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Problems and Practical Solutions to Tackle Extremism;  
and Muslim Youth and Community Issues

by Mehmood Naqshbandi

THE SHRIVENHAM PAPERS - Number 1  
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**DEFENCE ACADEMY  
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM**

**PROBLEMS AND PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS  
TO TACKLE EXTREMISM;  
AND MUSLIM YOUTH AND COMMUNITY  
ISSUES**

**BY**

**MEHMOOD NAQSHBANDI**

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**NUMBER 1**

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PROBLEMS AND PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS TO TACKLE EXTREMISM;  
AND MUSLIM YOUTH AND COMMUNITY ISSUES

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PROBLEMS AND PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS TO TACKLE EXTREMISM;  
AND MUSLIM YOUTH AND COMMUNITY ISSUES

**Editorial**

by

**Chris Donnelly**

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Head of the Advanced Research and Assessment Group**

In this short, incisive, and closely argued paper, the author has opened the way for a wider discussion of an issue of real importance to our national security. In so doing, he has not set out to analyse Muslim communities separately and in detail, but rather to give an overall picture. He identifies the key issues that he believes affect all Muslim communities in the UK to day. In doing so, he succeeds in demonstrating the great theological and ethnic diversity of these communities – something that is not widely recognised or understood. Furthermore, this is not merely an analysis. The author presents us with an assessment of the situation. The author presents us with an an assessment of the situation and puts forward recommendations as a basis for opening a discussion on how to tackle the problem effectively.

The scope of the paper has imposed certain limitations on the author. He has concentrated on the London area where his expertise is greatest, and he has addressed mainly Sunni communities. The importance of Muslim communities in other parts of the UK is fully recognised, as is the fact that that recent events have resulted in a rapid growth of Shia communities, which had historically been only a small proportion of the UK's Muslim population. Future 'Shrivenham Papers' will address these issues in greater detail

# **Problems and Practical Solutions to Tackle Extremism; and Muslim Youth and Community Issues**

**Mehmood Naqshbandi**

## **1. Summary**

Tensions in the Muslim community are both internal and external. Internal tensions exist between generations and conflicts between their respective attitudes towards the practice of Islam and Muslims' perceptions of their place in British Society. External tensions exist due to accumulating racial and Islamophobic pressures and a sense of powerlessness to address international policy inimical to Muslim interests. Terrorist groups exploit these tensions to achieve three quite explicit objectives:

- (i) to try to influence international policy in their favour, e.g. by undermining military intervention in Iraq;
- (ii) to seek vengeance using well-understood terror tactics of asymmetric warfare, and most pertinently,
- (iii) to try to drive a wedge between Muslims settled in the West and their host communities.

The last tactic is part of a strategy to 'purify' Islam by removing it from decadent Western influence, and to return to an international situation where the borders of Islam are distinct (and therefore controllable) from the non-Muslim world, in defiance of globalisation of borders.

The Muslim community in Britain is poorly-equipped to deal with these tensions, not due to the work of extremist imams, but exactly the opposite, due to the weakness of parents' and imams' positions in the face of disaffected youth exploring alternative and more challenging doctrines. Poverty of skills and resources in mosques exacerbate the weakness. Racialism within the Muslim community is a subtle feature of this Muslim community dysfunctionality. Muslim leadership is wholly inadequate and unrepresentative. Most mosques are vigorously independent and only join together along ethnic and doctrinal faction lines meaning that there are no obvious satisfactory solutions that provide adequate quality of leadership.

Most radical movements in the Muslim community attract youth to perfectly wholesome expressions of involvement in this society, and are indicative that they expect to have high expectations of realising their stake in Britain, rather than indicative of attempts to drive them into isolation from it.

The important aspects of recruitment into extremism are that recruits are largely self-propelled rather than cultivated by a network, and they thrive in gaps created by jealous and inadequate orthodox Muslim factions. There are very, very few mosques where extremists are free to act, but very many mosques where youth are left to act for themselves.

There are three aspects to practical solutions:

### **1. Practical steps to defuse extremism:**

- a. Contrasting reality against extremist idealism – good speakers, visits, relief work, exchanges, prominent representation of the community by conscientious practicing Muslims and converts, demystification of security.

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- b. Improving imams' capability – mosque resources, job skill training, specialist religious and rhetoric English training, religious training in tackling awkward doctrines, Madressa curriculum development.
  - c. Development of forums for Muslim women – university societies leading to local equivalents, women speaker tours, women-only community events.
  - d. Improvements to university Islamic societies – links with Muslim community outside, sensible literature, code of conduct, good supply of authoritative visiting speakers, access by students to influential public figures.
  - e. Tackle mosque sectarianism – adequate supply of imams, objective explanation of factions, standing conference of scholars across all Muslim factions, code of conduct for mosques to accommodate factional differences, code of conduct for mosques to manage converts and neophytes, institution in Britain of an international standing conference of leading Muslim scholars and leaders.
- 2. Practical steps to improve community relations**
- a. Tackling petty abuse – practical steps to tackle abuse that falls below the level of criminal processes; placing of recognisably Muslim people in positions of community reliance and authority; encouragement of non-Muslim witnesses to report, not ignore, minor Islamophobic incidents.
  - b. Involvement of more Muslims in voluntary sector, in youth work as leaders and members of youth organisations.
  - c. Involvement of high calibre non-Muslim instructors etc. in sports and similar Mosque fringe activities, such as Arabic language teaching.
  - d. Tackling internal Muslim community racialism issues – anti-Jewish, Arab anti-Asian and Asian anti-Black racialism.
  - e. Intervention in popular press and broadcasting to recognise damage, undermine negative stereotypes, use Muslim journalists.
- 3. Practical steps to improve dialogue with the Muslim community**
- a. Practical skills training for mosque staff.
  - b. Targeted recruitment of Muslim Special Constables, magistrates, rehabilitation volunteers, police scenario planning teams.
  - c. Demonstrate recognition of Muslim role at higher levels of society – establishment of a body of Muslim experts to advise on government policy, conspicuously; recognition of Muslim relief charity activities; prominence of Muslim community in British international relations.

Inevitably many of these practical proposals appear to favour the Muslim community. However, none of them preclude action of a similar nature to benefit other minority communities.

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### **2. Young British Muslims**

There are over one and a half million Muslims in Britain, and total mosque capacity is well in excess of half a million. Every Friday nearly every mosque is packed and spilling into the street. That means nearly every Muslim man and boy has some sense of being a practising Muslim.

That is not enough for many, especially some of the youngest generation. First generation migrants were and still are completely taken up with basic economic security - job, roof and food, and not even halaal food. Second generations are aggrieved by their parents' lack of status, so they become determined achievers - professions, nice cars, suburban semis. Third generations aren't sure any longer what their mother tongue is or what colour their skin is supposed to be. For them, identity has to be re-forged - they want to make an impact, and turn to radical versions of Islam.

There is no natural continuum from radical Muslim to militant violence. Radical Muslims variously preach their practice, establish independent institutions like schools, rage against oppression, argue about forms of Muslim governance or the correct practice of the religion. Radicals know they need this open British society to have the freedom to do all these things. Even in their most impassioned moments, they are still doing so inside this society, not outside it, not as outlaws. Everyone engaged in these activities is well aware that political violence, whether confrontational or terrorist, would immediately destroy the dialogue they want to foster. However in the absence of authoritative guidance, some individuals themselves fail to make the distinction between radical stakeholder and militant nihilist. Basically, through egotism, rivalry, peer-group pressure, inadequacy or impetuosity, some young Muslims have rejected straightforward radicalism for confrontational militancy or discrete but deadly political violence. The problem is that the Muslim communities, leaders and imams are terribly dysfunctional and unable to provide authoritative guidance, and if they respond at all it is to shut the trouble-makers out instead of guiding them in. Usually they are altogether unaware of the dangers because there never has been a channel for communication - traditional Muslim associations have no concept of rebellious youth.

### **3. Mosques and Imams in Britain**

#### **3.1 Extremist Preachers**

The attention given to a presumed cadre of extremist and foreign imams preaching in mosques is seriously misplaced. Practically all imams in Britain are in a precarious position which makes them exceedingly cautious. They are unequipped to tackle the non-orthodox doctrines spreading amongst Muslim youth. Those that have some English are more of a liability than those who have none, as they are unable to express subtleties of complex issues, whereas non-English-speakers would not be expected to express them. Because of intense factionalism between mosques, recruitment into sects (including moderate ones) takes place out of sight of imams and mosque managers and is carried out not by fervent imams but by enthusiastic neophytes with home-brewed doctrines. Mosques such as Finsbury Park that have been used by extremist preachers have been exploited by them precisely because there was no regular imam. Thus policies that restrict the ability to recruit imams can easily backfire and leave a vacuum for extremists to exploit. The few mosques

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that cater for Arab-speaking communities are either professionally managed and co-operate very closely with the authorities or make imam of whoever is present at the prayer time, with no prominent regular imam.

### **3.2 Mosques in Britain**

There are approximately 1400 mosques in the UK, ranging in size from 20 people using the front room of a terraced house to purpose-built institutions catering for 6000 or more. This excludes prayer rooms on college campuses, which have a significance of their own.

97% of the (non-college) mosques in Britain are owned and maintained by the Asian Muslim communities, ethnically Pakistani, Indian or Bangladeshi, with imams to match. Of the remainder, approximately twelve are very large institutions with very substantial numbers of Arab-speaking worshippers, and another twelve or so are very small and makeshift Arab-run mosques. Four are Turkish-language, two are run by Nigerians, one each by Indonesians, Malays and Brunei-ese, three by Guyanese and a couple by Iranians, one by black converts and one mainly by white converts.

In the twelve Arab-run makeshift mosques the role of imam is merely an honorary courtesy, because many of the attendees will be able to act as imam for the prayers, having Arabic as their first language.

The twelve very large Arab-dominated institutions are very keen to honour their responsibilities to the community and many have management and imams that maintain good relations with the authorities. Each mosque has a few Arab scholars employed as Imams and teachers.

Most universities have campus prayer rooms dedicated to university Muslim society members' use, supported from university union funds and led and managed by students.

### **3.3 Mosque Economics and Management**

Almost all mosques are filled to capacity on Fridays. Besides money collected for salaries and utility bills, there is usually some fund raising for expansion plans too. The average mosque size is about 400-500 worshippers for Friday prayers and donations average about £1 per head, or £20,000 to £25,000 per annum. However there are very many mosques that are much smaller than this – the typical median mosque comprises of the downstairs of a small terraced house.

In the circa 1,350 Asian-run mosques there is invariably an elderly committee that represents the predominant ethnic group and traditional religious faction of the mosque, and the committee employs one or more imams from the same ethnic group and faction. The worshippers require the imam to be sufficiently trained to be able to lead prayers and teach recitation of the Qur'an in precise Qur'anic Arabic. Besides the main imam there will often be a few volunteers or part-time teachers of Qur'an recitation and mother-tongue language teaching, working for pin-money.

Imams' salary is usually between £6,000 and £12,000 per annum, with benefits such as accommodation provided. It is almost unheard-of for an Imam either to have another job or be qualified for any other employment except teaching in the Madressa of the Mosque. The small number of Islamic schools employ a few local imams to teach relevant curriculum subjects – Arabic, Urdu or Islamic Studies.

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### **4. Factions and Divisions**

At least 97% of Muslims in Britain, and approximately 1400 or 96% of masjids or mosques, are Sunni, and under 2% are Shia, with 65 masjids. The majority of Sunni masjids broadly follow the principles of Deoband Madressa (circa 600 masjids) and about 550 others those of Bareilvi Madressa. About 60 are Maudoodi-influenced and about 75 Asian-run masjids adhere to Salafi or similar principles.<sup>1</sup>

They also split into separate Gujerati, Pakistani and Bangladeshi mosques, along corresponding factional lines. The religious differences between the Deobandi, Bareilvi and Maudoodi-ist Sunni factions are subtle and very obscure, and only the most marginal, partisan followers of each will make a principle of boycotting the others' mosques. Habit and often preservation of face will keep the rest from mixing between mosques.

The respective management committees and their imams are almost always determined to maintain the exclusiveness of their factions - they want to protect their material and moral investment in the mosque. The usual pattern is for the congregation to grow until a new factional or ethnically distinct, and discontented, group forms, then grows until a breakaway mosque becomes sustainable.

Few groups have accumulated enough resources to train imams adequately in Britain, and graduates have only emerged very recently. There are no material incentives that lead anyone born in Britain to choose this career although it is unfair to suppose that these imams have expectations of British working conditions and wages. Factional, sectarian scholarship is specialised; mother tongue teaching is also valued, as well as recitation of the Qur'an correctly from memory; mosque budgets are very limited, and so the vast majority of imams are obtained from India, Pakistan or Bangladesh and work in poor conditions at very low wages.

Some of the larger local mosques are managed in an open, democratic fashion instead of by enforcement of a rigid doctrinal position in the mosque's affairs. While this would suggest a correspondingly open and healthy approach to factionalism, instead such mosques are treated as fair-game for influence and for recruitment by marginal factions and become scenes of bitter disputes. However the desire to maintain a polite etiquette and avoid awkward confrontation pushes such activity and efforts to counteract it into surreptitious meetings out of the spotlight where it is difficult to manage.

### **5. Disaffected Youth, Salafi-ism, and Radical Groups**

#### **5.1 Generation Gaps**

Crudely speaking, first generation immigrants are preoccupied with basic needs - security of income, property and family. Second generations are preoccupied with social status, middle-class values and choosing the professions if they can. Third generations lose sense of an ethnic or racial identity and try to assert their own identities, and for an increasing number that means asserting a Muslim identity that their parents and grand-parents (and contemporary relatives in the mother country) eschewed.<sup>2</sup>

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1. These figures are not publicly available, since few masjids explicitly claim allegiance to particular factions and indeed most are utilised by all in the neighbourhood. The numbers are derived from first hand knowledge of the masjids or more subtle indicators of allegiance. In some cases organisations with clear affiliations have published lists of masjids who are directly affiliated or whose ethos shares their outlook.

2 For example a daughter might wear burqa and niqab (face veil) partly to assert her Muslim identity, 'rebellling' against her mother in westernised clothes and grandmother in shalwar-kameez, neither of whom would dare wear a burqa.

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### 5.2 Disaffected Youth

The dissatisfaction of youth with imams of their local mosques is widely recognised. The imams' employers quite intentionally expect imams to propagate traditional 'village' values to the children as well as defend the factional interests of the mosque founders. Far from being radical or extreme, these imams (note practically the entire population of Asian imams in Britain) are as cautious and conservative as the first-generation elders of the mosque; conservative in a cultural sense, **not** in a religious sense. Inevitably the youth turn away from the traditional approach to Islam and the cautious, irrelevant sycophancy of the imam, and look for something 'purer', freed from cultural baggage. The factionalism of the older generation, the mosque management and imams, has no meaning to them either, but the imams have no training in any other approach to Islam, regardless of how much they understand the cultural norms of British life.

Youth assert themselves in the wider society through their identity and appearance, by provocative political statements, by rejection of their parents' cultural constraints, and antagonistic posturing.

For Asian Muslim youth, this usually means:

- distinctively Arabic or pseudo-military dress and bravado, rejecting parents' assimilation or cultural ties,
- vocal support for militant movements, rejecting parents' parochial allegiances,
- and adoption of Arabic-sourced reinterpretations of Islamic practice, i.e. Salafi-ism – return to the roots, the salaf, of Islam – rejecting the limited knowledge-base of mosque imams.<sup>3</sup>

These changes have taken place gradually since around 1990, so inevitably Salafi religious factions have become the nucleus of more recent splits in mosque communities and therefore led to newer breakaway mosques, i.e. the approximately 75 smaller, predominantly Asian, Salafi-inclined ones.

### 5.3 International Politics

The continual series of upheavals in Muslim lands makes a constant impression on concerned Muslim youth, especially through harrowing scenes shown in mainstream news media. Kashmir, Afghanistan and Gujerat all have immediate resonance through family links and shared experiences. Palestine, Algeria and Iraq have a secondary impact because many mosques include a few people from those countries. Chechniya, Bosnia, Kosovo reinforce the sense of powerlessness, iniquity, proximity and hypocrisy.

The result is constant refreshment of the arguments of radical politics and the significance of groups that claim to address these issues, such as Hizb-ut-Tahrir and Al Muhajiroun. However, and in spite of controversial rhetoric, there is a huge gap in such groups between impassioned speeches and practical action, whereas most Muslim youth recognise the ease with which it is possible to become directly involved by slipping away overseas and finding a way into a relevant group there on the ground. In other words there is no need to have an active recruiting network in Britain for guerilla campaigns such as in Chechniya, Afghanistan, Kashmir or Iraq, and it is unlikely that these groups provide such a network.

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<sup>3</sup> Salafi-ism has a variety of forms, antagonistic to orthodox Islam, but popular among young Muslim revivalists, converts and Arab-speaking Muslims from Muslim societies with secular governments. Most Arab and North African countries have had nationalist, secular governments for several generations and migrants from there to Europe have grown up, whether there or in Europe, with little or no formal Islamic education. The reason for Salafi-ism's popularity is its accessibility, the use of literal sources, i.e. the Qur'an and numerous books of Hadith (records of the prototype Muslim society). Although militant groups frequently adhere to it, there is nothing peculiar to the Salafi doctrine that makes it militant, and many perfectly respectable Muslims adhere to it, and many militants have orthodox backgrounds.

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To gain credibility among angry young men, Al-Muhajiroun court notoriety by making claims about their involvement in violence. However there is little to suggest any substance to these claims. Hizb-ut-Tahrir in Britain is only loosely affiliated with similar Hizb-ut-Tahrir organisations overseas, and in the UK it is invariably restrained in its position on militancy, albeit with complex and ambiguous caveats. It is very important to note that neither Hizb-ut-Tahrir nor Al Muhajiroun have ever made any attempt to set up or take over a mosque of their own. Their modus operandi is emphatically to work outside and independent of mosques – their militant speeches do not originate from any mosque imams. Their Islamic doctrines are obscure and complex and they are hard to confront in open Muslim gatherings, so mosque imams are unable to counter their arguments even if the imams were able to overcome their parochial caution and lack of relevant knowledge. Instead, many mosques have ineffectual notices asking worshippers not to gather on the street outside or hand out leaflets without permission.

### **6. Arab Community Mosques**

There are very few predominantly Arab or North African mosques. This is mainly because religious practice among Arabs has been constrained by several generations of Arab secularism, but also partly because most Arab-speaking migrants to Britain are first generation and much more mobile than other communities. They have not settled down enough to have established their own community institutions, and as for mosques, are well provided in most areas by existing, Asian-run ones.

The larger, flagship mosques such as Regents Park or Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre in Notting Hill, or Central Mosque & Islamic Centre, Potter Row, Edinburgh are professionally-run, with full time managers, several imams, counsellors and other facilities. Besides about twelve institutions such as these, there are about twelve small, ad hoc mosques that are predominantly Arab. These do not have paid imams, although one or a small number of people will normally be imam for each prayer as a courtesy, being regarded as the most pious and knowledgeable of the Qur'an. For these small mosques there is never a need to bring in imams from abroad to service the mosque, extremist or otherwise.

### **7. Extremist Recruitment**

#### **7.1 Extremist Recruitment**

Attempts by militants to recruit by talent-spotting *are* made, but the complex divisions of religious sect and sub-sect, ethnic tribe, generation, culture and family network hugely constrain the extent to which trust-relationships can be constructed and maintained among would-be militants. Hence recruitment is only usually attempted through close-knit groups with common ethnicity, age and doctrine. Mistakes are sometimes made in identifying such links, exposing the recruiter's intent. North Africans in Britain are extremely wary of mother country secret police and *agents provocateurs*.

Most recruitment is actually self-imposed – the recruitee has already made a commitment to join the fight himself before finding a way to put it into practice. Firebrand speeches and disturbing video propaganda are not prerequisites since ordinary daily media stories are disturbing enough.

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The way in which the would-be recruit reaches a point of allegiance to a militant group is intimately tied up with Muslim factionalism and the **inability** of the mosque imam or management to provide adequate explanations of unorthodox doctrines or complex politics. When youngsters ask imams about radical or extremist arguments, they are fobbed off with facile answers – the youngsters have no choice but to turn elsewhere, inevitably outside of the mosques, to satisfy their curiosity.

### 7.2 Self Recruitment

For a newly conscientious Muslim youth or convert, the development steps can be summarised thus:

- Intense desire to practise Islam.
- Parents pay lip service to Islam.
- Imam only knows village-Islam of the older generation.
- Youngster is approached by a faction represented by:
  - discussion group in the corner
  - circle that meets in a house nearby
  - group who travel from masjid to masjid to preach
  - group handing out leaflets outside
  - sports group run by some of the youngsters
  - Arabic beginners class run privately in a sitting room
  - school friend just back from university
  - another lonely unsatisfied dissenter
- Many factions and individuals to choose from, independent of mosque (note that any religious faction has a proper duty to attract people to itself).
- Discreet bidding starts with rival group.
- Recruit has to take sides in the rivalry.
- Eventually recruit chooses his faction and makes himself practised in its doctrines.
- Residual dissatisfaction within any of the group's members may lead to a heightened involvement. The recruit now wants to make his mark
  - egotism drives a participant to prove his group's worth
  - disillusioned he goes off alone to break the mould
  - lacking confidence, goes overseas to study more deeply
  - makes his own mixture blended from the rival groups' doctrines.

### 7.3 Extremists From All Backgrounds

Proving his worth, making his mark, breaking the mould, deeper study, might all end in political violence, but there is no particular connection between the factions he is involved with and any violent outcome – indeed a violent outcome could come as a rejection of the factions courting him or as an individual attempt to demonstrate militant credentials for a traditional faction derided for being 'soft'. The following examples show that British militants have come from across the Sunni spectrum.

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- Asif Hanif, the Hounslow-based Tel Aviv suicide bomber, had a family and personal background in the mainstream, moderate Bareilvi tradition, as did Mohammed Siddique Khan, the 7/7 bomber. His Gujerati wife would seem to have a Deobandi family background.
- His collaborator Omar Sharif from Derby became involved, while in Derby, with Al-Muhajiroun (and Derby has several staunch Bareilvi mosques), but nothing has connected Al-Muhajiroun with their plot. It is easy for individuals to travel to Syria and seek out connections to Palestinian militants without the need to be introduced.
- Richard Reid the shoe-bomber was courted by several groups after his conversion and demonstrated attention-seeking personality defects.
- Sajid Badat came from a staunchly Deobandi mosque in a stifflingly close-knit Gujerati community that is a paragon of respectability. He was completely alone in his community when he adopted Salafi practices mixing among militants involved with Finsbury Park mosque.
- A group of militants in South West London staged direct confrontations with the management of Tooting mosque when they were in their mid-teens. They ran meetings in a nearby mosque that was managed by the ultra-Western Guyanese community who had no imam and rarely used their mosque. Ultimately some of the militants fought in Kashmir and apparently recently in Iraq. Their network was practically exclusively Kashmiri and Salafi in a local community that was predominantly Gujerati and Deobandi.
- Abu Hamza al-Masri imposed himself on Finsbury Park mosque when the Pakistani Deobandi management committee had sacked two Deobandi imams in succession and were left without an imam. Abu Hamza's followers ensured that the committee lost practical control of the mosque premises. Note that Abu Hamza cultivated his zeal in Britain and has no formal status as an alim (scholar) or imam.

### **8. Universities**

Significant numbers of Muslims educated in British schools started to attend university in the late 1980s and early 1990s. From initially insignificant numbers, the Muslim student population grew steadily, making campus Islamic Societies viable and establishing prayer rooms. Within a few years there were enough Muslim students for many universities to have different Islamic Societies for different factions e.g. orthodox, Salafi and Hizb-ut-Tahrir groups. Since then there has been considerable mellowing of the sharp divisions, but graduates have taken their experiences back to local communities and established local groups of the newer factions instead.

University campuses still provide an incredibly rich environment for factions to spawn and develop:

- New students are freed from family and peer group constraints.
- They have time to reflect and egos to establish.
- Student Unions have ample resources, meeting rooms, printing facilities etc all paid for by Student Union society budgets.

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- University prayer rooms need new imams nearly every year, naturally selected from the student body, and Islamic Society events need speakers and organisers.
- Differences between ethnicities, their practices and factions are brought into sharp relief by the cosmopolitan mixture of students.
- Activists are compelled to recruit again every year merely to ensure that their faction and their union budget survive.
- The events programme requires a stream of visiting speakers to address meetings on interesting and therefore controversial topics. Most speakers are unknown individuals, friends and fellow factionalists of the organiser.

### **9. Racialism in the Muslim Community**

#### **9.1 Anti-Jewish Racialism**

Not only is it difficult nowadays for the current generation of European youth to recognise the evil of the Second World War, but questionable attitudes from the Indian sub-continent cover all generations. There are no first hand experiences of Jewish communities in Asia; and older generations have positive associations with the Second World War as the enabler of independence. The whole Asian Muslim community has therefore had no direct experience to lighten a concept of Judaism as an entirely negative and alien phenomenon, continually reinforced by the Palestinian crisis.

Arab communities are more mixed in their attitude towards Jews. Older Arabs are generally highly secularised and have first hand experience of Jewish communities as a norm in their home cities. Younger Arab communities only have the Palestinian crisis as a reference point, but are more aware that the Palestinian crisis is not religiously motivated. Therefore there is a level of anti-Jewish racialism in the Muslim community that is largely unchallenged, not from malevolence but from the absence of a positive reference point of contact with the Jewish community.

However both Arabs and Asians, younger and older, are very credulous of malign conspiracy allegations, and these provide extremism with rich nutrients. Even though the raw material is the 'Zionist', 'freemasonry', 'Federal government' conspiracies and other standard fare of the 20th century, including Holocaust denial and now 9/11 denial. The sense of powerlessness these doctrines convey justifies an extreme response in the isolated militant.

#### **9.2 Arab-Asian Racialism**

Gulf-state Arabs have widespread and strongly expressed racialism towards Asians. This is brought to the fore whenever Asians travel to the Muslim holy sites in Saudi Arabia. While it is resented by Asian elders, youth instead add it to their own contempt for the traditions of their elders and envy and seek to emulate Arabs. They also perceive of Arabs as being active in militant campaigns e.g. Palestine, compared with their own passive elders, and presume that Arab Islamic practice is purer than their village-Islam. In some cases this leads to Asian Muslims attempting to demonstrate their worth to Arab counterparts, by outdoing them in extreme behaviour. There is nothing in contemporary society that challenges Arab racialism.

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### **9.3 Asian-Black Racialism**

Older Asians are suspicious and resentful of blacks. Among Gujeratis this is partly because many of them have links to middle-class families in Africa where blacks were the servant class. Others moved out of Brixton and parts of Bristol following street riots. Younger Asians emulate the antagonistic attitude of more aggressive blacks on the street as well as more positive aspects of black 'street culture'. This difference is added to the resentment of Asian youth against their parents' generation. There are significant numbers of black converts to Islam, most are excluded culturally from orthodox teaching by the impenetrability of 'village' Islam, and like most converts, strongly prefer the much more accessible Salafi approach. Many black converts bring with them a strong antagonistic attitude, and this inculcates militancy both in themselves and in others who emulate them, Asian youth and white converts too.

### **10. Converts**

Converts are particularly prone to factional recruitment pressures. Converts' new-found religiosity contrasts sharply with their dissatisfaction with the mainstream Muslim community and its tribalism. Imams are unable to communicate anything useful to the English-speaking convert; yet the convert naively welcomes anyone who offers guidance. The convert is quickly embroiled in rival claims for his attention, being a trophy for the winning faction. He is especially keen to be accepted, to make his mark or to learn more. The conversion itself is often accompanied by a break from the past, so going away for intense study or training is not a major imposition.

However, competent converts to Islam have a very important role to play, even though it is obstructed by traditional ethnic communities. They are free of the distorted view of Western society and ethnocentric views of Muslim society that many first and second generation migrant Muslims have. They can demonstrate meeting the aspirations of the upcoming generation in taking an active part in society and the workplace without the ethnic community's collective chip on its shoulder. And converts could be a visible demonstration to outside militants, terrorists, and racialsists and xenophobes too, that Islam has a non-negotiable stake in British society that cannot be undermined by political violence.

### **11. Community Relations**

#### **11.1 Engagement**

There is a widespread tradition in the Muslim communities of charitable acts and voluntary service. However this is invariably introspective and self-serving, partly because the need is great within the Muslim community in Britain and abroad, and partly because of the lack of engagement between Muslims and the non-Muslim community in general.

Charity is institutionalised in the religion. Mother-country communities are poor and their charities link in closely with British Muslim donors. Religious education, madressas and mosques themselves use volunteers extensively. Muslim schools are considerably under-funded and under-resourced, depending on parents and helpers to contribute help and donations. There is minimal knowledge of opportunities to participate in voluntary activities in the wider community.

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### **11.2 Institutions**

Most mosques, i.e. the smaller ones, depend on their inconspicuousness for security. They have little sense of fire or personal safety precautions, building regulations, or obligations of charitable status. Their independence and poverty reinforces their reluctance to engage with Local Authorities.

Madressa teaching methods and curriculum are primitive in large and small mosques. As youngsters mature, they recognise this disparity with their full-time education and despise the madressa system and as a result, orthodox Islam and the authority of the imam.

While almost all mosques are happy to present themselves to visitors, they are invariably inept at doing so, with poor and confusing use of English, unwarranted assumptions about the aspects of Islam and the Muslim community that interest visitors, or indeed assumptions about the beliefs and opinions of visitors themselves.

The range of support that could be made available to help should also be used to cultivate closer, more trusting and more enduring relations with the Local Authority and neighbours.

### **11.3 Leadership**

Leaders of Muslim organisations with a high public profile are unrepresentative. Muslim communities are desperately self-conscious about their spokesmen and women, only putting forward in public those people that they believe meet the expectations of the non-Muslim world - successful businessmen, career politicians, shaved, scrubbed, suited professionals, who rarely know where the local mosque even is. There is a yawning gulf between active, concerned Muslims and community engagement efforts through government institutions who deal only with 'community leaders'.

Muslim community leaders among local politicians and parliamentarians are entirely made up from people who have in all essentials, left the Muslim community far behind. They are drawn from successful businessmen and professionals, who by the very nature of their political success, represent a median of the whole community, which is predominantly non-Muslim of course. No one who meets the norms of a respected practical Muslim is currently able also to gain popular electoral support. Leaders of Muslim institutions represent the opinions of older generation Muslims, preoccupied by status and wealth. They get very short shrift from the youth.

Individual mosques' imams and committees rarely have much to do with other mosques or national bodies, except for imams' support for fraternal factional religious conferences. Therefore most active support for bodies such as the the Muslim Council of Britain comes from enthusiastic but essentially self-appointed individuals. While such individuals may make important contributions, there is no mechanism by which influence can be directed either into or out of the organisation other than by direct personal involvement. That is not to suggest that such influence is not welcomed by the MCB or other bodies, but that (i) factional issues constrain the MCB's actions and (ii) local mosque activities are not influenced by the MCB. Following the murders of 7th July 2005 there are increasing numbers of occasions in which adherents of different factions have subtly or bluntly blamed each other for problems.

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## 12. Deprivation

Deprivation and exclusion in British society are not factors leading to security threats, but are direct contributors to mundane street criminality. Muslims who are involved in any of the many kinds of radical Islamic activity, sinister or not, are overwhelmingly well educated and articulate, from comfortable and socially secure backgrounds. Intellectual capability is almost an essential prerequisite of understanding the more complex and extreme doctrines.

One of the most corrosive and difficult contributors to the sense of exclusion is continual low-level harassment, such as name-calling and other acts intended to provoke but which are rarely criminal and impossible to pursue. The cumulative effect of reporting such events in a simple, proportionate manner may enable them to be targeted. Raising public awareness of the destructiveness of such activity would decrease its acceptability - the majority population has little awareness that it exists, still less that it builds insecurity, since occasional taunts don't really trouble those who are already secure.

## 13. Jihad

Platitudes about Islam being a religion of peace, and appeals by elders and Muslim leaders to this effect, do not get much sympathy from disaffected youth. It is undeniable that military Jihad is an explicit element of the religion. Regardless of their interpretation of the relevant verses of the Qur'an and the history of Islam, statements that deny this aspect of Jihad inevitably demonstrate to youth how out of touch their elders are, or how self-interested, trying to protect their quiet, unconcerned livelihood.

Muslims need as much right to discuss Jihad and its implications as Christians have to discuss and approve (or otherwise) of an Augustinian 'just war'. Recently attention has started to be paid to the religious basis for Jihad itself, but attention also needs to be paid to the consequences of it.

- Firstly it is important to challenge the authority that the would-be militant invokes to justify his drastic path. There is no effective and binding authority over Islamic matters anywhere in the world today, and this absence causes individuals to assume upon themselves some very profound responsibilities that in truth, few Muslims, few people at all, are capable of shouldering.

- Secondly the outcomes of violent action have consequences that cannot be undone and that spread out in time and place. The unilateral decision of an unguided group or individual will have profound consequences that affect people well beyond the immediate participants. The violent militant draws his inspiration from an age when Muslim leadership was inspired and inspiring and where the least likely outcomes could have been deeper oppression and subjugation, least of all at the hands of the Muslim leaders of that age, whereas the most likely outcomes in modern times are exactly these.

- Thirdly, use of force in Islam is not arbitrary; instead in all circumstances, it requires severe restraint, and is conducted with the highest moral scruples, and only as a last resort. Where the conflict can be resolved, even at substantial cost to the

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Muslim community, whether temporarily or permanently, but without recourse to violence, that course must be followed as far as possible.

Open debate of these sorts of factors would go a long way to defusing much of the home-grown and quixotic militancy of youth, and would arm scholars and community leaders with tools to address it.

### **14. Solutions**

#### **14.1 Defusing Extremism**

##### **14.1.1 Exposure to Reality**

There is a big gap between many British Muslim radicals' romanticised notions of Islam under siege abroad and the realities of the materialistic compromises of everyday life in those countries. Some exposure to this gap might help to lower expectations and diffuse misplaced support before it is transformed into destructive political violence. In many places of conflict the majority of people have no particular allegiance to Islam.

Muslim leadership is out of touch and uninvolved with mosques, and has limited knowledge of practical Islam.

##### **Practical Steps:**

- Programmes of speakers who are authorities on modern history and ethnography of countries such as Iraq, Palestine, Bosnia, Kosovo.
- More information about practical action such as relief work and development aid.
- Opportunities for young Muslims to make short trips to Muslim countries under recognised government or Islamic aid programmes, e.g. during university vacations.
- Steps including those below, to involve practical, grass roots Muslims in representing the Muslim community.
- Involvement of converts in more prominent roles in the Muslim community, not just special cases already prominent because of their fame.
- Muslim community access to the less well understood instruments of security – demystifying the secret agencies.

##### **14.1.2 Improve Imams' Situations**

Imams are provided with minimal resources, have no capability to tackle unorthodox doctrines, and have limited ability to express themselves. These failures exacerbate the generation gap that alienates youth from mainstream Islam.

##### **Practical Steps:**

- Determine ways in which mosques and individual imams can improve their resources e.g. accommodation, training, presentation skills, equipment, library facilities, conference facilities, and grants or loan arrangements to facilitate these.

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- Provide access to job skills training and part-time employment that would enable imams to be less dependent on mosque committees for job security.
- Provide English-language training that is geared specifically to their religious subject matter.
- Establish a considered and agreed body of material and training in techniques that explicitly address the range of unorthodox doctrines. This does not need to be hostile; its purpose is to reduce dependency of newly conscientious Muslims on fringe polemicists.
- Produce better quality Madressa curricula (accepting differences by faction) supporting materials and training (content, method and pedagogy) to provide it, plus means, e.g. grants, to provide better physical environment. Materials and training needs need to be accessible to impoverished and tiny mosques, and to volunteers who provide madressah teaching.

### **14.1.3 Women's Communities**

It is generally observed that it is hard to establish a relationship with women in the Muslim community. Actually there is no fundamental obstacle to this, but the contrast by which it is relatively easy to address a gathering of men in the mosque leads to this supposition. There are occasional women's events, but usually large gatherings are around social occasions, chiefly weddings. Since it is the youth who are drawn to militancy, and young Muslim women who are more likely to participate in women's religious gatherings and women's self-help and support networks, there is little to obstruct the cultivation of women's influence. The only actual obstacles are (i) expectation that this can be achieved through Muslim community leadership - which does not connect with youth or local communities; and (ii) the need to recognise that women, not men, have to do the cultivating. Given the assumption that the strongest motivators towards militancy and violence are egotistical, it is reasonable to expect some success through women's more considered perspectives.

### **Practical Steps:**

- Encourage setting up of Muslim women's societies in universities, thereby seeding similar groups in local communities.
- Itinerary of women speakers' tours and women-only programmes.

### **14.1.4 Improving Campus Muslim Societies**

It is inevitable that university Islamic societies will continue to include vociferous, militant activists because of the nature of university communities. Institutional actions to curb their activities will be self-defeating by driving them underground and providing an apparent vindication of their self-importance. Restraining factors will be access to information that places a more realistic perspective on Islamic issues for students and greater involvement of Muslim students in wider affairs.

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### **Practical Steps:**

- Establish a body of easily accessible literature comparable to that for imams, for explaining factional and unorthodox doctrines and practice.
- Create formalised links between campus Muslim societies and the nearest mosques outside the university and the university chaplaincy, and set up a measurable programme of activities between them all.
- Establish a code of conduct for students running Islamic societies and performing as imams, that (i) is agreed nationally and signed up to locally, and (ii) has a mechanism by which complaints and challenges can be registered.
- Ensure that universities are provided with a good supply of authoritative speakers.
- Provide opportunities for Muslim students to gain access to public figures, to reduce the sense of remoteness and powerlessness, e.g. politicians, diplomats, journalists, figures in security and policing.

### **14.1.5 Tackling Mosque Sectarianism**

There is no point in trying to cure mosques and imams of factionalism - for many mosques, this is their unacknowledged *raison-d'être*. However a lot can be done to reduce the destructive way in which rival factions are driven into the shadows. National Muslim bodies have either avoided the problem and become too anodyne to be effective, or have become vehicles that promote factionalism.

Practical steps all involve considerable concessions by mosques and factions. Compliance could not be enforced, but, with sufficient numbers conforming, non-compliant organisations would be conspicuous enough for newcomers to recognise their default.

### **Practical Steps:**

- Do not obstruct the recruitment of mother-tongue-speaking imams from overseas with requirements for a minimal standard of English and some form of citizenship qualification. Mosques-without-imams are a proven source of trouble. India, Pakistan and Bangladesh are enthusiastic if imperfect democracies. Awkward, minimal English is more of an obstacle to communication of Islam than no English at all. At least the latter places the responsibility in the hands of other, competent English-speakers.
- Production and distribution of a booklet that deals objectively with every<sup>4</sup> Muslim faction in Britain, using definitions that the faction itself agrees on and in non-inflammatory language. While this would be an astonishing feat, the effect of including all together by mutual consent, would be to force each one to use measured, independently verifiable, objective definitions instead of the customary exaggerations. The booklet would be available in any mosque and to any newcomer, such as a convert or newly practising youth, by which he could make an objective opinion about whether his new friends are what they claim to be, and are reasonable when they denigrate alternatives.

<sup>4</sup> Including Ahmadiyya, otherwise universally declared outside of Islam.

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- Initiation of a standing conference of scholars and leaders from all factions to investigate and rationalise factional differences. This would aim to be as inclusive as possible and thus bring radical groups in from the margins. The conference would produce and maintain the booklet above, as well as address deeper sectarian points. It would be a channel to find and disseminate scholarly Muslim opinion (though not its source – that would definitely remain factional). It would include a complaints office.
- Creation of a code of conduct for mosques to sign up to, displayed in all conforming mosques, by which any group can stage an event by following agreed protocols, and a procedure by which they can register complaints. Groups that made arrangements outside these protocols and that did not register complaints would no doubt continue, but would thereby be conspicuously out of line, evident to newcomers. Similarly, range and consistency of complaints registered would also mark out a mosque's obduracy and unwillingness to contribute to lessening of tensions.
- Creation of a code of conduct for management of guidance of converts and newly practising Muslims. This would also be displayed in all conforming mosques and would declare that each mosque has an approved and publicly available plan for ensuring that newcomers are given balanced advice about factions and local sources of approved guidance according to each locally represented faction, in appropriate languages.
- Initiation of a multi-factional, international 'Muslim Security Council' conference. This would seek effective international remedies for Muslim large-scale grievances. It would inevitably raise considerable controversy. However it would allow concerns to be addressed rather than buried to be picked up by underground groups. Its international and objective status would accrue considerable prestige in the Muslim world and would be the focus of Muslim international diplomacy. The simple fact of its existence in a country where no Muslim country's domestic government could abuse it could give it sufficient impetus to be able to moderate and intervene diplomatically to defuse tensions.

### 14.2 Improving Community Relations

#### 14.2.1 Tackling Petty Abuse

The most corrosive aspects of poor race, religion and ethnicity integration are ubiquitous occurrences of very low level, petty assaults. They remain ubiquitous because they are extraordinarily difficult either to confront or to take action against. A typical example might be a verbal assault in which words sound ambiguously like abuse, shouted out by a passenger in a commercial van, driving past, with no obvious witnesses. The abuse carries no material loss or direct threat of injury, and even if basic details are recorded, the time wasted waiting for a police response and the obviously poor prospects of a resolution all contribute to make the crime unchallengeable. Such incidents are literally everyday life for anyone in a visibly distinct and disadvantaged minority.

An initial suggestion is that a means be found of distributing reporting forms to the local Muslim community. The forms would merely serve to record incidents of low-level crime and there should be no expectation of a direct follow-up. However accumulation of a body of such material from

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which hot spots can be identified, or even sufficient detail for individual persistent behaviour can be identified, could allow local police to target resources accordingly. If this follows as a direct result of this aspect of the survey, it should serve to increase the value and credibility of the survey in the minds of the sub-community participants. Some work of this nature has already been attempted by the Muslim Safety Forum and the Metropolitan Police, but there are drawbacks to what has been done.

### **Practical Steps:**

- Research design, dissemination and collection of low-level abuse and crime incident forms, then put results into practice.
- Raise public awareness of the effects of sustained petty abuse.
- Encourage non-Muslim witnesses of trivial incidents of Islamophobia to offer themselves as witnesses and to report the incidents themselves.
- Identify situations where conspicuously Muslim people can exercise some benign, respected authority over others - stewarding, responding to incidents, e.g. first-aiders, receptions, public information.

### **14.2.2 Voluntary Work and Youth Work**

Currently there is little involvement by Muslims in community voluntary work of any kind outside the Muslim community because this is very much the preserve of enlightened white middle-class folk – e.g. blood donors are overwhelmingly white. The reasons are not a shortage of altruism but that ‘inclusion’ has not yet permeated that far.

### **Practical Steps:**

- Identify opportunities for Muslims to contribute to the voluntary sector, e.g. discussions with Community Service Volunteers, local authorities, prison visitors, hospital welfare, school governorship, magistracy etc.
- Promote opportunities to the Muslim community.
- Identify and overcome possible practical obstacles e.g. religious observances, training.
- Promote Muslim youth involvement in groups such as cadets, scouting etc.
- Make available high-quality non-Muslim instructors, coaches and clubs in sports events, clubs and training for Muslim youth, reducing opportunities for extremists to provide low-quality versions of these as a lure.

### **14.2.3 Tackling Racialism**

Most anti-racism programmes have been based on the premise that the problem community is the white majority one. While Muslims are definitely victims of this sort, as well as victims of Islamophobia on account of the distinct and assumed identities of Muslims, the Muslim community is diverse enough in itself to harbour racialism. Tackling racialism is a worthy aim in itself, but the aim is also to undermine the simplistic arguments of extremists.

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**Practical Steps:**

- Address Muslim-Jewish racialism through mutual meetings and visits, noting that there are multiple Muslim communities to involve.
- Explain Qur'anic disparaging references to Jews in a proper context, i.e. as examples of the fate that befalls guided people when they reject guidance.
- Explain how little of the Palestinian cause is motivated by allegiance to Islam.
- Make all generations of Muslims better aware of the grossnesses of the second world war.
- Address Arab-Asian and Asian-Black racialism through conventional methods adapted to these specific cases.

**14.2.4 Popular News Media**

There is an eternal debate about whether mass media influence or reflect popular opinion. Regardless of this, the Muslim community is a long way from influencing or reflecting the average Briton. Accordingly it gets very poor treatment by all popular news media. This is exacerbated by journalists' keenness for a dramatic, shocking story, and their inveterate laziness. This contributes directly to:

- actual antagonism towards the Muslim community,
- Muslims' sense of victimisation and inferiority,
- Muslims' notions of conspiracies against them,
- their sense of powerlessness,
- their reluctance to debate issues in public.

All these factors feed extremism with a nourishing diet.

**Practical Steps:**

- Intervene directly in mass-circulation press and populist broadcasting to make editors recognise and take responsibility for the damage they cause.
- Bring journalists into greater contact with articulate Muslims who contradict popular stereotypes.
- Impose upon the popular press to use representative Muslims as journalists to cover Muslim affairs and events.

**14.3 Improving Communications, Building Trust**

**14.3.1 Skills and Training for Mosque Management**

Individuals would be encouraged to take part in a succession of mutually beneficial activities geared at creating a responsible role in the mosque and its community. Where this takes place in the context of a particular building or organisation the activities would include a carefully planned series of training sessions such as:

- Building security and protection
- Fire precautions

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- Building regulations and planning permission processes
- First Aid
- Charity Registration processes and responsibilities
- Fund raising techniques
- Public relations and presentation skills
- Standing Advisory Committees on Religious Education
- Awareness of opportunities for voluntary service in the community - prison visitors, hospital welfare, school governorship, etc.
- Management skills relevant to the voluntary sector
- Book-keeping
- Drug abuse, child abuse, domestic violence awareness

Careful planning is required:

- (i) to maintain momentum through regular spacing of events,
- (ii) to allow like-minded people from different organisations contacted in the programme to participate together,
- (iii) to accommodate specific features tailored to the needs of the sub-community, e.g. translations, single-sex gatherings, etc.

The ultimate objective is that over a period of time a constructive, mutually beneficial relationship is built up with participants. Thus continuity and consistency of contact is essential. The aim is to involve those people who are most closely involved on the ground, in the mosque, (not abstract and remote leaders) by addressing in particular the cultivation of practical knowledge and skills.

### **Practical Steps:**

- Implement programmes of training in these practical skills.
- Consider formalising progression, e.g. certificate in voluntary association management.
- Ensure that contact with candidates is maintained and links are cultivated and matured.

### **14.3.2 Special Constabulary**

It is feasible to seek out small groups of responsible-looking middle-aged people in the community and encourage them to become Special Constables. By identifying a small group of friends, it helps the would-be recruits to give each other moral support. Management of Special Constable training and relations with the local police unit would need to avoid some of the more dubious attitudes of other recruits and professional police, but that should be true anyway. Having maturity, responsibility and community knowledge, they should be recognised by local police as a valuable resource of local specialist knowledge on or off duty. If a similar

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attitude permeated the rest of the Special Constable corpus, it would improve the status of Special Constables generally.

There is no reason why this process should be performed in a way that suggests an underhand motive because there are many in the Muslim community who are anxious to cultivate respect and responsibility in the community. There is no rational basis for fear of a negative reaction from the Muslim communities (except for a few known special cases) because critics would be among those who are pretty marginalised in the more substantial mosques and organisations.

Awareness of the presence of people with such responsibilities and links would help improve confidence and involvement. The principle barriers at the moment are lack of awareness of Special Constabulary, and perception of private loutish racialism among and between police officers. It is possible that operational issues e.g. Special Constables having duties in commands away from their home, might lessen the immediacy of the local knowledge, but that is easily overcome.

Service objections may exist to the targeting of recruitment in this way, apparently providing preferential treatment for Muslims. But the situation is in no way peculiar to the Muslim community and the pattern could be extended at will, or started in another community first. If benefits are realised on both sides, the process would accelerate.

### **Practical Steps:**

- Determine an appropriate targeting strategy.
- Recruit special constables.
- Determine best way of harnessing community knowledge.

### **14.3.3 International Affairs**

Muslims are right to believe that they are not taken into consideration in many matters of British foreign policy in areas of Muslim interest. One of the most substantial untapped assets of the Muslim community in Britain is its fantastically rich network of contacts and influence across the Muslim world. It is the existence of this pattern of influence and feedback that causes so much distress among Muslims at badly thought-out foreign policy by the British government. For a very large part of the community, British government foreign policy is their own, unasked for, domestic policy. Properly integrated and properly consulted, Muslim contribution to British government could make Britain a much more influential and respected voice in the international community.

Properly respected and properly advised, the Muslim community could in turn channel much more considered and moderated opinions back into the wider Muslim world (20% of the whole world). That would give Muslims around the world a prize they would not discard lightly.

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**Practical Steps:**

- Set up a two-tier advisory body on foreign affairs, the upper level of which is a changing forum of British-based Muslim experts, journalists, exiled and absent politicians, community leaders and Islamic scholars with open and measurable access to relevant government departments (FCO, DfID etc); and the lower level is a broader body drawn from the British Muslim community, accessible and accountable to it, that would provide the stock of contributors to the upper forum.
- Give greater domestic recognition to the activities of UK-based Muslim aid and relief agencies.
- Give greater prominence to the British Muslim community in promotion of Britain overseas, both in Muslim and non-Muslim countries, the former to enhance British influence and the latter to demonstrate the benefits of open engagement. Both increase the collective self-esteem and stake of Muslims in British society.

# Summary of Recommendations and Progress

Summary of Recommendations and Progress	Purpose			Responsibilities						Definable success criteria	Current efforts	
	Normalisation of fringe activities / isolation of extremist activities	Better engagement and mutual understanding	Undermining of case for extremism	Local Muslim community	National Muslim organisations	Local police	Local authority	Academic and student bodies	Central Govt enabling or perse			Non Muslim Govt bodies
Programmes of speakers who are authorities on modern history and ethnography of countries such as Iraq, Palestine, Bosnia, Kosovo.		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	None	None
More information about practical action such as relief work and development aid.	Yes		Yes		Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	None	None
Opportunities for young Muslims to make short trips to Muslim countries under government or Islamic aid programmes, e.g. in university vacations			Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	None	None
Steps to involve grass roots Muslims in representing the Muslim community.	Yes		Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	None	None
Involvement of converts in more prominent roles in the Muslim community, not just special cases already prominent because of their fame.			Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	3 notable converts on Home Office task force (70 total)	
Muslim community access to the less well understood instruments of security - demystifying the secret agencies.		Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	MPSB MCU	
Determine ways in which mosques and individual imams can improve their resources e.g. accommodation, training, presentation skills, equipment, library facilities, conference facilities, and grants or loan arrangements to	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes				Islamic Foundation - its faction only	
Provide access to job skills training and part-time employment that would enable imams to be less dependent on mosque committees for job security	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes					None	None
Provide English-language training that is geared specifically to their religious subject matter.		Yes	Yes		Yes						None	None
Establish for imams a considered and agreed body of theological material and training, in techniques that explicitly address the range of unorthodox doctrines. This does not need to be hostile; its purpose is to reduce dependency of newly conscientious Muslims on fringe polemicists.		Yes	Yes		Yes		Yes				None	None
Produce better quality Madressa curricula (accepting differences by faction) supporting materials and training (content, method and pedagogy) to provide it, plus means, e.g. grants, to provide better physical environment. Materials and training needs need to be accessible to impoverished and tiny mosques, and to volunteers who provide madrasah teaching.	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Widespread quality madrassas, madrasah-school interaction	Limited and private factional efforts.
Encourage setting up of Muslim women's societies in universities, thereby seeding similar groups in local communities.		Yes					Yes				Recognition by outsiders that Muslim women contribute and participate	None
Itinerary of women speakers' tours and women-only programmes.		Yes			Yes		Yes				Recognition by outsiders that Muslim women contribute and participate	None systematic

Summary of Recommendations and Progress	Purpose			Responsibilities						Definable success criteria	Current efforts	
	Normalisation of fringe activities / isolation of extremist activities	Better engagement and mutual understanding	Undermining of extremism for Local Muslim community	Local Muslim community	National Muslim Organisations	Local police	Local authority	Academic and student bodies	Enabling or per se Central Govt			Non Muslim / Non Govt bodies
Create formalised links between campus Muslim societies and the nearest mosques outside the university and the university chaplaincy, and set up a measurable programme of activities between them all.	Yes			Yes			Yes	Yes			Mainstream Muslim presence on Campus	None
Establish a body of easily accessible literature comparable to that for imams, for explaining factional and unorthodox doctrines and practice to all corners.	Yes				Yes		Yes	Yes			Widely available, widely referenced documents	None
Establish a code of conduct for students running Islamic societies and performing as imams, that (i) is agreed nationally and signed up to locally, and (ii) has a mechanism by which complaints and challenges can be registered.	Yes				Yes		Yes	Yes			Healthy stream of complaints about breaches	None
Ensure that universities' Islamic societies are provided with a good supply of authoritative speakers.	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes			Rich programmes of events for Islamic socs, well attended	None
Provide opportunities for Muslim students to gain access to public figures, to reduce the sense of remoteness and powerlessness, e.g. politicians, diplomats, journalists, figures in security and policing.			Yes					Yes	Yes	Yes	Higher levels of debate, more young Muslim participation	Patchy
Do not obstruct the recruitment of mother-tongue-speaking imams from overseas with requirements for a minimal standard of English and some form of citizenship qualification. Mosques without imams are a proven source of trouble. India, Pakistan and Bangladesh are enthusiastic if imperfect democracies. Stilted, basic English is more of an obstacle to communication of Islam than no English at all. At least the latter places the responsibility in the hands of other, competent, English-speakers.	Yes	Yes		Yes							Imam-less, militant mosques are limited to poky and obscure ones.	Opposite, potentially worsening
Production and distribution of a booklet that deals objectively with every Muslim faction in Britain, using definitions that the faction itself agrees on and in non-inflammatory language. While this would be an astonishing feat, the effect of including all together by mutual consent, would be to force each one to use measured, independently verifiable, objective definitions instead of the customary exaggerations. The booklet would be available in any mosque and to any newcomer, such as a convert or newly practising youth, by which he could make an objective opinion about whether his new friends are what they claim to be, and are reasonable when they denigrate alternatives.	Yes			Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes			Widely available, widely referenced documents	None
Initiation of a standing conference of scholars and leaders from all factions to investigate and rationalise factional differences. This would aim to be as inclusive as possible and thus bring radical groups in from the margins. The conference would produce and maintain the booklet above, as well as address deeper sectarian points. It would be a channel to find and disseminate scholarly Muslim opinion (though not its source - that would definitely remain factional). It would include a complaints office.	Yes		Yes		Yes			Yes	Yes		Uniform respect for conference across Muslim community	Controversial and obstructed
Creation of a code of conduct for mosques to sign up to, displayed in all conforming mosques, by which any group can stage an event by following agreed protocols, and a procedure by which they can register complaints. Groups that made arrangements outside these protocols and that didn't register complaints would no doubt continue, but would thereby be conspicuously out of line, evident to newcomers. Similarly, range and consistency of complaints registered would also mark out a mosque's obduracy and unwillingness to contribute to lessening of tensions.	Yes				Yes						Healthy stream of complaints about breaches	None

Summary of Recommendations and Progress	Purpose			Responsibilities						Definable success criteria	Current efforts	
	Normalisation of fringe activities / extremist activities	Better engagement and mutual understanding	Undermining of case for extremism	Local Muslim community	National Muslim organisations	Local police	Local authority	Academic and student bodies	Central Govt enabling or per se			Non Muslim
Creation of a code of conduct for mosque management of guidance for converts and newly practising Muslims, to be displayed in all conforming mosques and would declare that each mosque has an approved and publicly available plan for ensuring newcomers are given balanced advice about factions and local sources of approved guidance according to each locally represented faction, in appropriate languages.	Yes			Yes	Yes				Central Govt enabling or per se	Non Muslim	Healthy stream of complaints about breaches	None
Initiation of a multi-factional, international "Muslim Security Council" conference. This would seek effective international remedies for Muslim large-scale grievances. It would inevitably raise controversy. However it would allow concerns to be addressed rather than buried to be picked up by underground groups. Its international and objective status would accrue considerable prestige in the Muslim world and would be the focus of Muslim international diplomacy. The fact of its existence in a country where no Muslim country's domestic government could abuse it could give it sufficient impetus to be able to moderate and intervene diplomatically to defuse tensions.	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes		Uniform respect for conference across International Community	None
Research design, dissemination and collection of low-level abuse and crime incident forms, then put results into practice.		Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		National Crime Survey results	Muslim Safety Forum Islamophobia pack – very limited, poor distribution, not main aim
Raise public awareness of the effects of sustained petty abuse.		Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		National Crime Survey results	None – hate crime only signifies when impact is obvious
Encourage non-Muslim witnesses of trivial incidents of Islamophobia to offer themselves as witnesses and to report the incidents themselves.		Yes				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Increased prosecution rate	None – assumed to be a minority community issue.
Identify situations where conspicuously Muslim people can exercise some benign, respected authority over others - stewarding, responding to incidents, e.g. first-aiders, receptions, public information.	Yes			Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Increased positive use of Muslim stereotypes.	None – emphasis is on positive roles of assimilated stereotypes
Identify opportunities for Muslims to contribute to the voluntary sector, e.g. discussions with Community Service Volunteers, local authorities, prison visitors, hospital welfare, school governorship, magistracy etc.		Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Muslim participation	Occasional scarf-wearing woman, e.g. blood recipient.
Promote voluntary/community work opportunities to the Muslim community. Identify and overcome possible practical obstacles e.g. religious observances, training.		Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Muslim participation	None targeted
Promote Muslim youth involvement in groups such as cadets, scouting etc.	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Muslim participation	Some Muslim scout troops
Make available high-quality non-Muslim instructors, coaches and clubs in sports events, clubs and training for Muslim youth, reducing opportunities for extremists to provide low-quality versions of these as a lure.	Yes	Yes			Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	Well-subscribed events	None

Summary of Recommendations and Progress		Purpose			Responsibilities						Definable success criteria	Current efforts	
													Normalization of fringe activities / isolation of extremist activities
Address Muslim-Jewish racism through mutual meetings and visits, noting that there are multiple Muslim communities to involve.				Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes	Separation of Israeli and Jewish issues, Muslims seeking broader base for Palestinian issues including Jewish groups.	None except inter-faith dialogues
Explain Qur'anic disparaging references to Jews in a proper context, i.e. as examples of the fate that befalls guided people when they reject guidance.				Yes	Yes		Yes		Yes			Reduction in gratuitous anti-Jewish references in Muslim rhetoric.	Naqshbandi Asfii jamaat only
Explain how little of the Palestinian cause is motivated by allegiance to Islam.				Yes				Yes	Yes		Yes	Tempering of Palestine Muslim rhetoric	None
Make all generations of Muslims better aware of the grossnesses of the second world war.			Yes	Yes				Yes	Yes		Yes	Tempering of Palestine Muslim rhetoric among elder Muslims	Contrived, specious and factional
Address Arab-Asian and Asian-Black racialism through conventional methods adapted to these specific cases.		Yes					Yes		Yes		Yes	Increased young Asian self-esteem, increased note of Gulf and Saudi race issues	None
Intervene directly in mass-circulation press and populist broadcasting to make editors recognise and take responsibility for the damage they cause.			Yes	Yes				Yes	Yes		Yes	Positive projection of Muslim stereotypes	Occasional and discreet
Bring journalists into greater contact with articulate Muslims who contradict popular stereotypes.			Yes								Yes	Positive projection of Muslim stereotypes	None
Impose upon the popular press to use representative Muslims as journalists to cover Muslim affairs and events.		Yes	Yes				Yes		Yes		Yes	Balanced reportage.	Only from totally assimilated role models
Implement programmes of training in capacity-building practical skills as listed in sub-sub-paragraph 14.3.1 (page 25)			Yes				Yes		Yes		Yes	Well managed mosques and regular, trusted engagement with local authorities and police	Very limited, factional by Markfield only. No engagement plan.

Summary of Recommendations and Progress	Purpose		Responsibilities							Definable success criteria	Current efforts	
	Normalisation of fringe activities / isolation of extremists	Better engagement and mutual understanding	Undermining of case for extremism	Local Muslim community	National Muslim organisations	Local police	Local authority	Academic and student bodies	Central Govt enabling or perse			Non Muslim Govt bodies
Consider formalising progression in capacity building programmes, e.g. certificate in voluntary association management. Ensure that contact with candidates in capacity building programmes is maintained and links are cultivated and matured.		Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Mosque management becomes a marketable asset	None
Determine an appropriate targeting strategy for special constable and PCSO recruitment. Recruit special constables. Determine best way of harnessing community knowledge of special constables.		Yes				Yes			Yes		Normality includes informal police presence within Muslim community	Awareness emerging in Met and City. Farhad Ahmed MBE in Footing
Set up a two-tier advisory body on foreign affairs, the upper level of which is a changing forum of British-based Muslim experts, journalists, exiled and absent politicians, community leaders and Islamic scholars with open and measurable access to relevant government departments (FCO / DFID etc); and the lower level is a broader body drawn from the British Muslim community, accessible and accountable to it, that would provide the stock of contributors to the upper forum.			Yes		Yes		Yes				Body recognised and influential internationally and inside community.	FCO has body which is almost unknown and has no recognised access route.
Give greater domestic recognition to the activities of UK-based Muslim aid and relief agencies.			Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes	Non-Muslim common recognition, cited in media e.g. in disaster relief news	Recognition only within Muslim bodies.
Give greater prominence to the British Muslim community in promotion of Britain overseas, both in Muslim and non-Muslim countries, the former to enhance British influence and the latter to demonstrate the benefits of open engagement. Increase both the collective self-esteem and the stake of Muslims in British society.			Yes					Yes	Yes	Yes	Greater attention paid to British Muslim community by govts of Muslim and non-Muslim countries.	British Haj Delegation.

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**DEFENCE – SECURITY – DEVELOPMENT**

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and Muslim Youth and Community Issues*

Mehmood Naqshbandi

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