

Preventing terrorism: a foreign policy response

Al-Qa'ida's Single Narrative

Problem? A Zionist/Christian crusade against the Muslim world, in Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine

- violence and human rights abuses
- hypocrisy of the west
- illegitimate regimes in Muslim countries
- racism and alienation of Muslims

Solution? Establishment of an Islamic Caliphate

Why does it appeal?

- (Uncomfortably) rings true
- Simple and adaptable
- Susceptible
 - Provides sense of belonging (umma)
 - Explains everything
 - It's cool?
- Charisma of messengers



The myth of denial

“Tony Blair and his government have obliged civil servants to deny that a link exists between terrorism and British foreign policy.”

Tariq Ramadan, 4 June 2007

Radicalisation myth busting

All terrorists are...

- Poor
- Stupid
- Mentally ill
- No family
- Unemployed
- Religious

To whom does it appeal?

- Young people,
- who want to make a difference
- and struggle against the status quo (because young people often do),
- and who have friends that want to do the same.



The UK 'profile'



Where?

- Mosques
- Universities
- Prisons
- Training camps
- Gyms/Social centre
- Internet



So what do we do?

CONTEST

PROTECT: the public, key national services and UK interests overseas;

PREPARE: for the consequences of terrorism;

PURSUE: terrorists and those that sponsor them;

PREVENT: terrorism by tackling the radicalisation of individuals.

Overall 'Prevent' Aim

Worst Case

**Highly radicalised
Muslim
Communities**

UK/Others' Interventions

Ideal Situation

**Muslim Communities
Rejecting Narrative
and Extremism**

This results in:

- Rich recruitment ground for AQ
- Individuals who find identity in Islam rather than nationality
- Lack of trust in governments
- Communities which reject government policies
- Segmented & divided communities
- Poor leadership: those who work with governments lack credibility
- Violence acceptable as form of political expression

This looks like:

Community leaders provide example

Real or perceived grievances addressed undermining extremists' message

Communities reject extremists' message

Recruits to AQ dry up

UK's 'Prevent' Community

Traditionally:

- Police
- Ministry of Defence
- Home Office
- Foreign Office
- Intelligence Agencies



Now:

- Dept. of Communities and Local Government (DCLG)
- Dept. Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)
- Dept. Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS)
- Dept. for International Development (DfID)
- Research Information, Communications Unit (RICU)

Prevent Strategy

Undermine extremist ideology; support mainstream voices:

- Empower mainstream opinion formers, challenge misperceptions

Disrupt promoters; strengthen institutions

- Madrassa reform, imam training, outreach at universities

Support vulnerable individuals

- Empower tomorrow's leaders, vocational training, volunteering

Increase resilience of communities

- Empower civil society and community groups. international civil society network

Effectively addressing grievances

- Economic, governance, educational, judicial, political and media freedom

Building an evidence base

- Research on extremist narratives, causes of radicalisation, trends in ideology

Improving strategic communications

- Audience segmentation/ message differentiation, co-ordinating HMG comms

Overseas Prevent: Priority Engagements

Top priority Prevent countries: Pakistan, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, Egypt

1. Countries with **UK diaspora** links: Pakistan, Bangladesh, Somalia/E.Africa, India
2. Countries of **ideological importance**: Saudi, Egypt, Turkey, Indonesia, Syria, Yemen
3. Countries included in the **terrorist single narrative**: Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon



- **Multilateral organisations:** EU, UN, G8, OIC, Alliance of Civilisations etc
- Outreach on foreign policy to **British Muslim communities** by Ministers & officials

Conclusion

- Exclusive focus on foreign policy is misleading, but ...
- ... need to deal with legitimate grievances
- Real foreign policy challenge is building a coalition to tackle long-term causes – ideological, social, political