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for*

Muslim Brotherhood Review: Main Findings

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Muslim Brotherhood Review: main findings

1. In April 2014 the Prime Minister commissioned an internal review of the Muslim Brotherhood, including its origins, ideology, record in and out of government; and its organisation and activities in the UK and abroad.
2. The review comprises a classified report to the Prime Minister. However, the Prime Minister made clear that the main findings of the review would be made public. These findings are set out below.
3. The Government is committed to developing a much better understanding of groups which have been or are alleged to have been associated with extremism and terrorism, and has made further resources available for that purpose. Research into the Muslim Brotherhood will continue. The subject matter is complex, with significant domestic and foreign policy implications.

Process

4. The review was conducted by two of the UK's most senior and expert civil servants: Sir John Jenkins, until recently HM Ambassador to Riyadh, assessed the Muslim Brotherhood and affiliates overseas; Charles Farr, at the time of writing Director General of the Office for Security and Counter Terrorism in the Home Office considered the history, activities, ideology and influence of the Muslim Brotherhood network and affiliates in the UK. The National Security Adviser subsequently led work across government to consider, where appropriate, the review's policy implications.
5. In preparing their reports, the authors consulted widely. Sir John Jenkins visited twelve countries and met representatives of governments, political movements, religious leaders, academics and other independent commentators. Information was provided by many Foreign & Commonwealth Office posts and our security and intelligence agencies. Both authors consulted representatives of the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist movements in the UK and overseas and invited interested parties to make written contributions. They consulted a wide range of academic and online sources in English, Arabic and other languages.
6. The review was completed in July 2014 and that is the cut off date for the material. The principal focus for the review was the Muslim Brotherhood in the Arab world, the UK and parts of western Europe. In preparing its policy response to the Review the Government has continued to assess developments in the MB in Egypt and elsewhere, including through the new Extremism Analysis Unit.

Main findings

7. Sir John Jenkins examined the development, ideology and structures of the Muslim Brotherhood, historically and through its foundational writings

Foundational ideology and structures

8. The Muslim Brotherhood was established in Egypt in 1928. The founder and first Supreme Guide (spiritual leader), Hassan al Banna, called for the religious reformation of individual Muslims, the progressive moral purification of Muslim societies and their eventual political unification in a Caliphate under sharia law.

Al Banna and others argued that secularisation and westernisation were at the root of all contemporary problems of Arab and Muslim societies, and that nationalism was not the answer.

9. From its foundation the Muslim Brotherhood organised itself into a secretive 'cell' structure, with an elaborate induction and education programme for new members. It relied heavily on group solidarity and peer pressure to maintain discipline. This clandestine, centralised and hierarchical structure persists to this day.

The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt

10. Sir John Jenkins traced the history of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt through its dissolution by Nasser in 1954 (which led to the arrest, torture and execution of many members and the co-optation of others) to its rehabilitation under Sadat 20 years later. In the 1970s the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt expanded, established a foothold within the Egyptian political system and took a firm hold on student organisations, professional syndicates and trades unions. It also developed a large, sophisticated and often clandestine network of commercial enterprises, small businesses and charities.
11. Sir John considered the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's experience in power - through the vehicle of The Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) - in Egypt between 2011 and 2013, noting the range of views on the complex interplay of events. He concluded that the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood did not do enough to demonstrate political moderation or a commitment to democratic values, had failed to convince Egyptians of their competence or good intentions, and had subsequently struggled to draw lessons for what its failure in Egypt meant for its future.

The Muslim Brotherhood internationally

12. From at least the 1950s the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood also developed an international network, within and beyond the Islamic world. Europe became an important base for the growing Muslim Brotherhood global network. International Muslim Brotherhood organisations received financial and other support from the Gulf. National chapters developed individual concerns and tactical approaches, but shared a common ideology. The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's Supreme Guide remained, at least in theory, the spiritual leader of the movement as a whole. The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood dominated (and continues to dominate) the International Guidance Bureau, whose influence has waxed and waned. In the 1950s, the 1970s and again today, a dispersed international presence has provided the means for the Muslim Brotherhood to regroup and recover from setbacks in Egypt and elsewhere.
13. Sir John tracked the complex historical relationships between Muslim Brotherhood chapters and governments in the Islamic world. In some Arab states the Muslim Brotherhood is now a proscribed organisation. In others, it is legal and politically active. In Tunisia, a party originally inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood has played a positive role as part of an emerging democratic process.
14. The Hamas founding charter claims they are the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Muslim Brotherhood treat them as such. In the past ten years support for Hamas (including in particular funding) has been an important priority for the MB in Egypt and the MB international network.

15. The wider international network of the Muslim Brotherhood now performs a range of functions. It promotes Muslim Brotherhood ideology (including through communications platforms), raises and invests funds, and provides a haven for members of the Brotherhood who have left their country of origin to continue promoting Brotherhood activity.

The Muslim Brotherhood, violence and terrorism

16. Sir John assessed views in the Muslim Brotherhood about violence and terrorism, and the use of violence and terrorism in the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and other national chapters. He found a complex and situational relationship, in a region where political violence was and is common. He noted that:

- Hassan al Banna accepted the political utility of violence, and the Brotherhood conducted attacks, including political assassinations and attempted assassinations against Egyptian state targets and both British and Jewish interests during his lifetime;
- influenced by his personal experiences in 1940s Egypt, in the US and in prison under Nasser, the key Muslim Brotherhood ideologue, Sayyid Qutb, drew on the thought of the Indo-Pakistani theorist, Abul Ala'a Mawdudi, the founder of the Islamist party Jamaat-e-Islami, to promote the doctrine of takfirism. This has consistently been understood as a doctrine permitting the stigmatisation of other Muslims as infidel or apostate, and of existing states as unIslamic, and the use of extreme violence in the pursuit of the perfect Islamic society. Qutb argued that a self-appointed vanguard of true believers was essential to create an authentically Islamic community and state. Jihad was neither solely spiritual nor defensive. Many contemporary Islamic states were regarded as 'Un-Islamic'; confrontation with their 'unjust' rulers was legitimate and inevitable.
- Qutb's views have at times been reinterpreted by some in the Muslim Brotherhood. But they have never been institutionally disowned. They continue to be explicitly endorsed by many senior Muslim Brotherhood figures, including leaders of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. They remain central to the Muslim Brotherhood's formational curriculum. Qutb's thinking led to a resurgence of takfiri ideology, and has inspired many terrorist organisations, including the assassins of Sadat, Al Qaida and its offshoots. Qutb was executed in Egypt in 1966;
- in return for freedom to reorganise politically and socially in Egypt in the 1970s, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood officially disowned violence;
- however, the Muslim Brotherhood at all levels have repeatedly defended Hamas attacks against Israel, including the use of suicide bombers and the killing of civilians. The Muslim Brotherhood facilitate funding for Hamas. The leadership of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, its Jordanian counterpart and Hamas are closely connected. There are wider links with Muslim Brotherhood affiliates throughout the region. Senior members of the Muslim Brotherhood routinely use virulent, anti-Semitic language;
- senior Muslim Brotherhood figures and associates have justified attacks against coalition forces in Iraq and Afghanistan;
- some members of the Muslim Brotherhood (mainly in non Muslim countries) have strongly criticised Al Qaida. But leaders in the Muslim Brotherhood have claimed that the attacks on 09/11 were fabricated by the US, and that the so called 'war on terrorism' is a pretext to attack Muslims.

17. Sir John concluded on this complex subject that, for the most part, the Muslim Brotherhood have preferred non violent incremental change on the grounds of expediency, often on the basis that political opposition will disappear when the process of Islamisation is complete. But they are prepared to countenance violence – including, from time to time, terrorism - where gradualism is ineffective. They have deliberately, wittingly and openly incubated and sustained an organisation - Hamas - whose military wing has been proscribed in the UK as a terrorist organisation (and which has been proscribed in its entirety by other countries). The writings of the leading Muslim Brotherhood ideologue have been used to legitimise AQ-related terror. Some leading Muslim Brotherhood members and supporters have endorsed attacks on western forces
18. Sir John concluded that it was not possible to reconcile these views with the claim made by the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in their evidence to the review that “the Muslim Brotherhood has consistently adhered to peaceful means of opposition, renouncing all forms of violence throughout its existence”.

The Muslim Brotherhood in the UK

19. Charles Farr examined in detail the Muslim Brotherhood’s development, ideology and activities in the UK.
20. He found that organisations associated with the Muslim Brotherhood were established in the UK (and elsewhere in Europe) over fifty years ago. They mainly comprised exiles and overseas students. In the UK these organisations worked very closely with like minded counterparts from South Asia, established to promote the work of Abu A’la Mawdudi and representing Jama’at-e-Islami. They regarded themselves as a single Islamic movement.
21. In their earliest phase these organisations were not politically active in the UK. Many of their members assumed they would return to their country of origin. They wanted to avoid social and political engagement with a non Islamic country which (following advice from Hassan al Banna) they regarded as potentially corrupting. Their priorities were to recruit and educate new members (through study groups) and support the Muslim Brotherhood in the Arab world.
22. In the late 1980s and early 1990s the Muslim Brotherhood and its associates developed a new strategy of domestic engagement in western countries. Key issues (notably Iraq and Palestine) had already mobilised settled second generation UK Muslim community organisations. The Muslim Brotherhood faced a significant challenge for community support from militant Salafists who had returned to the UK after fighting in Afghanistan and who regarded the Brotherhood as ineffective. But the Muslim Brotherhood was cautious: the stated purpose of engagement was not just to promote the Muslim Brotherhood overseas but also to preserve the autonomy of Muslim communities in the UK.
23. In the 1990s the Muslim Brotherhood and their associates established public facing and apparently national organisations in the UK to promote their views. None were openly identified with the Muslim Brotherhood and membership of the Muslim Brotherhood remained (and still remains) a secret. But for some years the Muslim Brotherhood shaped the new Islamic Society of Britain (ISB), dominated the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB) and played an important role in establishing and then running the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB). MAB became politically active, notably in connection with Palestine and Iraq, and promoted candidates in national and local elections. The MCB sought and obtained a dialogue with Government.

MAB were active partners in a security dialogue with the police and collaborated with the police in ejecting Abu Hamza, the militant Salafist preacher, from a mosque in north London. The MAB have participated in the governance of this mosque ever since.

24. In 2009 the then government suspended dialogue with the MCB after an office holder signed a public document which appeared to condone violence against any country supporting an arms blockade against Gaza. There has been no substantive dialogue since then between any part of the Brotherhood in the UK and Government.
25. Mr Farr found that as of mid-2014 the Brotherhood in the UK comprised a range of organisations, loosely associated together but without common command and control or a single leader. Some of these organisations had emerged in and from the UK. Others represented third country Brotherhood organisations using London as a base for overseas activities. The most senior member of the Muslim Brotherhood permanently resident in the UK told the review team that he coordinated some Muslim Brotherhood international activity, but not Muslim Brotherhood activity in this country.
26. The Arab Spring and its aftermath led to the departure of some overseas Muslim Brotherhood-inspired groups back to their countries of origin (notably Tunisia and Libya). In 2013 small numbers of Muslim Brothers arrived from Egypt and, later, from the UAE. As of July 2014 the Egyptian Brotherhood ran some of its English and Arab speaking MB communications from London and has been supported here by several lobbying and protest movements, including R4BIA and British Egyptians for Democracy. As of July 2014 members of Al Islah, the Emirati chapter of the Muslim Brotherhood, resident in the UK were linked to several UK based charities in turn associated with the UK-based Emirates Media and Studies Centre.
27. The MAB appears much less active than it was between 2002 and 2006. It has little political profile and no obvious connection with groups which have recently arrived from Egypt or the UAE. In 2014 MAB claimed a membership of just 600 people and maintains eight welfare houses (first established here in the 1960s) and associated mosques. It has nine UK branches. MAB has links to the Cordoba Foundation, a think tank which is associated with the Brotherhood (though claiming to be neither affiliated to the Muslim Brotherhood nor a lobby organisation for it).
28. Since 2001 the Islamic Society of Britain (ISB) has distanced itself from the Muslim Brotherhood and Muslim Brotherhood ideology and also from the MCB. The ISB has consciously set out to try to promote a British Muslim identity and to support British values and can lay some claim to be the first post Islamist organisation which has emerged from the UK Brotherhood movement.
29. The military wing of Hamas was proscribed in the UK as a terrorist organisation in 2001 but Hamas has been active here for over ten years. The EU has had in place an asset freeze on the whole of Hamas (both its political and military wings).
30. Many Brotherhood groups have raised funds in the UK. A complex network of charities associated with the Muslim Brotherhood has developed here over many years. Whilst some of these seem to be raising funds only for the Brotherhood in the UK others have been linked to Hamas. In 2003 the UK charity Interpal was designated as a terrorist entity by the US Treasury, primarily on the grounds of alleged links to Hamas. Interpal has been investigated three times by the Charity Commission in the UK. In 2006 the Charity Commission found that Interpal was a member of the Union of Good, a wider group of charities believed to have Hamas links and that in 2003 an Interpal partner was designated as a terrorist entity under UK law.

The Charity Commission took regulatory action against Interpal in 2009. Though never publicly acknowledged by the Muslim Brotherhood charities in the UK are an important part of the Hamas and Brotherhood infrastructure in this country.

31. Muslim Brotherhood organisations in the UK – including charities – are connected to counterparts elsewhere in Europe. MAB are associated with the Federation of Islamic Organisations in Europe (FIOE), established by the Muslim Brotherhood in 1989. FIOE subsequently created the European Council for Fatwa and Research, another pan European Muslim Brotherhood body, intended to provide religious and social guidance to Muslims living in Europe.
32. Organisations which were originally associated with Mawdudi and the Jamaat continue to operate in this country. The UK Islamic Mission (UKIM) runs some fifty mosques. The Islamic Forum for Europe (IFE) is politically active, in particular in the local authority of Tower Hamlets, and has supported the Respect political party. Trustees of the large East London mosque and associated London Muslim Centre are also IFE members.

Ideology and outlook

33. Mr Farr found that groups and people in the UK linked to the Muslim Brotherhood and to the wider Muslim Brotherhood movement had in the past held out the prospect and ambition of an Islamic state in this country as elsewhere. But he found that there was no indication that the Muslim Brotherhood itself still held this view or at least openly promoted an Islamic state here. In and for the UK – as for other non Muslim countries – the public narrative of the Muslim Brotherhood focused more on the task of Islamising the individual and community than the state.
34. In their written submission to the review MAB stated that it supported social integration and encouraged young people to be active and responsible citizens. There is some evidence that MAB have tried to do so in specific areas of the country. But as of July 2014 neither MAB nor other organisations related to the Muslim Brotherhood had clearly and publicly promoted a vision of Muslims living in this country as integrated British citizens; indeed, in the course of the preparation of this review MAB accepted that their teaching material has not been updated to reflect their claimed objectives. Literature in the Muslim Brotherhood movement in this country continues to reflect some of the concerns of the foundational Muslim Brotherhood ideology, notably that western society is inherently hostile to Muslim faith and interests and that Muslims must respond by maintaining their distance and autonomy. The UK based chairman of Interpal has written openly in support of the death penalty for homosexuality and stoning to death of married men and women found guilty of adultery.
35. Material still being promoted by UKIM as of July 2014 continued to explicitly claim that it is not possible for an observant Muslim to live under a non-Islamic system of government (and anticipated the forthcoming 'victory' of Islam over communism, capitalist democracy and secular materialism). In 2010 a television documentary showed members of the Islamic Forum for Europe privately advocating sharia law in Tower Hamlets and actively seeking influence in the Council. In November 2009 the IFE led a petition seeking a directly elected mayor in Tower Hamlets and the IFE supported Lufter Rahman while he was Mayor.
36. The Muslim Brotherhood has not been linked to terrorist related activity in and against the UK. The Muslim Brotherhood in the UK (eg MAB) has often condemned terrorist related activity in the UK associated with al Qai'da.

37. However, in common with the Muslim Brotherhood elsewhere, Muslim Brotherhood-related organisations and individuals in the UK have openly supported the activities of Hamas. People associated with the Muslim Brotherhood in the UK have applauded suicide bombing by Hamas, in some cases against civilians. Hamas terrorist activities have not been publicly disowned or condemned. Muslim Brotherhood organisations and associates in the UK have neither openly nor consistently refuted the literature of Brotherhood member Sayyid Qutb which is known to have inspired people (including in this country) to engage in terrorism.
38. MAB (like the MCB) have consistently opposed programmes by successive Governments to prevent terrorism.

Conclusions

39. Both Sir John Jenkins and Charles Farr drew the following overarching conclusions from their work:
- the Muslim Brotherhood have promoted a radical, transformative politics, at odds with a millennium of Islamic jurisprudence and statecraft, in which the reconstruction of individual identity is the first step towards a revolutionary challenge to established states and a secularised if socially conservative order;
 - the Muslim Brotherhood historically focused on remodelling individuals and communities through grassroots activism. They have engaged politically where possible. But they have also selectively used violence and sometimes terror in pursuit of their institutional goals. Their public narrative – notably in the West - emphasised engagement not violence. But there have been significant differences between Muslim Brotherhood communications in English and Arabic;
 - there is little evidence that the experience of power in Egypt has caused a rethinking in the Muslim Brotherhood of its ideology or conduct. UK official engagement with the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood produced no discernible change in their thinking. Indeed even by mid 2014 statements from Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood-linked media platforms seem to have deliberately incited violence;
 - much about the Muslim Brotherhood in the UK remains secretive, including membership, fund raising and educational programmes. But Muslim Brotherhood associates and affiliates here have at times had significant influence on the largest UK Muslim student organisation, national organisations which have claimed to represent Muslim communities (and on that basis have sought and had a dialogue with Government), charities and some mosques. Though their domestic influence has declined organisations associated with the Muslim Brotherhood continue to have an influence here which is disproportionate to their size;
 - the Muslim Brotherhood in the UK claimed to act in support of Muslim communities here and use London as a base for activism elsewhere, notably with other Muslim Brotherhood organisations in Europe, in Egypt and the occupied Palestinian territories and in the Gulf. This activity is sometimes secretive, if not clandestine;
 - the Muslim Brotherhood have been publicly committed to political engagement in this country. Engagement with Government has at times been facilitated by what appeared to be a common agenda against al Qaida and (at least in the UK) militant salafism. But this engagement did not take account of Muslim Brotherhood support for a proscribed terrorist group and its views about terrorism which, in reality, were quite different from our own;

- aspects of Muslim Brotherhood ideology and tactics, in this country and overseas, are contrary to our values and have been contrary to our national interests and our national security.

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