

## GUARDIAN: POLICE CONFIRM FOREIGN POLICY LINK

What is so striking about the *Guardian's* front-page distortion is that it sits alongside another confirmatory front-page story: 'After the London bombings, British counter-terrorism officials intensified their efforts to understand why some Muslims turned to violence. The document, which has been seen by the *Guardian*, is the product of that work, and was completed within the past three months before being distributed to senior officers across London. The document says in a headline introducing one section: "**Foreign policy and Iraq; Iraq HAS [its emphasis] had a huge impact.**" '

The report includes the removal of legitimate grievances as part of the anti-terrorist programme: 'What will change them [the jihadists]—gradually—is argument, **the removal of justifying causes (Palestine, Iraq)**, the erosion of perverted beliefs and day-to-day frustrations.' <tinyurl.com/j2th6>

This is exactly the argument of *7/7: The London Bombings, Islam and the Iraq War*, it is exactly the argument JNV has been making for many years now, it is the argument that Tony Blair has been resisting, and it is the argument that the mainstream media has largely excluded from the debate.

There are concessions to reality. See the end of Philip Johnston's comments in the *Telegraph* <tinyurl.com/kauzr> or the muted sentences buried in the middle of the *Independent* editorial today (page 24) for typically weak examples. They are minor elements drowned out by the rest of the media chorus.

## DOWN THE MEMORY HOLE

Overall, the mass media continue to effectively suppress vital facts, such as the leaked Home Office/Foreign Office report '**Young Muslims and Extremism**', which said that British foreign policy post-9/11 was a major cause of such 'extremism'; the **Joint Intelligence Committee warning** to Tony Blair that invading Iraq would 'heighten' the threat from al-Qaeda; the **Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre** report in June 2005 that 'Events in Iraq are continuing to act as motivation and a focus of a range of terrorist related activity in the UK', and so on. Also omitted are the most credible **statement of responsibility**, the earlier video from **Mohammad Sidique Khan**, and the evidence of the bombers' **friends**. (See *7/7* or search the JNV website.)

Without retrieving this information, we cannot find our way forward. We will certainly not find it by telling young Muslims that they are **wrong** to feel what they feel about the crimes that we commit, or are party to.

# 7/7 One Year On The New Video

Confirmation That Foreign Policy Was A Root Cause  
JNV Anti-War Briefing 89 (7 July 2006)

## REALISM AND DENIAL

The suicide bombings in London on 7 July 2005 killed 52 people and injured hundreds more. Evidence emerged soon afterwards that the four young Muslims who carried out the attacks were motivated in large part by their anger over **the impact of British foreign policy** on Muslims around the world. (See Milan Rai's *7/7: The London Bombings, Islam and the Iraq War*.)

This has been confirmed by the **video statement** of suicide bomber Shehzad Tanweer, released by al-Qaeda on 6 July—discussed below.

Despite this new evidence, the British Government continues to deny that British foreign policy is in any way responsible for the attacks, or for the heightened level of threat from al-Qaeda. The British media continues to distort and censor its news reporting and commentary in support of this line.

## 'FALSE GRIEVANCE'

On 4 July 2006, Tony Blair re-affirmed his position that to 'defeat' al-Qaeda-type terrorism, we must 'defeat' '**a completely false sense of grievance against the West**'. The Prime Minister told a Parliamentary committee that Muslims should not say to al-Qaeda sympathisers: 'Look: we understand why you feel like this and we can sympathise with that but you are wrong to do these things'—they should say: '**You are wrong to feel those things**'. (Blair's words, not ours. Official draft transcript, <http://tinyurl.com/h24rn>)

In other words, if you are against terrorism, you should tell British Muslims: '**You are wrong** to be furious about the invasion of Iraq'; '**You are wrong** to be angry about the occupation of Afghanistan'; and '**You are wrong** to rage against the West's support for the oppression of the Palestinians.'

On the one hand, Blair argues that the young British Muslims who carried out these atrocities were **not** motivated by their fury and despair over British foreign policy. On the other hand, he says that British Muslims **do** feel fury and despair about British foreign policy, and **they shouldn't**.

## TANWEER: IT'S FOREIGN POLICY

Tony Blair's denial that British foreign policy was a motive for the bombings was flatly contradicted by the video statement of suicide bomber Shehzad Tanweer, released on 6 July, which highlighted the plight of Muslims globally.

In the al-Qaeda video, Tanweer said: 'To the non-Muslims of Britain, you may have wondered what you have done to deserve this. You are those who have voted in your government, who have in turn and still continue to this day continue to oppress our mothers, children, brothers and sisters from the east to the west in Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Chechnya. Your government has openly supported the genocide of over 150,000 innocent Muslims in Fallujah.' (SITE <<http://tinyurl.com/z53ye>>)

(The reference to voting tends to confirm the suggestion made in 7/7: *The London Bombings, Islam and the Iraq War* that the bomb plot started in earnest after, and because of, the re-election of the Blair Government.)

## TANWEER: IT'S IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN AND PALESTINE

Tanweer also said: 'What have you witnessed now is only the beginning of a string of attacks that will continue and become stronger **until you pull your forces out of Afghanistan and Iraq** and until you stop your financial and military support to **America and Israel.**' (*Guardian* <[tinyurl.com/zu43z](http://tinyurl.com/zu43z)>)

Tony Blair said on 4 July, 'There is a reason why they [al-Qaeda terrorists] were plotting terrorist activities in Spain even after the Spanish had withdrawn their troops from Iraq.' Yes, there is a reason. It's because Spain was involved—and continues to be involved—in the occupation of **Afghanistan**, which is just as important to al-Qaeda jihadists as Iraq or Palestine, as we see from Tanweer's video statement.

## MEDIA SELF-CENSORSHIP

How have the British media responded to the Tanweer video statement? Typically, the *Financial Times* had a flat headline (page 2): 'Video of London bomber shown on Arab TV'; and a perceptive, realistic news report (para. 5): 'Its linkage of the bombings to British foreign policy appears to be a **calculated challenge to the government of Tony Blair**, who earlier this week urged British Muslims not to excuse extremism by blaming British military operations abroad.' <<http://tinyurl.com/guzub>>

Most of the media framed the statement either in relation to the al-Qaeda connection (*Independent* headline, 'Bomber's video shows hand of al-Qaida',

page 5); or the cynical timing of its release (*Guardian* headline, 'One year on, a London bomber issues a threat from the dead', page 1); or the possible impact on people personally affected by the atrocity (*Telegraph* headline, 'Suicide bomber's video won't frighten us, say July 7 families', page 1).

*The Times* was the only newspaper to headline the key element of the video statement: 'I blame war in Iraq and Afghanistan, 7/7 bomber says in video' (page 4, <[tinyurl.com/f2ndk](http://tinyurl.com/f2ndk)>). However, unlike the *FT*, *The Times* did not make any connection to the propaganda of the British Government, and the way in which Tanweer's statement undermined Blair's denial.

## REPORTED AND SUPPRESSED

Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman point out that media provision of *some* information about an issue 'proves absolutely nothing about the adequacy or accuracy of media coverage': 'The media do in fact suppress a great deal of information, but even more important is the way they **present** a particular fact—its **placement, tone, and frequency of repetition**—and the framework of analysis in which it is placed.'

'That a careful reader, looking for a fact can sometimes find it, with diligence and a skeptical eye, tells us nothing about whether that fact received the **attention and context it deserved**, whether it was **intelligible to most readers**, or whether it was **effectively distorted or suppressed.**' <[tinyurl.com/9zql2](http://tinyurl.com/9zql2)> It is possible for something to be reported, but effectively distorted or suppressed.

In the case of the reporting of Tanweer's explicit statement of his own motivations, we have a classic case of this phenomenon. Newspapers often **record** his words—the attacks continue 'until you pull your forces out from Afghanistan and Iraq'—but they do so in a way that **suppresses** their meaning.

For example, the *Guardian*, whose front-page headline, subhead and first 7 paragraphs have nothing to do with the foreign policy element, makes no further reference to foreign policy in the 5 paragraphs following the Tanweer quotes in paragraphs 8 and 9.

Typically, the **final** paragraph is allowed to contain a hint of realism, quoting Mohammed Abdul Baari, Secretary-General of the Muslim Council of Britain: 'We hope this video serves to end the **denial** in parts of government about the impact of some of its **foreign policies** on the radicalisation of a section of Muslim youth, but also the denial in some pockets of the Muslim community that these four Muslim men were responsible for these murderous acts.'