home Affairs, Justice and Equalities. Tom will Co-Chair the committee alongside Baroness Hamwee and Lord Thomas of Gresford OBE QC.

Keith Vaz was born in Aden, Yemen. He has been a Member of Parliament for Leicester East since 1987. During this time he has held a number of Government posts including; Minister of State for Europe, Parliamentary Secretary (Minister) and Lord Chancellor's Dept. He has held the position of Chairman of the influential Home Affairs Select Committee since being elected in 2007.

Prior to being elected as MP for Leicester East, Keith was a practicing solicitor. He is a member of the Labour Party's National Executive Committee and is also Chair of the Labour Party's Ethnic Minority Taskforce.

**Shabana Mahmood MP** was born and brought up in Small Heath, Birmingham. She went on to study at the University of Oxford and graduated with a BA degree in Law. Whilst at University, she was involved in various programmes designed to promote and increase applications to Oxbridge by students from minority and disadvantaged backgrounds. Throughout her career, she has continued to mentor students from disadvantaged and ethnic and religious minority backgrounds with applications for university and jobs.

Shabana was elected Member of Parliament for Birmingham Ladywood constituency in May this year, becoming one of the first Muslim women to be elected to Parliament.

**Fuad Nahdi** is the Executive Director of the Radical Middle Way – a grassroots initiative aimed at articulating and facilitating a mainstream understanding of Islam. He is a Senior Fellow at the Muslim College, London, where he teaches and conducts research on aspects of British Islam specialising in intra-Muslim and inter-community dialogue. He is a member of the Executive Board of the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board, a founder trustee of the Association of Muslim with Disabilities and the Amal Youth Trust. He is an Advisor to the Three Faiths Forum and Consultant to the Abu Dhabi-based Tabah Foundation for

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Research and Learning.

**Shami Chakrabarti** is Director of Liberty. A Barrister by background, she was called to the Bar in 1994 and worked as a lawyer in the Home Office from 1996 until 2001 for Governments of both persuasions. Since becoming Liberty's Director she has written, spoken and broadcast widely on the importance of the post-WW2 human rights framework as an essential component of democratic society. She is Chancellor of Oxford Brookes University, a Governor of the London School of Economics and the British Film Institute, and a Visiting Fellow of Nuffield College, Oxford and a Master of the Bench of Middle Temple. □

Born in Fatahpur, India, **Maulana Shahid Raza** came to the UK in 1978 to work as Head Imam at the Islamic Centre, Leicester. He moved to London in 1984 to join the Muslim College where he designed and conducted the very first in-house training course for Imams. Maulana Raza currently holds a number of positions including Deputy Director of the Muslim College, Executive Secretary and Registrar of the Muslim Shariah Council UK, Member of the Executive Committee of the Interfaith Network UK and Serving Imam at the Leicester Central Mosque. He was honoured in the Queen's New Year Honours List in 2007 with an OBE for his services to the Muslim community.

**Dr. Jonathan Githens-Mazer**, is Co-Director European Muslim Research Centre and Senior Lecturer in the Institute for Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter, United Kingdom.

Jonathan received his PhD from the LSE in 2005, and his research focuses on radicalisation, violent political mobilisation, and Islamophobia. He has been extensively involved in academic and policy debates over the concept of what radicalisation means, and acted as a consultant for numerous Government and community organisations. His research has been funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and British Academy.

**Yousef Dar** is a GMP police officer and the current Vice President of the National Association of Muslim Police. Yousef was born in Nairobi of Kashmiri/Pakistani descent and moved to the UK during the Asian expulsion from East Africa. Passionate about diversity he sought to challenge some of the early negative attitudes towards BME officers. He was one of the founding members of the NAMP that met with the home office and The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) to facilitate the creation of NAMP.

He is an avid Manchester United fan and describes himself as an adopted Manchurian and British.

**Harmander Singh** is a co-founder and Principal Adviser of Sikhs in England, an internet-based social policy think-tank. He is an Independent Advisor to the Police and Chair of the National Sikh Security Forum. He has also helped set up a National Sikh/Muslim Advisory Group.

His work centres around society, injustice, identity and social policy and he regularly provides a Sikh perspective to the media. He is a Justice of Peace since 1993 and a trustee at the Faith Based Regeneration Network UK. He was awarded an Honorary Fellowship for outstanding achievements in community development in 2006.

**Dr. Waqar Azmi OBE** is Chairman & Managing Partner of Waterhouse Consulting Group and EU Ambassador of Intercultural Dialogue (EYID). Prior to this, he was the UK Government's Chief Diversity Adviser at the Cabinet Office. He sits on numerous top-level boards and committees and is also listed in the Asian Power 100 list of the most influential Asians in the UK. He is listed in the World's 500 Most Influential Muslims published by the Georgetown University's Prince Al-Waleed Bin Talaal Centre and the Royal Islamic Strategic

Beyond Prevent: Achieving Security and Challenging Extremism

Studies Centre in Jordan.

**Talha Ahmad** is the member of the Central Working Committee and chair of the membership committee of the Muslim Council of Britain. He has appeared on local, regional and national media to comment on various issues on behalf of the MCB. He is a former Teacher and Lecturer of Mathematics working in School, College and Adult Education settings. He recently completed the Bar Vocational Course and is waiting to be called to the Bar.

The Reverend Prebendary **Alan Green** was born and raised in Brighton. After five years of working as a geriatric nurse and a youth worker he trained for the priesthood in the Church of England. In Tower Hamlets he has been very involved in bringing the diverse faith communities together to gain a better understanding of one another, to develop their ability to work for the common good and to oppose ignorance, prejudice and hate. In 2010 he was made a Prebendary of St Paul's Cathedral by the Diocese of London in recognition of his interfaith work.

**Tehmina Kazi** is the Director of British Muslims for Secular Democracy. Previously, she was a Project Officer at the Equality and Human Rights Commission, where she worked on a ground-breaking inquiry into the Human Rights Act and its impact on public service delivery. Tehmina has done extensive research on domestic and international human rights issues, particularly the detention of foreign nationals and violence against women in South Asia. She regularly contributes to debates and forums on civil liberties and foreign policy. Her articles have been published in a wide variety of newspapers and blogs, including The Guardian and The Independent.

**Anwar Akhtar** is Director of [www.thesamosa.co.uk](http://www.thesamosa.co.uk), a culture and politics site with a focus on Britain and South Asia. He is also associate of [www.urbed.coop](http://www.urbed.coop) regeneration practice. He was previously Director of Rich Mix and spent 10 years working as a DJ and club promoter.

## Press Release

### Conference on counter terrorism calls for a new approach in dealing with threats to the UK

24 November 2010:

A major conference in the British Parliament early this week called upon the government to learn from the failures of its counter terrorism policy – Prevent, and devise an inclusive and transparent approach in dealing with the terrorist threat that the country faces. The conference, entitled ‘Beyond Prevent: Achieving security and Challenging Extremism’, was timed to take place as the Government’s review of counter-terrorism and security legislation concludes and aimed to generate ideas and contributions on the best way of bringing communities on board to challenge simplistic narratives of extremists or extremism.

The conference organised by Rabita, a training and policy consultancy was held in the Portcullis House on Tuesday, 16<sup>th</sup> November. It featured speakers from political parties, Muslim and other faith groups, civil liberties activists and academics.

Welcoming the guests, Murtaza Shibli, Director of Rabita and organiser of the conference, said: “It is encouraging to note that the Coalition government is reviewing the Prevent strategy, something a large number of Muslim organisations have been demanding for a long time”. Recounting his experience of growing up in Kashmir on the Indian side, he said that terrorism does not happen in vacuum and added: “While we can deal with the immediate security challenges of terrorism, there is no magic to stop it apart from addressing its root causes, thoroughly and comprehensively”.

In his introduction, Tom Brake MP and Co-chair of the Liberal Democrat Parliamentary Party Committee on Home Affairs mentioned about some debate in the press about the value or otherwise of control orders. “My role is to ensure we deliver on the coalition’s pledge to deliver control orders and if there are moves to introduce other orders that look or feel like control orders I will be opposing them too”, he said. Acknowledging that terrorism was a serious danger to the UK, Tom Brake said that Northern Ireland presented a significant threat that should be taken into consideration in any future policy.

Keith Vaz MP emphasised replacing the use of the word ‘prevent’ with the word ‘engage’, as “it is too ambitious or arrogant for any government to assume it can prevent radical extremism in community”. “The Government cannot simply impose its ideas – engagement is the only way we can begin to find a solution to terrorism”, he emphasised.

Shami Chakrabarti, the Director of Liberty reiterated that mistakes have been made in the past and now was a good moment to learn from these mistakes. “I have concerns about the review being undertaken by those who were complicit in the mistakes but I welcome the review in good faith”.

Shabana Mahmood MP and Shadow Home Office Minister mentioned the surveillance cameras in Birmingham that were aimed at spying on Muslim populations and said: “It is clear that we need a strategy for preventing terrorism in all its forms, but vital that we learn important lessons from the first outing of the Prevent strategy.”

Maulana Shahid Raza, Chair of the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board lamented that whenever there is a review of a government policy or an action of political correctness, the Muslim community becomes a target. While criticising aspects of the Prevent, he also said there was a positive side to the strategy that resulted in “enhanced engagement of

youths and women in public life and helped an improved level of cohesion within various communities”.

Fuad Nahdi, Executive Director and Founder of the Radical Middle Way said that as a strategy, the aims and ambitions of Prevent “are both legitimate and necessary except in their focus on Muslims – and by extension Islam”. However, he stressed that for any counter terrorism strategy to succeed, we need to appreciate and respect Islam and its emblematic teachings of mercy, co-existence, civic engagement and justice. Dr. Waqar Azmi OBE of the British Muslim Forum (BMF) reiterated that the British Muslim were committed to challenge extremism and terrorism. He highlighted the contribution of the BMF, “the largest Muslim organisation in the country that represents traditional Sunni Muslims”.

Jonathan Githens-Mazer, Co-director of the European Muslim Research Centre, University of Exeter, noted that Prevent was a policy response during a time of crisis to a question that was never properly conceived. “While Prevent itself was an understandable reaction at the time, the review of the Prevent policy represents an opportunity to decide what this policy should actually do”.

Yousef Dar, Vice Chair, National Association of Muslim Police (NAMP), said that NAMP fully supports the strategy and objectives of collectively tackling all forms of extremism in our communities in a consistent manner. However, “the concerns of the Muslim communities must be taken onboard for us to succeed with this strategy. We ought to look at how this has affected the daily lives of our communities and engage with them in a meaningful way”. He also mentioned Channel Project and ACPO’s Prevent Unit as positive contribution of the Prevent.

Talha Ahmed of the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) argued that the issue of security, intelligence gathering and other counter terrorism measures must be the concerns of our security establishment, working within a transparent, legal and a fair framework. He welcomed the Prevent review and said that the MCB will do its best to support the process to identify good ideas and recommendations which can achieve the set objectives effectively.

The Revd. Prebendary Alan Green strongly argued that “Instead of defining religious groups by theological interpretation it is more appropriate to judge by activity: those that are active with others in inter faith partnerships - both to be a challenge to the status quo and to co-operate in projects of social engagement - provide an entry point for civic authorities to engage with faith groups in understanding theological discourse and in building healthy, safe and supportive communities for all”.

Harmander Singh of the National Sikh Security Forum praised the conference for providing a long awaited opportunity to allow the reality of the past failures in addressing the underlying community issues to be aired and point to a more meaningful direction that will have a genuine engagement from all sections of society.

Tehmina Kazi, Director, British Muslims for Secular Democracy welcomed the Coalition Government’s announcement of a clearer distinction between counter-terrorism initiatives for specific individuals, and more general work on social cohesion. “Any work on the latter must emanate from a positive standpoint, as opposed to one that is better suited to policing and surveillance”.

Anwar Akhtar, Director of Samosa website, mentioned that someone of the most important campaigners against extremism and sectarianism are the political and cultural activists and artists of South Asia, as are those working in welfare and social programmes.”

After the conference Tom Brake MP said, 'The last Government's Prevent strategy, designed to stop extremism, came in for heavy criticism from all sides today. It was made clear by many contributors that we need to engage with communities and give them the lead in tackling extremism. In the words of one speaker, community groups should be strategic partners not service deliverers.'

#### Links:

Associated Press of Pakistan

[http://ftpapp.app.com.pk/en /index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=122387&Itemid=2](http://ftpapp.app.com.pk/en /index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=122387&Itemid=2)

Muslim Council of Britain

[http://www.mcb.org.uk/features/features.php?ann\\_id=2066](http://www.mcb.org.uk/features/features.php?ann_id=2066)

Muslim Youth Skills

<http://www.muslimyouthskills.co.uk/about/updates/4-general-news/282-prevent-conference-calls-for-a-new-approach-in-dealing-with-terrorism-and-extremism>

The Asians

[http://www.theasians.co.uk/event\\_detail.php?event\\_id=219](http://www.theasians.co.uk/event_detail.php?event_id=219)

## Media articles

### 1. Prevent Stigma

The government's counter-terrorism strategy, currently under review, has been criticised for its intrusiveness and insensitivity to Muslims

REVIEW OF THE WEEK

By Murtaza Shibli

BARONESS Sayeeda Warsi prompted anger and shock in the Muslim community when she recently disclosed that the Labour government had paid for previous Hajj delegations out of antiterrorism funding. A source close to Lord Patel, who has headed most of the previous Hajj delegations to Saudi Arabia, claimed that he too was shocked to learn that his tours had been financed by a counter-terrorism programme.

A Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) report titled *British Hajj Delegation: Consular Review* released in March this year, says the Hajj delegation "has played a prominent Prevent role for CT [counter-terrorism] colleagues". The report further mentions that the FCO's Counter-Terrorism Department remains committed to the British Hajj delegation as it is "a valuable part of Prevent work". Looking at the Hajj, the highest act of Islamic worship, through a counter-terrorism lens is a glaring example that Prevent was ill conceived and has mutated beyond its aim and purpose. From the very start, the Prevent strategy was doomed to fail as it sought to validate assumptions that linked any form of dissenting political expressions with preventing terrorism. The policy viewed almost everyone in the Muslim community and their religious practices – as the FCO report on Hajj describes – subject to counter-terrorism interventions. This approach that not only securitised every aspect of Muslim life, but also sought to engineer an 'acceptable' Muslim response, has stigmatised British Muslims.

This is no wonder that despite pouring hundreds of millions into the Prevent programme, the Muslim organisations, including those that have received Prevent money, have criticised the programme for its intrusiveness and insensitivity.

One of the most dangerous fall-outs of the Prevent strategy has been its tacit encouragement of Islamophobia and resultant anti-Muslim violence. Because the funding at the local level was provided to 'deal with the Muslim problem(s)', the councils had to be inventive in finding or manufacturing one, popularising myths that saw Muslims overwhelmingly as security problems. This has made Islamophobia not only acceptable and but also fashionable, spurring the far right to exploit it to their advantage. The ever-increasing English Defence League demonstrations against mosques and minarets must be seen as a collateral of the Prevent. This, in turn, has galvanised Islamic extremists to advance their world view of exclusion using victimisation of Muslims and anti-Muslim demonstrations as an effective tool.

Last week, I organised a conference in parliament to discuss the Prevent strategy. *Beyond the Prevent: Achieving security and Challenging Extremism*, was timed to take place as the government's review of counter-terrorism and security legislation

Beyond Prevent: Achieving Security and Challenging Extremism

concludes. The conference featured speakers from political parties, faith groups, civil liberty activists and academics.

There was a unanimous call that Prevent should stop stigmatising communities and seek to engage rather than impose. While nobody can trivialise the threat posed by Islamic extremists or terrorists, the conference called for a need to put these threats in perspective. As noted by Tom Brake MP, Northern Ireland presents a significant threat and it should be taken into consideration in any future policy. Similarly, another speaker emphasised that our government must rise to the challenge posed by far-right extremism.

The conference also acknowledged the positive side of the Prevent strategy. It has offered much-needed support to fledgling infrastructure of Muslim institutions, and helped them to organise and form a credible and cohesive response to the challenges from extremist fringe groups. The Prevent funding has also supported and spurred grass-roots initiatives among the Muslim community and beyond. It has created a valuable platform for Muslims and non-Muslims to engage through credible Islamic scholars and activists in pursuit of a world that respects and appreciates diversity in a European context – within and outside Islam. One such example is the Radical Middle Way founded by Fuad Nahdi.

The Prevent programme, as noted by one of the lead speakers at the conference, Maulana Shahid Raza, chair of the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB), resulted in “enhanced engagement of youths and women in public life and helped an improved level of cohesion within various communities”. Similarly, Yousef Dar, vice-chair, National Association of Muslim Police (NAMP), praised the Channel Project and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO)’s Prevent Unit as positive examples.

It is encouraging to note that the coalition government is reviewing the whole Prevent strategy, something a large number of Muslim organisations have been demanding for a long time. Earlier this month, announcing the government review, home secretary Teresa May acknowledged the long-stated demand of Muslim groups, also supported by many in academic and policy circles. “We have to deal with the causes of terrorism as well as its symptoms,” she said. The review is an opportunity for the government to set the course right by moving away from securitisation of Muslim communities or Islam and its theology, and refocusing energies on countering terrorism rather than stigmatising whole communities. As Keith Vaz MP put it, “The government cannot simply impose its ideas. Engagement is the only way to find a solution to terrorism.”

**(Weekly, ‘Eastern Eye’, November 26, 2010)**

## **2. The Civil War among Muslims in Britain by Michael Mumisa**

<http://blogs.independent.co.uk/2010/12/01/the-civil-war-among-muslims-in-britain/>