

# *Hizb ut-Tahrir* **Britain**

## *Media Information Pack*

## **Introduction**

***Hizb ut-Tahrir (the Liberation Party)*** is a global Islamic political organisation established in 1953 under the leadership of its founder - the honourable scholar, thinker, politician, and judge in the Court of Appeals in Al-Quds (Jerusalem) - Taqiuddin an-Nabhani. The current leader of the organisation is Ata ibn Khaleel Abu Rushta.

In the Muslim world, Hizb ut-Tahrir works at all levels of society to restore to the Muslims a means of living an Islamic way of life under the shade of the Khilafah State (Caliphate) following an exclusively political method.

In the West, Hizb ut-Tahrir works to cultivate a Muslim community that lives by Islam in thought and deed, whereby adhering to the rules of Islam and preserving a strong Islamic identity. The party does not work in the West to change the system of government, but works to project a positive image of Islam to Western society and engages in dialogue with Western thinkers, policymakers and academics.

## **Where does Hizb ut-Tahrir work?**

The party is active throughout the Middle East, Central Asia, South-East Asia, Africa, the Indian subcontinent, Europe, Australasia and the Americas.

## **Hizb ut-Tahrir's Aim**

Exclusive to the Muslim world, our political aim is the re-establishment of the Islamic Caliphate as an independent state - having an elected and accountable ruler, an independent judiciary, political parties, the rule of law and equal rights for minority groups. Citizens of the Caliphate have every right to be involved in politics and accounting the ruler - as the role of the ruler (*Khalifah*) is that of a servant to the masses, governing them with justice.

## **Hizb ut-Tahrir's Method of Work**

Hizb ut-Tahrir was established in 1953 as a non-violent Islamic political party with the objective of establishing Islam in state and society in the Muslim world and built upon mass popular support. However, this work is unwelcome by the unelected dictators and despots who rule the Muslim world with intolerance to anyone who has ideas different to their own, or those who challenge their unjust rule. As a result, our members have been imprisoned, tortured and even killed for their beliefs. Since its inception to the current day, our members have never resorted to armed struggle or violence as a way of bringing about political change. Resilience in the face of intense oppression comes from the

passionate belief of our members, and adopted as part of Hizb ut-Tahrir's method, that societies do not change through coercion or violence, but through intellectual advancement, debate and dialogue.

*Hizb-ut-Tahrir* is convinced that change must start in the minds of people, and therefore does not accept for people, or societies, to be forced to change by means of violence and terror. Additionally, the party strictly adheres to Islamic law in all aspects of its work as an Islamic intellectual and political entity that seeks to change people's thoughts through intelligent discussion and debate. We consider that Islamic law forbids violence or armed struggle against the regime as a method to re-establish the Islamic State.

### **Why is Hizb ut-Tahrir banned in some countries?**

Hizb ut-Tahrir is at the forefront of political activism in the Muslim world, challenging and accounting the tyrannical rulers of the Muslim world such as Colonel Gaddafi in Libya, Saddam Hussein in Iraq, Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, Islam Karimov in Uzbekistan, and General Musharraf in Pakistan. The response of these regimes to our work has been the imprisonment, torture and murder of our members. Whilst our challenge to these regimes has been upon an intellectual and political basis, through encouragement of debate and discussion, these regimes have turned a blind eye and resorted to banning and silencing the party through violent means. As these regimes tolerate no opposition whatsoever, all opposition parties are banned. However, despite the banning of Hizb ut-Tahrir and the intimidation of its members, the thoughts of the party have nevertheless successfully permeated throughout society.

### **Can I attend a Hizb ut-Tahrir meeting?**

Our meetings are conducted openly and whoever is interested, regardless of their political and intellectual outlook, has the right to participate and to discuss the contents of the meeting regardless of his or her personal stance towards Islam or the subject matter.

To find out details of a meeting near to you please contact us.

### **Are women involved in Hizb ut-Tahrir?**

Women in Hizb ut-Tahrir play an active role undertaking intellectual and political work - such as calling the rulers of the Muslim world to account and struggling against oppression and injustice. Many female members of Hizb ut-Tahrir have been imprisoned for their beliefs by a number of the regimes in the Muslim world. In accordance with the Islamic etiquettes, women's activities are separate or segregated from men's activities; however, the UK women's section has held conferences that were attended by thousands of Muslim and non-Muslim women.

### **How does one join Hizb ut-Tahrir?**

Membership of Hizb ut-Tahrir is open to all Muslim men and women regardless of their nationality, race or school of thought, thus the party looks to all of them according to the viewpoint of Islam. An individual becomes a party member after detailed study and contemplation of the party's thoughts and opinions. Membership of the party occurs when the individual achieves maturity in the party culture and adopts the party's thoughts and opinions based on the intellectual and Islamic evidences.

### **Hizb ut-Tahrir's Work in the UK**

Although our primary political aim is the re-establishment of the Caliphate, we are not working to establish such a state in the UK. In the UK our work with the Muslim community is focused on directing Muslims to make a positive contribution to society whilst preserving their Islamic identity. Our members are the embodiment of this vision - they are men and women, young and old, from different walks of life and from different ethnic backgrounds. Many of our members have senior roles in IT, economics, medicine, teaching, engineering, and some of our members were involved in treating the victims of the 7th July bombings in London's hospitals.

We also work to direct the sentiments of Muslims regarding events in the Muslim world into non-violent political work - such as channelling the anger and frustration over events in the Muslim world towards positive political work. Our activities include public protests, petitions, conferences, seminars and roundtable discussions and have been attended by thousands of people.

In recent times we have held panel discussions with non-Muslim politicians, thinkers and personalities. These events have helped to overcome the intellectual entrenchment that characterises most of today's debate. Furthermore, we believe the Muslim community, with her Islamic values and culture, can contribute in solving many of the social problems affecting Western society - such as racism, alcohol abuse, substance misuse, family breakdown, sexual abuse and the decline in morality.

**OPINIONS OF ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS REGARDING HIZB UT-TAHRIR'S IDEAS  
AND ACTIONS.**

1. **"The group's non-violent ideology has displayed remarkable continuity over five decades. Originally directed at Arab Muslims, its vision of a return to an Islamic way of life through the agency of a new pan-Islamic state attracts adherents around the world...Hizb ut-Tahrir has remained remarkably consistent in ideology and strategy."**  
[Oxford Analytica 2008]
2. **"We have yet to see convincing evidence that Hizb ut-Tahrir as an organisation advocates violence or terrorism."** [UK FCO Minister Bill Rammell, Hansard, 19/4/04]
3. **"Hizb ut-Tahrir [HT] is an independent political party that is active in many countries across the world. HT's activities centre on intellectual reasoning, logic arguments and political lobbying. The party adheres to the Islamic Shariah law in all aspects of its work. It considers violence or armed struggle against the regime, as a method to re-establish the Islamic State, a violation of the Islamic Shariah."** [Restricted Home Office Documents 19/8/03, Released to Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain 1/6/05 under FOI Act]
4. **"Hizb ut-Tahrir is a completely non-violent organisation."** [Craig Murray, the ex-British ambassador to Uzbekistan, Al-Jazeera, 17/5/05]
5. **"...it advocates the restoration of the Islamic caliphate. It differs from jihadi groups which share this objective in abstaining from violent activity."** [International Crisis Group, 2/3/05]
6. **"Hizb ut-Tahrir - Lines to take if extensive coverage is given in the media: Freedom of thought and speech key element of our society. Our tradition that there is a place for those who disagree with the way we do things – unless they espouse violence as a way to achieve their ends."** [Restricted Home Office Documents 19/8/03, Released to Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain 1/6/05 under FOI Act]
7. **"Hizb ut-Tahrir does not advocate a violent overthrow of Muslim regimes... Instead HT believes in winning over mass support, believing that one day these supporters will rise up in peaceful demonstrations and overthrow the regimes of Central Asia."** [Ahmed Rashid, Jihad: the Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia]

8. **"Hizb ut-Tahrir quite explicitly disavows violence as its means for achieving power."**  
[John Schoeberlein, Director of Harvard University's Central Asia program]
9. **"Hizb ut-Tahrir has shown dissatisfaction on the policies of the [Pakistan] government which is the right of each and every citizen...I am unable to understand as to how distribution of these pamphlets in the general public was termed as terrorism or sectarianism."** [Multan Bench, Lahore High Court, March 2005]
10. The Joint Committee on Human Rights issued an indictment on the proposed measures the Government's Anti-Terrorism legislation purports, criticising the plan to outlaw the "glorification" of terrorism and ban non-violent political parties for allegedly "glorifying terrorism".  
  
Louise Arbour, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights criticised the government's definition of terrorism, the 'glorification' offence, the proposed proscription of non-violent Islamic organisations and the extension of pre-charge detention to 28 days. In her letter, Ms Arbour wrote that parts of the Terrorism Act 2006 **"could pose grave challenges to effective human rights protection and set worrying precedents in the global struggle against terrorism."**
11. **"Hizb ut-Tahrir is a completely non-violent organisation."** [Craig Murray, the ex-British ambassador to Uzbekistan, Al-Jazeera, 17/5/05]
12. **"Ata Abu Rushta, spokesperson for the Hizb ut-Tahrir, Liberation Party in Jordan, a party seeking to re-establish the Islamic Caliphate, was sentenced to three years' imprisonment in February by the State Security Court for lese majesty under Article 195(1) of the Penal Code in connection with an interview he had given to the newspaper al-Hiwar. The statements on which the charges were based did not advocate violence."** [Amnesty International Report, 1997]
13. **"Even now, senior officers aver that Hizb ut-Tahrir..... plays a "stabilising" role in certain areas."** [Dean Godson in *The Times* 8/2/2006].

## THE CALL FOR THE PROSCRIPTION OF HIZB UT-TAHRIR IN BRITAIN

In August 2005, British Prime Minister Tony Blair announced an intent to ban Hizb ut-Tahrir. The move was widely opposed, not least because there was no evidence upon which to ban Hizb ut-Tahrir.

**Former Home Secretary John Reid said at Prime Ministers Questions on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2007 “In relation to the question from the Leader of the Opposition, I confirm what the Prime Minister said: we have recently carried out two reviews of Hizb ut-Tahrir and we have decided that there is insufficient evidence to ban it.” Hansard Column 955 - 4 July 2007**

The motive for Blair’s action was later reported to be a deal with Pakistan’s dictator General Pervez Musharraf. (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2006/dec/24/religion.uk>)

Lord Hoffmann said, in relation to state anti-terrorism powers, that **“The real threat to the life of the nation ... comes not from terrorism but from laws such as these.”** Whilst any nation will always seek to protect security on its streets holding an entire community responsible for the actions of a few will be counterproductive and could only be described as an extreme overreaction.

Banning a non-violent Islamic political movement with a history of non-violence exceeding fifty years would be descending a very slippery slope. It would lead many to further question and debate the strength of values of freedom of speech, tolerance, the empowerment of people, human rights and democracy – as championed by many in the west. Descending this slippery slope will not be changing “the rules of the game”, as Tony Blair said in August 2005, but changing society fundamentally. It will prove that society cannot tolerate the peaceful expression of Islamic political thought.

### What people have said about the threat of proscription

1. **“I agree with the two Muslim MPs who oppose the banning of Hizb ut-Tahrir (Islamist clerics face treason charges, August 8). As a scholar who has some knowledge of their operations in the UK and abroad, I am convinced their modus operandi is through traditional political campaigning, not violence. Believing that nation states in the Middle East are artificial creations of western powers to divide Muslims and exploit oil resources, they seek social justice through the formation of a single Islamic state that serves the poor rather than corrupt clients of foreign powers. They argue that violence cannot be used to take control of the state, but the state can use the military to defend itself against other states. As a political geographer and Christian socialist, I believe their historical analysis is correct and their conclusion well-reasoned. I cannot share their vision, for it ultimately maintains the Quranic commitment to just war theory that**

is as much part of the Middle East's problems as the variants deployed by George Bush and Tony Blair. However, they are not terrorists and parliament must resist this unreasonable attack on freedom of speech." [Dr Nick Megoran, Cambridge University, 09/08/2005, *The Guardian*]

2. "The government's measures must not infringe upon the rights and freedoms of its citizens. Proscribing groups that are understood to be non-violent is certainly a step in the wrong direction. Hizb-ut-Tahrir is clearly understood to be a non-violent organisation with strong and vocal opinions which Muslim community may agree or disagree with. This does not warrant a ban on this group as such actions will only be counterproductive." [Wakkas Khan – President Federation of Student Islamic Societies (FOSIS)]
  
3. "Hizb ut-Tahrir is to be proscribed. If necessary, powers to proscribe terrorist organisations are to be extended - presumably into the realms of non-terrorist extreme political parties. I certainly have very little in common with this organisation. But it is anathema to democracy to ban non-violent political organisations, however extreme. Surely it is unwise to emulate the banning tendencies of Middle Eastern regimes that radicalised generations of dissenters by similar policies. In months and years to come, will we see the banning of extreme rightwing or leftwing political parties?" [Shami Chakrabarti, Director of Liberty (the National Council for Civil Liberties), 08/08/2005, *The Guardian*]
  
4. The Association of Chief Police Officers have said that they know "of no intelligence to justify a Hizb ut-Tahrir ban".<sup>1</sup>
  
5. "It will be impossible to see Hizb ut-Tahrir as a terrorist organisation. If Hizb ut-Tahrir resorts to violence then it can be described as a terrorist organisation. Further more Hizb ut-Tahrir, as it stands, cannot be proscribed as a terrorist organisation."
 

[Verdict Turkish Second State Security Court, 13/4/04]
  
6. "I see no reason why HT should be banned on the basis of available evidence. I haven't seen anything suggesting they have apologised for or glorified terrorism. I might not

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<sup>1</sup> <http://politics.guardian.co.uk/terrorism/story/0,,1647285,00.html>

like their views but that doesn't mean that they are criminal and that is an important distinction we have to make...members are against terror but can provide an insight into why people might become radicalised. It is important to know who one is dealing with in order to formulate a response." [Bob Beckley, lead spokesman on community policing and counter-terrorism issues for the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO)]

7. **"The proposal to ban the non-violent organisation Hizb ut-Tahrir is, in our view, unwarranted, unjust and unwise, and runs counter to all the principles which Western democracies are currently trying to promote abroad. Any disagreement with a political organisation must be expressed through debate not censorship. Whatever objections one may have to someone else's point of view, we must uphold their right to hold and articulate those views. If it is suggested that any laws have been broken by any individuals or groups then this must be proven by due legal process. Criminalising the mere possession of certain opinions is the hallmark of dictatorships, not democracies."** [Joint statement signed by over 180 prominent Muslim organisations and individuals from around the UK].
  
8. **"But there is no apparent case to proscribe HT because its activities abroad include involvement in terrorism. Indeed it is not entirely clear whether they would be caught under a future criterion of "justifying or condoning violence". Much of their literature explicitly rejects the use of violence."** [Robert Tinline, Head of the multilateral and terrorist financing section of the counter-terrorist department, Leaked Email dated 30/8/05, cited in New Statesman 30/1/06]
  
9. **"Banning Hizb ut-Tahrir is certainly not the solution and may well prove to be counterproductive. We understand that Hizb ut-Tahrir in the United Kingdom are an avowedly non-violent group."** [Iqbal Sacranie, Secretary-General of the Muslim Council of Britain, 05/08/2005, Press Release on behalf of MCB]
  
10. **"Tony Blair has said that he wishes to ban 'extremist' Muslim organisations including Hizb ut-Tahrir, under new antiterrorism laws. While we do not necessarily agree with their politics, Middlesex University Students' Union supports the right of Hizb ut-Tahrir to meet and operate on campus within our union and opposes this proposed ban."** [Keith Shilson, President, Middlesex University Student's Union, 09/08/05, Press Release on behalf of Middlesex University Student's Union]

11. **Commenting on the Prime Minister's plans to deport foreign nationals and proscribe the Muslim political party, Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami (HT), Mr Faradhi said "in a democracy people are tried and prosecuted through the due processes of the law, not exported to other countries, particularly those which torture their own people. In a democracy legitimate political dissent is allowed, non-violent groups are tolerated. HT in the UK, to my knowledge, is a non-violent political group and proscribing it will be counterproductive; it will give a green light to despotic leaders in the Muslim world to silence political dissenters."** [Musleh Faradhi, President of Islamic Forum Europe, 05/08/2005]
12. **"MAB also extremely concerned by the decision of the Prime Minister to ban Hizb ut-Tahrir. Despite the fact that MAB has constantly had major disagreement with Hizb ut-Tahrir, banning HT will serve no cause and could prove counterproductive."** [The Muslim Association of Britain, 05/08/2005]
13. **"Respect opposes the banning of the Hizb ut Tahrir organisation, despite the fact that Respect profoundly disagrees with this organisation's politics."** [Respect Party, 05/08/2005]
14. **"The announcement by Tony Blair that he intends to ban the Islamic political group Hizb ut Tahrir should be of concern to all democrats. While we disagree with much of the politics of the group, it has publicly argued against the London bombings. There is no evidence whatever that it is committed to violence or terrorism. There can be no justification for such a ban."** [Stop the War Coalition]
15. **"I am also concerned about proscribing non-violent organisations, such as Hizb ut-Tahrir. Doing so will drive it underground and alienate whole sections of our Muslim community. They are intelligent people, who do not espouse violence but do want a debate about the principles of Sharia law and so on."** [Baroness Kennedy of The Shaws: Hansard: Column 1445 21 Nov 2005]

**LEADING UK MEMBERS OF HIZB UT-TAHRIR**

**Chairman UK Executive Dr Abdul Wahid**

**Media Representative Taji Mustafa      Chief Media Advisor Dr Imran Waheed**

**Women's Media Representative Dr Nasreen Nawaz**

**Head of Legal Affairs Jamal Harwood      Chief Political Advisor Sajjad Khan**

## **SOME COMMON ISSUES THAT ARE REGULARLY MISREPRESENTED OR MISUNDERSTOOD**

### **The founding and role of Hizb ut-Tahrir in the UK**

Hizb ut-Tahrir has been present in the UK since the early 1980s, led by a Palestinian Fouad Hussein.<sup>2</sup>

It has been alleged that the group's UK branch is among the most important, with Britain today serving as the base for much of HT's leadership. This is untrue. This speculation was mistakenly made by Zeyno Baran when she wrote for the Nixon Center subsequently propagated by others. The party's main arena of political work is in the Muslim world. The party's leadership, including the global leader Ata Abu Rushta, is based in the Muslim world.

With respect to the founder of Hizb ut-Tahrir, Taqiuddin an-Nabhani, the allegation that he was a member of the Muslim Brotherhood is incorrect and without foundation. A biography of the founder of the party can be found at <http://www.hizb.org.uk/hizb/who-is-ht/prominent-members/sheikh-muhammad-taqiuddin-al-nabhani.html> .

### **Is Hizb ut-Tahrir linked with any other groups?**

Hizb ut-Tahrir is a completely independent organisation and has no association with any other Islamic or non-Islamic movement, party or organisation by name or deed.

### **Hizb ut-Tahrir and Democracy**

Hizb ut-Tahrir is working for an accountable government in the Muslim world, where authority lies with the people, but not for a democracy - where sovereignty is not for the Shariah and the process of legislation is open to external interference. The Islamic ruling system, the Caliphate, allows and encourages the accounting of the ruler and has provision for elections and consultation. Islam does not accept for state policies to be influenced or directed by corporate elites or big business. Islam obliges citizens in the Khilafah to be involved in politics and accounting the state. Democracy in capitalist states is undoubtedly a ruling system that is distinct from the Islamic ruling system. This is because Islam and Capitalism are built on entirely different fundamental philosophies. While the capitalist system advocates sovereignty in legislation for humankind, the Islamic system advocates sovereignty in legislation for the Creator. For this reason, democracy is not consistent with the Islamic system. Democracy is increasingly seen to be deeply flawed, controlled by large corporations and largely indifferent to the needs of ordinary citizens. Voter turnouts in the West are at an all time low

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<sup>2</sup> Suha Taji-Farouki, A Fundamental Quest – Hizb ut-Tahrir and the Search for the Islamic Caliphate, Grey Seal, London 1996

and people are obliged to go out to the streets in their hundreds of thousands to express their frustrations. Though individuals currently have some 'freedom' to criticise and change their politicians in the West, the reality is that whichever politicians are elected, they are of the economic elite and they rule on behalf of the economic elite.

### **Hizb ut-Tahrir in Britain and accusations of separatism**

Hizb ut-Tahrir does not believe in separatism and isolation of Muslims in Britain. We believe that Muslims should interact with others upon an Islamic basis. Following a Home Office consultation entitled "Strength in Diversity." Hizb ut-Tahrir presented a document outlining how Muslims should seek to aid cohesion in wider society. These are some key extracts from that document:

*"We believe that Muslims adhering to the sublime values of Islam can lead to harmony between Muslims and non-Muslims and the improving of community relations, especially in northern towns characterised by polarised communities."*

*"Muslims must maintain the security of property of their fellow citizens. Therefore, it is forbidden to steal, defraud, embezzle or deceive others. To the extent, for example, it is prohibited to travel on public transport without paying for the ticket."*

*"Muslims must not violate the blood of their fellow citizens. It is forbidden to cause them any harm. This includes the prohibition of causing fear and terror."*

### **Hizb ut-Tahrir and non-Muslims living under Islam**

Regarding our viewpoint of non-Muslims living under Islam, our position is repeatedly a matter of public record. An Islamic classical scholar whose understanding of Islam is widely accepted, Imam Qarafi, aptly expressed the view of non-Muslims in the Islamic state when he said "It is the responsibility of the Muslims to the People of the Dhimma [non-Muslim citizens] to take care of their weak, fulfil the needs of the poor, feed the hungry, provide clothes, address them politely and even tolerate their harm even if it was from a neighbour, even though the Muslim would have an upper hand. The Muslims must also advise them sincerely on their affairs and protect them against anyone who tries to hurt them or their family, steal their wealth or anyone who violates their rights," Many non-Muslims used to live with Muslims under the banner of Islam for almost thirteen centuries. Throughout those periods non-Muslims used to have the same high standard of living as the Muslims did. They enjoyed equal rights, prosperity, happiness, tranquillity and security.

### **Hizb ut-Tahrir and charges of anti-Semitism**

We have been accused of anti-Semitism: this is a charge that we reject decisively. The charge has arisen from our opposition to the Israeli State and our rejection of Zionism. We defend the right of people living under military occupation to defend their land with the proviso that they do not kill innocent civilians. To do other than this would be to side with the aggressor. Islam teaches us to respect other people's beliefs and culture and hence HT envisages a Caliphate State where the rights of Jews, Christians, Hindus, Sikhs and others will be protected. We look forward to living and working side by side with all faiths and dispositions under a stable and progressive state - as was the case for hundreds of years prior to the untimely demise of the Caliphate at the beginning of the last century.

The state of Israel is founded upon a land that it took by force, after it drove out its people, both Muslim and Christian. This is injustice, which will never be accepted from an Islamic perspective, regardless of the race of the perpetrators. In Palestine, Islam is in conflict with Israelis — not in their capacity as Jews who historically had lived alongside Muslims in peace and security for centuries — but in their capacity as occupiers and aggressors.

See also Taji Mustafa's article at

[http://commentisfree.guardian.co.uk/taji\\_mustafa/2007/07/what\\_cameron\\_got\\_wrong.html](http://commentisfree.guardian.co.uk/taji_mustafa/2007/07/what_cameron_got_wrong.html)

### **Hizb ut-Tahrir's Position on Recent Events**

Hizb ut-Tahrir has been on the public record on several occasions stating that in our Islamic opinion the killing of innocent civilians such as in the London bombings of 7th July 2005 and the attacks of September 11th 2001 are forbidden and prohibited.

We demand the withdrawal of British and US troops from Iraq and Afghanistan as we believe that the Muslim world should be able to determine its own political destiny without external interference.

### **Hizb ut-Tahrir and violence**

Hizb ut-Tahrir has no history of violence or militancy anywhere in the world. Our rejection of violence as a methodology for political change is clearly stated in our literature. Unlike many on the right we do not believe that the "ends justify the means".

The party outlines its methodology in the book "The Methodology of Hizb ut-Tahrir for Change" which is widely available. A fairly accurate account is also given in Suha Taji-Farouki's book (which has been referenced). All of our members are required to engage exclusively in intellectual and political work during all three stages of our methodology. We reject the notion that an Islamic political party can use violence to establish an Islamic government. Within the document "The Reasons for the

Establishment of Hizb ut-Tahrir" we state: *"Rather its (the Party's) work is political, in which the thoughts and laws of Islam are presented in order to act upon them and to carry them so as to establish them in life's affairs and in the State."* In 1954, Hizb ut-Tahrir published an internal memorandum, entitled "The Starting Point". Within this, Article 33 stated that the party requires thinkers and not militants. Article 34 further comments that *"The method (of Hizb ut-Tahrir) in carrying its ideas to the people in the society is to invite them using the method of wisdom, excellent invitation, and the best of argument."* The suggestion that Hizb ut-Tahrir will be permitted to engage in an armed struggle when the Caliphate re-emerges, is absolutely false due to the fact that, in our view, groups and parties in Islam are licensed only to undertake intellectual, political and religious work, not military work, even after the establishment of an Islamic state. The party is not waiting for any order to begin an "armed struggle" and despite the worst oppression visited upon its members and supporters by the tyrant rulers of the Muslim world, it will continue on its path of non-violent political struggle until a Caliphate is established, and post its re-establishment.

### **Hizb ut-Tahrir on "Terrorism"**

Our rejection of violence as a methodology, or means of change, is clear in our literature and in practice – indeed even the New Statesman (30/1/2006) reported that in a secret Government memo, Robert Tinline, head of the UK multilateral and terrorist financing section of the counter-terrorist department, wrote, *"There is no apparent case to proscribe HT because its activities abroad include involvement in terrorism. Indeed it is not entirely clear whether they would be caught under a future criterion of "justifying or condoning violence". Much of their literature explicitly rejects the use of violence."* He further noted that *"those who have banned it are not known for tolerance of democratic dissent"*. A UK Foreign Office Minister said, *"We have yet to see convincing evidence that Hizb ut-Tahrir as an organisation advocates violence or terrorism"* [Hansard, 19/4/04]. Home Office documents released under the FOI Act said that, *"Hizb ut-Tahrir [HT] is an independent political party that is active in many countries across the world. HT's activities centre on intellectual reasoning, logic arguments and political lobbying. The party adheres to the Islamic Shariah law in all aspects of its work. It considers violence or armed struggle against the regime, as a method to re-establish the Islamic State, a violation of the Islamic Shariah."*

The allegation that a *"HT member working for the Home Office...organised a meeting of new HT recruits, showing them a video dramatisation of alleged abuses of prisoners at Guantanamo Bay"* is entirely without substance. It is based on an article in the Telegraph detailing a November 2006 BBC Newsnight report which was widely discredited at the time and was later criticised in a judgment by the BBC Editorial Complaints Unit.

### Hizb ut-Tahrir is Not a Conveyor Belt for Terrorism

We reject the charge made by some that the party though non violent itself, incites others to commit violent acts. With respect to the "conveyor belt" allegation, we note that there are many academics that reject the allegation that Hizb ut-Tahrir is a "conveyor belt for terrorism" (e.g. Jean Francois-Mayer, *Hizb ut-Tahrir, the next Al-Qaida, Really?* p. 9, PSIO, Geneva 2004). Hizb ut-Tahrir has publicly responded to the accusation that it was "conveyor belt for terrorism". The claim was originally introduced by an article by Zeyno Baran, director of international-security and energy programs at the Nixon Centre (US): "The Road from Tashkent to the Taliban". The full text of the reply from Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain to the Nixon Center is republished below:

Dear Ms Baran,

I read your recent article, "The road from Tashkent to the Taliban," with interest because it presented conclusions from a conference about Hizb ut Tahrir, the Islamic political party of which I am a member, and was published by the Nixon Center from which perceptive analysis might be expected. Furthermore, your visit to London a few months ago, where we met and discussed at some length, was an opportunity to assist you in arriving at informed opinions regarding Hizb ut Tahrir and the plight of thousands of our members in Uzbek torture camps.

I was soon disappointed, however, by the article's conflation, and its opening conjectures, which effortlessly transformed, as the paragraphs slipped by, into accepted facts. Along the way surprising charges were made against us; hatred, racism and anti-Semitism. I suggest that future conferences about us would be better served by having someone from Hizb ut-Tahrir present. I for one would be happy to oblige. Meanwhile, as Tom Paine once wrote, "It is often better, to pass some things over" and so, in deference to his wisdom, I will limit my response to the central argument of your article - that Hizb ut-Tahrir is a conveyor belt for terrorists.

First though, I must tell you that in one important respect I envy you your rare privilege. You are the director for international-security and energy programs within a centre that offers in depth thought and analysis, to a nation not only with the power to act, but more importantly with the moral conviction that its form of government, freely chosen, was built upon a set of declared thoughts; framed by Thomas Jefferson and approved by congress on the 4th July 1776. One year later John Jay expressed his sense of the blessing of a government based upon the choice of intellect; "The Americans are the first people whom Heaven has favored with an opportunity of deliberating upon, and choosing, the forms of government under which they shall live." Despite being labeled a terrorist, your first President fought, Jefferson's eloquent preamble etched into his heart, to liberate Americans from the arbitrariness of despotic British colonial rule. For the Declaration of Independence Americans can thank Tom Paine, one of Benjamin Franklin's 'value-added' recruits from Britain, who in January 1776 wrote a seditious pamphlet called Common Sense. The British viewed him as a traitor for the crime of calling for a declaration of independence, based, not upon the privileges of land or birth, but upon thoughts; "Can we but leave posterity with a settled form of government, an independent constitution of its own, the purchase at any price will be cheap." Had the conveyor belt been invented in that time it is conceivable that British international experts and law-enforcement agencies would have called his work a conveyor belt for producing terrorists. By calling Hizb ut-Tahrir a conveyor belt for producing terrorists, the Nixon Center showed its inability to appreciate a double irony.

Were the production of terrorists our goal, we would find it hard to compete with American foreign policy, which Muslims perceive in the same way that Americans perceive the brutal tactics of the English during the War of Independence. A picture, it is said, tells a thousand words; and Muslims have many pictures of US foreign policy in action, from many theatres, over many years. I tend to agree with a recent headline from Robert Fisk, "What better recruiting sergeant could Bin Laden have than the President of the United States."

While it is true that Hizb ut-Tahrir is opposed to American colonial interests and dares to espouse an alternative ideology, it would be trivial to content ourselves with stirring up anti-American feeling because there is no shortage of such feeling already in the world today. The effort that we put into

changing peoples thinking is to convey them towards a stated objective. We hope that it will lead there inevitably as if by standing upon a conveyor belt, and certainly we are not relying upon chance. We desire to see the fruit of our hard work, and that is why Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideology and its method of work has been meticulously thought out and published in many detailed books; including one on the subject of thinking itself. We have published a draft constitution for the coming Khilafah State, and this along with many of our books is available in the English language. We too are working, in one sense, as your forefathers did, upon establishing governance based upon the ideas that we hold dear. We share the confidence of your own forbears and we share their words when we say; "we have it in our power to begin the world over again. We are not insulting the world with our fleets and armies, nor ravaging the globe for plunder. Beneath the shade of our own vines are we attacked; in our own houses, and on our own lands, is the violence committed against us." Tom Paine was referring to the suffering of Americans, but Muslims in Falluja, Baghdad, Najaf, Ramallah or Gaza city could be forgiven for thinking that he was writing about them. Muslims are victims of what they perceive to be State terror, and for resisting occupation, are themselves called terrorists. Even those who have chosen to address the root cause of Muslim weakness by working politically and intellectually to reestablish the Khilafah are assaulted with the charge of terrorism - and for doing less than Tom Paine's followers. They fought on the battlefield with muskets and flintlocks - Hizb ut-Tahrir on the other hand has sought only to fight thought with thought.

Some in America argue that we might become frustrated and follow the example of your ancestors who resorted to changing their government by violence. While we appreciate their resistance to colonial exploitation, it must be understood that our reality is different to theirs in one very important respect, and that necessitates a different course of action - which we have been explaining for over fifty years.

The Muslim countries are indeed afflicted with despotic arbitrary rulers, and notwithstanding the West's active support for most of them they themselves are not foreign - they are sadly from amongst us and are supported by Muslim elites from amongst us. Furthermore, the Muslims who are suffering this despotism lacked, initially, a clear ideological thought as to the system that should replace them. Many Muslims have hitherto adopted one of two approaches.

The first, which acknowledges and strengthens the authority of illegitimate rule, has been to seek gradual reform through efforts to achieve power sharing. Hizb ut-Tahrir is not alone in believing that "to expend millions for the sake of getting a few vile acts repealed, and routing the present ministry only, is unworthy the charge, and is using posterity with the utmost cruelty; because it is leaving them the great work to do, and a debt upon their backs, from which they derive no advantage."

The second approach is violent insurrection against our rulers in Uzbekistan and other Muslim countries. This also we reject. While, for example, any wise observer can conclude that the US will probably, in the face of adamant local resistance, leave Iraq, weakened by the experience; Muslims will still not have solved their own fundamental problem of stable progressive governance. Iraq, like all the other colonial creations was in a pitiful condition prior to the recent US invasion and faces the same prospect also after the removal of foreign occupation. Here is where our experience of despotism differs from yours, for we Muslims ourselves, notwithstanding foreign interference against us, have primarily to change our own society by changing the thought upon which society is built.

British readers will understand the distinction between government and society from the writings of John Locke. Americans will have found this concept expressed a century later by Tom Paine; "Some writers have so confounded society with government, as to leave little or no distinction between them; whereas they are not only different, but have different origins." Americans should not be blamed, however, for not knowing Hizb ut-Tahrir's view of the distinction between society and government, and perhaps if they believe their president they would not expect Muslims even to hold a view about such things. They ought, however, to expect the experts from the Nixon Center to know Hizb ut-Tahrir's political philosophy before they seek to guide American foreign policy further into the abyss.

Whoever studies our literature will know that we too distinguish between society and government, and, that while we seek a change of government, it is society that is the object of our work. This important distinction drives our equanimity towards submissive power sharing and violent insurrection, both of which we reject, as the one serves to strengthen the corrupt thoughts and emotions that define society while the other bypasses society in order to place seized power upon a foundation of mere sand. We seek to establish the Khilafah form of government upon a foundation of firm insightful acceptance by Muslim society. We also believe in the necessity of Khilafah for the protection of humanity, and that the world will nevertheless challenge this new State and will rightly expect Muslims to explain their ideology. No one at the Nixon Center should feel patronized if I quote, for the benefit of a wider audience, the first sentence from the first of many books that our members, from Britain, Uzbekistan or elsewhere, are obliged to study and live by if they wish to remain in our Party, Man progresses as a result of his thoughts..."

Our members across the globe strive for the intellectual elevation of society, and one of our fundamental concepts is the adherence to the Islamic legislative texts in all areas of life. It was impossible to replace the tyrannical rulers in our countries when the society understood that the rituals of worship had to be carried out according to the Islamic texts but failed to grasp the importance of adhering to these same texts in political and economic matters. It would also make nonsense of our work to clarify to the society the details of Islam's political system, while ignoring its own method for gaining political power. We defined this method in great detail, deriving its legitimacy from the peaceful efforts of the Prophet Mohammad (peace and blessings be upon him) to spread his ideology to all sectors of society and to pursue the acquisition of support and authority from the influential leaders of his day. How could we forsake our own ideology by ignoring the prophetic method for change? For this, he was abused and banished for a time by the society he sought to change. Some of his followers were tortured - beaten, burned, crushed and humiliated, others were killed - both men and women. Nevertheless, he refused to take up arms against the regime and that is a legislative proof for us. Those humble Muslims, those heroes, those brave hearts who by the thousand have joined our work in Uzbekistan, who suffered most terrible torture at the hands of America's most cruel ally, seeking only the pleasure of their Lord, are the last ones on the face of the earth from whom we expect betrayal and abandonment of the principles for which Hizb ut Tahrir stands by conspiring in any way to create explosions in Tashkent.

Your article called for naming the war correctly as, "a war of ideologies" and at last I do agree with you. Our only weapon in this war is thought, and there is no better weapon than this for those possessed of confidence in the intellectual strength of their ideology. You, on the other hand, wrote, "the ideology of democracy and capitalism has failed in most of the Muslim world." You noted the need for U.S. allies to "pay attention to socio-economic equality and injustice in their societies so that people do not turn to radical ideologies in the first place." By addressing this point it is implied that poverty and bad conditions, rather than intellectual disagreement, are the main factors promoting opposition to US allies, but please consider this - there is no moral equivalence between the food that buys submission and the lack of food that prompts resentment. The one is a measure of cowardice the other of intelligence. Tom Paine has expressed it better than I could, "Hath your house been burnt? Hath your property been destroyed before your face? Are your wife and children destitute of a bed to lie on, or bread to live on? Have you lost a parent or a child by their hands, and yourself the ruined and wretched survivor? .... The more men have to lose, the less willing are they to venture. The rich are in general slaves to fear, and submit to courtly power with the trembling duplicity of a Spaniel." Is it possible that the truths that Americans have held for three centuries to be self-evident are in some way flawed, or are they forgotten relics like the quaint language of Tom Paine? The Nixon Center could better advise American policy makers that a nation that rose from humbler beginnings to later sell its products all over the world ought not now to presume that the whole world can be bought over to accept its ideology by the filling of stomachs.

I hope you now understand the basis of Hizb ut-Tahrir's confidence in its ability to effect enduring change in the Muslim world without the need for a single bullet. We should meet and discuss these issues. Perhaps the ideology of democracy and capitalism has failed because we didn't understand it correctly, or perhaps it is just wrong. Either way, honest discussion could bear more enduring fruit than socio-economic and political cosmetic surgery. While our ideology is, of course, very different from the secular ideology of the Nixon Center, we should at least agree upon basing arguments on a high standard of reasoned thought - rather than a mosaic of hearsay, assumptions and orphaned facts. Let us raise a standard to which the wise and honest can repair.

Yours sincerely,

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