

[REDACTED]
From: [REDACTED]@met.pnn.police.uk

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To: [REDACTED]@met.police.uk [REDACTED]@met.police.uk [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]@acpo.pnn.police.uk

Please find attached the final version of the response to the Ministerial Questions re the Demonstrations this weekend.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Central Operations

Room 532, NSY

Phone: [REDACTED]

Fax: [REDACTED]

Mobile: [REDACTED]

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Briefing Note

Assistant Commissioner House,

In response to the information required on the e-mail from the Home Office the following information is supplied for your information:

Question: Assessment on what happened on Friday and the weekend?

Answer: On Wednesday 1st February a representative of Al-Ghurabaa (essentially a replacement for the allegedly disbanded Al-Muhajiroun) contacted police and stated that they wished to march on Friday 3rd to the Danish Embassy to protest at the publication of the now infamous cartoons. They were informed that insufficient notice had been given for a march but a static demonstration could be accommodated. This was agreed. Not unexpectedly despite the agreement a 'spontaneous' march did take place from the Central London Mosque to the Danish Embassy. There were approximately 300 on the march at its peak there were 450 at the Embassy. It is estimated that 40% of the crowd comprised the more vociferous element.

In view of the prevailing circumstances the main thrust of the policing strategy was one of being firm but tolerant with due consideration being required before making immediate arrests. Some of the placards and chanting could be construed as offensive and inciting violence and there were isolated incidents of flag burning and egg throwing at the embassy. Bystanders made several complaints and others have been made to the MPS since. Small groups left the location and marched to the Norwegian, French and Spanish Embassies.

On Saturday 4th approximately 3,500 people demonstrated at the Danish Embassy with some coming from outside London on hastily organised coaches. The protest was due to end at 2-00pm but the organiser called it to an end at 12-40pm. It is felt that he did this to prevent the event being high jacked by a group of approximately 100 young males who were recognised as coming from East London and had masked up and refuse to act on the direction of the stewards. Most people left the area but this group remained in a nearby street and seemed intent on some action and were encouraged by a large group of photographers and cameramen who were following them. Police managed to separate the group from the media pack which resulted in the former dispersing.

Question: Assessment of offences committed and timescale for enquiry?

Answer: The post event enquiry team is investigating complaints and reviewing CCTV and other evidence but it is too early how many offences might have been committed or how long the enquiry will take. Although a large number of initial complaints have been received, experience suggests that these do not always lead to prosecutions. A considerable number of statements will need to be taken. The CPS will be involved from the earliest stages, indeed we are already in contact.

Although the question is not asked of the MPS, in respect of other protests where police have not made immediate arrests but have done so subsequently, I can quote May Day protests and football matches when this has happened.

An 'in person' briefing may assist the Minister and we would be happy to arrange this.



Chief Superintendent