



## Whistleblower alleges HSBC behind suppression of extremism report

By Robert Barwick

HSBC whistleblower Nicholas Wilson charges that the British government is suppressing a report into the funding of Islamist extremism in the UK to guarantee business for the UK's biggest bank. The report, which the British prime minister and Home secretary have had in their possession since mid-2016, is understood to focus on Saudi Arabia, the world's leading financial sponsor of terrorism. Wilson, who for years has fought to expose HSBC's corrupt practices and influence, is accusing Theresa May's government of suppressing the report so HSBC and the London Stock Exchange (LSE) can manage next year's US\$2 trillion float of Saudi Arabia's gigantic state-owned oil company Aramco.

As reported in the 12 July 2016 AAS, the two terror attacks during the recent UK elections drew attention to the suppressed extremism report, and led to angry demands for Theresa May to release it. On 12 July, Home Secretary Amber Rudd announced in a written parliamentary statement that the report would not be released for national security reasons—the same excuse then-PM Tony Blair used in 2006 to shut down a Serious Fraud Office investigation of the UK's al-Yamamah arms deal with Saudi Arabia.

Saying the report “gives us the best picture we have ever had of how extremists operating in the UK sustain their activities”, Rudd's statement did include a brief summary of its findings. However, the summary points to the report being a cover-up anyway. It states: “For a small number of organisations with which there are extremism concerns, overseas funding is a significant source of income. However, for the vast majority of extremist groups in the UK, overseas funding is not a significant source.” Contradicting this claim are the public statements of British Muslims who accuse Saudi Arabia of funding the radicalisation of young Muslims through British mosques. For instance, following the 22 May Manchester terror attacks, a courageous young woman spoke up on the 25 May BBC Question Time programme: “I am a British Muslim, and I am very proud of my heritage”, she said. “But ... there is an elephant in the room here: ... Yes, we do have an issue within our mosques, within our religious institutions: we have children being taught the Wahhabi interpretation of the Quran; we have Saudi-trained clerics coming in and speaking to children as young as seven.” Given that the Home Office's Extremism Analysis Unit that prepared the report includes MI5, which is infamous for its decades of collusion with known terrorists groups, a cover-up was to be expected, especially as the report is available to be read by members of the Privy Council, which includes Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn.

### The HSBC connection

The UK media is speculating that May and Rudd are suppressing the report in order to protect the lucrative UK-Saudi arms trade. The bigger issue, reported in the 12 July AAS, is that the UK-Saudi arms trade, which involves both countries' royal families, is used to fund international



Nicholas Wilson (standing) speaking at the 3 June election hustings for his electorate. His opponent, Home Secretary Amber Rudd (second from far left) can be seen handing a note to the moderator instructing him to shut Wilson down, after Wilson raised HSBC's business dealings with Saudi Arabia. Photo: Screenshot

terrorism. Nicholas Wilson also rejects the media's speculation about the arms trade. “I do not believe this is the reason the report is being suppressed”, he stated in a 16 July blog post. “It is well known that Saudi Arabia funds and supports terrorist organisations.” Wilson points to the Saudi business interests of HSBC, which he observes—referencing the bank being caught by US authorities in 2011 laundering money for drug cartels and terrorists—“is no stranger to terrorist finance”.

Wilson has clashed publicly with Amber Rudd over HSBC. In the recent UK election, when he ran as an independent against Rudd, the Home Secretary abused her authority during a 3 June local candidates' hustings (debate) to order the moderator to shut Wilson down when he raised HSBC and Saudi Arabia in his speech. (In 2011 Rudd was the Parliamentary Private Secretary to then Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne when he rushed off a letter to Washington to heavy US authorities against prosecuting HSBC for laundering terrorists' and drug cartels' funds.)

Wilson chronicles how the May government has gone all-out to secure for HSBC the prize of managing the Saudi government's partial sale of Aramco, and is determined to not let any obstacles get in the way. It was first mooted in February this year that HSBC was in the running to win Aramco's business, worth as much as US\$7 billion in fees. When Theresa May visited Saudi Arabia in April, she was accompanied by London Stock Exchange CEO Xavier Rolet, and their first meeting upon arrival was with Aramco's chief executive Khalid al-Falih, who is also the Saudi energy minister. Following May's visit, it was announced that HSBC had got the job, alongside JPMorgan Chase and Morgan Stanley, with the only question remaining whether Aramco's shares would be listed in New York or London. On 13 July, the day after Rudd announced the extremism report would be suppressed, Britain's Financial Conduct Authority (FCA)—which in 2015 was shown to have corruptly colluded with HSBC to deny Wilson's whistleblowing allegations—announced changes to its rules to allow Aramco to list on the LSE.

HSBC is a cornerstone of the Crown-City of London

nexus which is the supreme political and financial power in Britain. It is a key agency of the Anglo-Saudi terror apparatus, both through its financing arrangements with Saudi-backed terrorists and its deep ties to Britain's security services. HSBC director Jonathan Evans is the former head of MI5; the deputy chairman of HSBC Private Bank, Lord Janvrin, is the Queen's former private secretary and a Privy Counsellor on Parliament's Intelligence and Security Committee, which has oversight of the intelligence agencies; and the bank's head of Government Affairs is former MI6 honcho Sherard Cowper-Coles, who led the MI6

cover-up of the 1997 murder of anti-arms industry campaigner Princess Diana, was UK ambassador to Saudi Arabia in 2003-06 and ran the behind-the-scenes lobbying of the SFO to drop its investigation of the al-Yamamah arms deal between the Saudis and giant British arms manufacturer BAE Systems, and then joined BAE to run its business interests in the Middle East. It is clear that May's and Rudd's suppression of the extremism report is to protect the dark heart of the British Establishment, inclusive of the Crown, City, HSBC, BAE etc., to which Saudi Arabia is secondary and subservient.

## British collusion with sectarian violence

*Part one: Britain's security services facilitate flow of terrorists into Syria.*

Russia Today (RT) on 3 April 2016 commenced a four-part op-ed series by British freelance political writer Dan Glazebrook entitled "British collusion with sectarian violence". In part one, Glazebrook detailed many instances of Britain's security services MI5 and MI6 expediting the travel of known jihadists to fight alongside al-Qaeda and ISIS in Syria, against the Assad government. Unwittingly, Glazebrook's article foreshadowed the Manchester and London bridge terrorists attacks during the 2017 UK elections, which were perpetrated by terrorists who were known to MI5, and committed to murderous jihad in Syria.

To set the scene, Glazebrook made the point that the 2003 invasion of Iraq, under the false pretext of weapons of mass destruction, was not a failure of intelligence, as it is reported. It was an intelligence success.

"Blair told us that the Iraqi government had an active nuclear weapons program, had acquired uranium from Niger, had mobile chemical weapons factories that could evade UN weapons inspectors, and had stocks of chemical weapons able to hit British troops in Cyprus within 45 minutes", Glazebrook recounted. "All of these claims were false, and all were blamed on 'intelligence failings', creating an image of an intelligence service totally incapable of distinguishing between credible information and the deluding ravings of crackpots and fantasists, such as the notorious Curveball, the source of many of the various made-up claims later repeated in such grave and reverent tones by the likes of Tony Blair and Colin Powell.

"In fact, we now know that sources such as Curveball had already been written off as delusional, compulsive liars by multiple intelligence agencies long before Blair and co. got their hands on their outpourings—and the British government was fully aware of this.

"The truth is, there were no intelligence failings over the Iraq war. In fact, the intelligence services had been carrying out their job perfectly: on the one hand, making correct assessments of unreliable information, and on the other, providing the government with everything necessary to facilitate its war of aggression. The Iraq war, then, represented a supreme example not of intelligence failure, but intelligence success."

Writing in early 2016, Glazebrook observed that the same narrative of "intelligence failure" and incompetence of the security services was being reused to explain the flood of Western jihadists being able to travel Syria to fight alongside ISIS. Then British Foreign Minister Philip Hammond had recently admitted that 800 British citizens had gone to join the anti-government terrorist movement in Syria, with at least 50 known to have been killed fighting for al-Qaeda or Islamic State. "The British security and intelligence community, we are to believe, were



MI6 headquarters in London. MI6's incorrect intelligence that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction is reported as a "failure"; but Glazebrook argues it was an intelligence success, as their lie ensured Tony Blair achieved his objective: the invasion of Iraq. Likewise, MI5's "failure" to stop a flood of British jihadists to Syria assisted Britain's objective of regime change. Photo: MI6

simply unable to stop them", Glazebrook wrote. "Opportunist political opponents blame such shocking statistics on incompetence, while the government and its supporters increasingly weave them into an argument for greater powers and resources for the security services. Both are wrong; and a closer look at some of these so-called 'intelligence failings' makes this very clear."

Glazebrook cited the following examples of close connections between Britain's security services and known terrorists and ISIS recruits.

Michael Adebolajo, one of the killers of Fusilier Lee Rigby, whom MI5 had tried to recruit just a few weeks before Rigby's murder: "Adebolajo had been on the radar of both MI5 and MI6 for over 10 years. He had been under surveillance in no less than five separate MI5 investigations, including one set up specifically to watch him. He was known to have been in contact with the senior leadership of al-Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula, based in Yemen, and he had been arrested in Kenya on a speedboat on the way to Somalia with five other youths, where he was suspected of hoping to join al-Shabaab. The Kenyans were furious when they handed him over to the Brits only for him to be turned loose, presumably to continue with his recruitment activities."

Aseel Muthana, a 17-year-old from Cardiff who left home in 2013 to fight alongside rebels in Syria: "His brother Nasser had left three months earlier, and his family were worried that Aseel would try to join him. So they confiscated his passport, and informed the police of their concerns. The police kept the family under close scrutiny. They even arrived at his house at 5:00 PM the day he left for Syria, to be told he hadn't been seen since the night before. He



boarded a flight at 8:35 PM that night, using alternative travel documents issued by the Foreign Office. His family were horrified that he had been allowed to travel, without a passport, despite all their warnings."

Three sisters from Bradford who travelled with their nine young children to Syria in June 2015: "Again, the family had been under intense scrutiny from the police ever since their brother went to join IS in Syria earlier that year. And far from being unaware of the risk of their being recruited, counter-terrorist police were, it appears, deeply complicit in their recruitment. A letter from the family's lawyers said they were 'alarmed' by the police allegedly having been actively promoting and encouraging contact with the brother believed to be fighting in Syria: 'It would appear that there has been a reckless disregard as to the consequences of any such contact [with] the families of those whom we represent', the lawyers said, and continued: 'Plainly, by the NECTU [North East Counter Terrorism Unit] allowing this contact they have been complicit in the grooming and radicalising of the women.'"

Moazzam Begg, who went on trial in October 2014 for terrorism-related offences: "Begg had admitted to training British recruits in Syria—but in his defence, he made the incendiary claim that MI5 had explicitly given him the green light for his frequent visits in a meeting they had arranged with him. MI5 admitted it was true, and the trial collapsed."

The following cases also made Glazebrook's list:

- Founding al-Qaeda member Aimen Dean, whom MI6 recruited as a spy: "Part of his work for MI6, he said, involved encouraging young impressionable Muslims to go and join the ranks of al-Qaeda."

- Abu Muntasir, who is known as the "godfather" of British jihadists. Muntasir is credited with recruiting thousands of British Muslims to fight in Afghanistan, Kashmir, Burma, Bosnia and Chechnya. In June 2015 he gave an interview to the *Guardian*, "repenting his actions. He explained that he came back from fighting in Afghanistan to 'create the link and clear the paths. I came back [from war] and opened the door and the trickle turned to a flood. I inspired and recruited, I raised funds and bought weapons, not just a one-off but for 15 to 20 years. Why I have never been arrested I don't know."

- Bherlin Gildo, who was arrested in October 2014 on his way from Copenhagen to Manila and accused of attending a terrorist training camp and other terrorism offences. The *Guardian* reported that, like Moazzam Begg's trial, the prosecution "collapsed at the Old Bailey after it became clear Britain's security and intelligence agencies would have been deeply embarrassed had a trial gone ahead."

- Siddhartha Dhar, the second "Jihadi John", who skipped bail in September 2014 to travel to Syria to join ISIS, where he appeared in beheading videos. Dhar had been charged with terrorism offences—for the sixth time! He was able to abscond not long after MI5 had reportedly tried to recruit him: "Police had demanded he hand in his passport, but did not follow it up; this was despite the fact that he had revealed—live on BBC morning television no less—that he would 'love to live in the Islamic State'. He later posted pictures of himself posing with guns in Raqqa, and is suspected of being the so-called 'new Jihadi John', appearing in an IS video executing suspected spies. The original 'Jihadi John'—British-Kuwaiti Mohammed Emwazi—had also been well known to the British security services, having—just as Adebolajo and Dhar—



The man identified as the so-called "new jihadi John", Siddhartha Dhar (centre in white), pictured at a London rally in 2011. Well-known to the UK's security agencies, MI5 reportedly "tried" to recruit him, but somehow he was able to slip out of the UK while on bail to join ISIS in Syria. Photo: AFP/Justin Tallis

apparently been offered a job by MI5."

Glazebrook questioned: "Is this all just a 'catalogue of blunders', more 'intelligence failings' on a massive scale?"

"These cases demonstrate a couple of irrefutable points. Firstly, the claim that the security services would have needed more power and resources to have prevented the absconding is clearly not true.

"Since 1995, the Home Office has operated what it calls a 'Warnings Index': a list of people 'of interest' to any branch of government, who will then be 'flagged up' should they attempt to leave the country. Given that every single one of these cases was well known to the authorities, the Home Office had, for whatever reason, decided either not to put them on the Warnings Index, or to ignore their attempts to leave the country when they were duly flagged up. That is, the government decided not to use the powers already at its disposal to prevent those at the most extreme risk of joining the Syrian insurgency from doing so.

"Secondly, these cases show that British intelligence and security clearly prioritise recruitment of violent so-called Islamists over disruption of their activities. The question is—what exactly are they recruiting them for?"

"At his trial, Bherlin Gildo's lawyers provided detailed evidence that the British government itself had been arming and training the very groups that Gildo was being prosecuted for supporting. Indeed, Britain has been one of the most active and vocal supporters of the anti-government insurgency in Syria since its inception, support which continued undiminished even after the sectarian leadership and direction of the insurgency was privately admitted by Western intelligence agencies in 2012. Even today, with IS clearly the main beneficiaries of the country's destabilisation, and al-Qaeda increasingly hegemonic over the other anti-government forces, David Cameron continues to openly ally himself with the insurgency."

In conclusion, Glazebrook posed the question: "Is it really such a far-fetched idea that the British state, openly supporting a sectarian war against the Ba'athist government in Syria, might also be wilfully facilitating the flow of British fighters to join this war? Britain's history of collusion with sectarian paramilitaries as a tool of foreign policy certainly suggests this may be so."

Glazebrook addresses this history—in Ireland, Afghanistan and the Arab peninsula—and its role in shaping British policy today, in subsequent instalments of his series: "British collusion with sectarian violence".