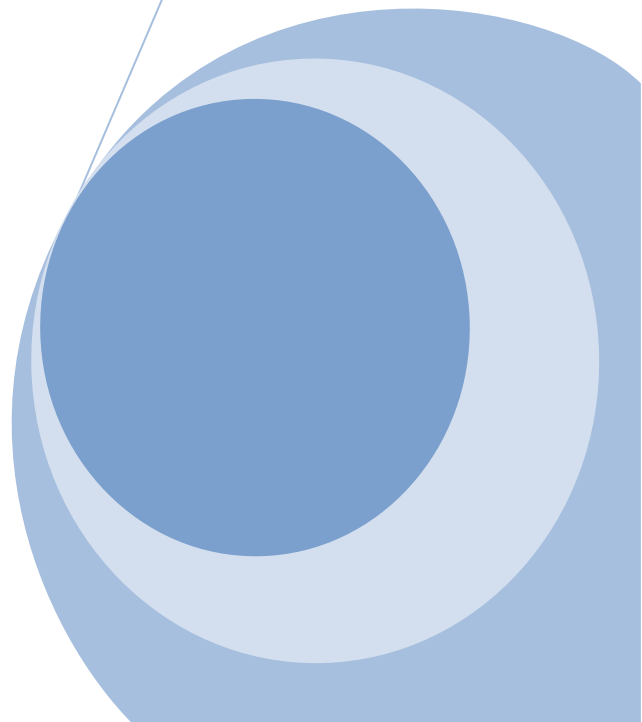


**MUSLIM  
COMMUNITY  
RELATIONS  
POST 9/11  
A CHRONOLOGY**



**First edition by Dr Frank Reeves, REWM 2008**

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### **About Waterhouse Consulting Group**

Waterhouse Consulting Group is a multi disciplinary management consultancy that brings together the UK's leading experts to deliver services in equalities & diversity, counter-extremism training, research and executive search.

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A CHRONOLOGY**

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## INTRODUCTION

September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 is a day with its place in history. In the morning, the United States suffered the worst attack on its citizens since the Japanese attacks on its naval base at Pearl Harbour, Hawaii, in December 1941 that led to the entry of the U.S. into the Second World War. The hijacking by terrorists of four commercial passenger jet airliners and the crashing of two of them into the World Trade buildings in New York, leading to their collapse, and another into the US Defence headquarters at the Pentagon, in Washington, resulted in the deaths of almost 3,000 people. Events were captured on film as they happened and televised almost simultaneously around the world. The images are unlikely ever to be forgotten by the millions of people around the world who saw them.

News quickly spread that the perpetrators of these attacks were Muslims associated with a movement known as Al Qaida that was prepared to kill Americans as part of its opposition to US involvement in the Muslim world. It was, by any standard, the movement's largest and most audacious terrorist attack and its scale has never been repeated. It turned Al Qaida from a largely obscure terrorist movement known only to foreign and security specialists into a household name which has, for many people, become synonymous with any kind of militant or extreme Islamic activity.

It transformed the relationship between Muslim and non-Muslim communities in many countries, including the UK, with its 1.5 million Muslim population. Prior to September 11<sup>th</sup>, there had been signs in the UK of a worsening in the relationship between Muslim and non-Muslim communities. Observers suggested that the substantial Muslim populations in some urban areas were not only experiencing economic and social deprivation, but becoming more segregated from white and other ethnic minority communities. This segregation was felt to be exemplified by disturbances in towns in the north of England in the summer of 2001 involving Muslim youths and, in some cases, clashes with white youths. What had not been expected was that the circumstances facing the UK's Muslim communities in the summer of 2001 might be related in some way to terrorist activity by militant Islamic groups. The events of September 11<sup>th</sup> in the United States changed that. The UK, as a close ally of the US, became a target for terrorism by militant groups that associated themselves with Islam. This became a reality in July 2005 with the suicide bombings on the London transport system which killed more than 50 people and injured 700.

This booklet is a chronology of the key events which have impacted on relationships between the Muslim and non Muslim communities in the UK in the six years from September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 to September 2007. It summarises the key facts of what happened on September 11<sup>th</sup> and the first responses of the US Government and the international community. It then sets out for each year, not only related events in the UK, but also those events on the international stage which contributed in influencing what subsequently took place in the UK. For each year, there is an international and a national (UK) time line of events. In the events listed for 2007, information is quoted from authoritative sources on the position that has been reached on, for example, the situation in Iraq and Afghanistan and the continuing capability of organisations like al Qaida to mount terrorist activities. The material contained in the chronology does not seek to interpret or provide comment on events. Instead, it seeks to bring together at

one source the various events that have influenced how Muslim and non-Muslim populations have come to perceive and interact with each other since 11 September 2001. Readers must draw their own conclusions. In doing so, this booklet may help to inform them.

International and national events have continued to shape the relationships between Muslim and non Muslim communities in the UK since the end of this chronology in September 2007. They can expect to continue to do so and what is what is written in this publication will have to be read in the context of more recent and future events. At the time this publication was being completed in February 2008, hopes that some level of security might be returning to Iraq were shattered by bombs in Baghdad markets, killing some 100 people and in injuring many more. In the UK, news coverage for some three days was dominated by a furore over remarks by the Archbishop of Canterbury in a public lecture on civil and religious law. He suggested that some aspects of Islamic Sharia law should be incorporated into British law.

To assist in understanding the chronology that follows, it is necessary to summarise details about the origins and development of the Al Qaida movement, how the US government viewed any potential threats to its interests from militant Islamic groups before September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, and the key concerns of the Muslim communities in the UK in the months preceding this momentous date. It is also necessary to set out the rationale for selecting the international and UK events included in the chronology.

## **Al Qaida**

It is generally accepted that Al Qaida was spawned by the war in Afghanistan in the 1980s between Afghan mujahedin and the then Marxist government supported by the Soviet Union. Al Qaida evolved from a Muslim organisation, Maktab al Khadamat, founded in 1980 to raise and channel funds and recruit foreign mujahedin for the war against the Soviet Union. The philosophy behind this movement was that the Muslim world no longer existed in countries like Afghanistan, because of the absence of sharia law. Righteous Muslims needed to form a vanguard movement to remove non-Muslim concepts, such as socialism and nationalism.

Maktab al Khadamat organised para-military training camps in the Afghanistan/Pakistan border areas to prepare foreign volunteers for the Afghan war front. Osman Bin Laden, who was to become the leader of Al Qaida, joined that movement. He was a member of the large, prestigious and wealthy Bin Laden family of Saudi Arabia. As a university student, he had developed a keen interest in Islam and had been influenced by scholars who believed in jihad (holy war) against all that was un-Islamic in the world. It was hoped that Osman Bin Laden's own wealth and connections in Saudi Arabia would be a useful source of money for the foreign mujahedin in Afghanistan.

Towards the end of the Soviet military mission in Afghanistan, some mujahedin wanted to expand their operations to include Islamic struggles in other parts of the world. Osama Bin Laden set up an organisation to help do this. When the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989, Bin Laden returned to Saudi Arabia. He publicly opposed the Saudi Government's decision to deploy US and allied military forces on Saudi territory when Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, believing that it profaned

sacred Muslim soil. He was forced into exile in Sudan and, in 1994, his Saudi citizenship was revoked, with his family publicly disowning him. In 1996, Sudan made it clear that Bin Laden and his associates were no longer welcome.

He returned to Afghanistan where, following the Soviet withdrawal and after years of internecine warfare between various factions, a Taliban government had established control over much of the country. The Taliban government shared a similar philosophy to Bin Laden's. It provided a perfect safe haven for Bin Laden, allowing his Al Qaida organisation to have its headquarters and establish training camps for militant Muslims from around the world to learn para-military techniques.

In February 1998, Osama Bin Laden and four other Islamic leaders issued a fatwa (binding religious edict) under the banner of the 'World Islamic Front for Combat against the Jews and Crusaders'. It declared 'The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies, civilian and military, is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it in order to liberate the Al-Aqsa mosque (in Jerusalem) and the holy mosque in Makka from their grip and in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam defeated and unable to threaten any Muslim'. Neither Bin Laden nor any of the other leaders had the qualifications to issue a fatwa of any kind. But, they rejected the authority of Muslim scholars who could do so.

The first major terrorist attack reliably attributed to Al Qaida was the US Embassy bombings in East Africa in 1998, which killed over 300 people, mainly local civilians. The US responded by launching a cruise missile attack on known Al Qaida bases in Afghanistan. The Al Qaida base in Khost, Afghanistan, was devastated, but the network's capacity went unharmed. United Nations-authorized financial and military sanctions were also imposed on the Taliban government to persuade it to turn over Bin Laden for trial over the embassy bombings and to close terrorist training camps. It had no effect. In October 2000, Al Qaida militants in Yemen bombed the US warship SS Cole in a suicide attack while the ship lay off shore. The vessel was damaged and seventeen US servicemen were killed. The next major terrorist attack was on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 on the United States itself.

### **The US government's view on potential threats prior to September 11th 2001**

At the beginning of 2001, a new president and government came into power in the United States. A conservative-leaning Republican Party, President George W Bush, and his administration, replaced a more centrist Democratic Party administration, under President Bill Clinton, that had held power for the previous eight years. The incoming President Bush had little experience of foreign affairs and was expected to rely heavily on his closest advisers. His Secretary for Defence, Donald Rumsfeld, was ideologically conservative and saw the United States interests as being best protected by an assertive unilateralist approach supported by military power. His Secretary of State (foreign affairs), General Colin Powell, who had commanded the successful US and allied forces in the 1991 Iraq war, favoured the use of diplomacy and alliance politics to promote US interests.

US President Bush, in his first address to Congress in February 2001 acknowledged the danger of bomb-wielding terrorists, but promoted missile defence as the priority in

protecting the United States. . In the key passage in his speech, the President stated, 'Our nation... needs a clear strategy to confront the threats of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, threats that are more widespread and less certain. They range from terrorists who threaten with bombs to tyrants and rogue nations intent on developing weapons of mass destruction. To protect our own people, our allies and friends, we must develop and we must deploy effective missile defences.... later this year the administration plans to put into operation the first phase of a system to intercept and destroy incoming ballistic missiles'.

The threat posed by Muslim terrorists like Al Qaida, and the country that hosted them, the Taliban government in Afghanistan, was rarely specifically mentioned by the President or leading officials. Iraq, on which so much US attention was to be directed after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, was seen as a rogue state that at some time might threaten US allies and interests with weapons that could cause significant destruction. It was not seen as a country that was linked to militant Islamic groups carrying out terrorist activities against the United States and allied countries. The discussions in the US government in the early months of the Bush administration on Iraq centred around making more effective the existing United Nations-imposed sanctions on the Iraqi government to prevent the repression of its own people, stop the production of illegal weapons and arm the Iraqi opposition to overthrow the Iraqi government. These subjects were still being debated at the time of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks.

Top US government officials continued to prioritise new missile defences in the weeks before September 11<sup>th</sup>. In August, Vice President Cheney, let it be known at a conference that 'We're fundamentally transforming the US strategic relationship around the world as we look at missile defences and modifications to our offensive strategic arms'. The influential national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, in a speech entitled 'the threats and problems of today and the day after, not the world of tomorrow', due to be delivered on September 11<sup>th</sup> but postponed in the chaos of the events that day, is authoritatively reported to have promoted missile defence as the corner stone of a new national security strategy, with no mention being made of the dangers of terrorists attacks from militant Islamic groups.

In the aftermath of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, the US administration came under criticism for failing to take seriously the danger of terrorist attacks from militant Islamic groups like Al Qaida. It was a charge that the US government vigorously disputed. What is known from authoritative reports is that discussions on how to deal with the threats posed to US interests by groups like Al Qaida were taking place amongst US government officials prior to September 11, but specific plans had yet to be formulated. It is also the case that US intelligence agencies had some intelligence indications by the summer of 2001 about militant Muslim groups planning potential terrorist attacks on the US, although specific information on the format and timing of these attacks was unknown. But these issues had not emerged as a major concern or priority for the US administration by September 11<sup>th</sup>. In essence, the US government was not expecting or prepared for what took place on September 11<sup>th</sup>. The events of that day however, dramatically changed the situation. Combating Islamic terrorism and countries suspected of harbouring such terrorists became a major priority.

## **Key concerns of UK Muslims, summer 2001**

UK Muslim communities, originating primarily from the South Asian sub-continent of Pakistan, India and Bangladesh, are amongst of the poorest in the UK. UK economic and social data show such communities experiencing some of the most severe forms of deprivation. By the summer of 2001, there had been serious disturbances in some towns in northern England. Muslim males were in confrontation with the police and, in some cases, clashed with white youths. These youths believed their communities to be under threat from white extremists and their grievances ignored by public institutions. Some observers thought Muslim communities in urban areas were growing apart from other communities in terms of residence, the schools they attended and in their social lives. For most Muslims, the key issues were economic and social, and the desire to live their lives and practise their culture, of which religion formed an important part without the fear of abuse. They were looking to Government and public institutions to address their grievances. Many Muslims believed that, if their concerns were addressed, many of the looming issues over their relationships with other communities would be resolved.

International affairs for most Muslims were a lower priority. There were concerns, for example, about the long-running issues of the treatment of Muslims in Palestine following the partition of that country in 1947, and the formation of the state of Israel. For many Muslims from Pakistan, the partition of the Muslim state of Kashmir at the time of independence in 1947 was a festering sore. There was even some concern about how Russia was treating some of its own minority Muslim communities in, for example, the long running war in the Caucasus region of Chechen over independence where 100,000 mainly Muslim civilians could have been killed. . But with the exception of a few Islamic academics and a minority of radical Muslims, the existence of al Qaida and its militaristic approach to addressing grievances was largely unknown.

Following the September 11th attacks, the increasing focus on what was happening in Muslim communities in the UK was for most Muslims largely unwelcome. It generally centred around the questions of whether were Muslims saw themselves as part of Britain as a separate community and whether there were extremists hiding within their communities intent on using terrorism to further their views. The vast majority of Muslims strongly disowned the use of terrorism as a way of dealing with grievances and their leaders repeatedly stated that the taking of innocent life was contrary to Islam. They did, however, ask for their concerns about Islamophobia, racism, economic deprivation and social exclusion to be addressed. They were also opposed to US/UK coalition's use of military force to deal with militant Islamic terrorism. It was, of course, a view also shared by many non-Muslims. But in the years following September 11<sup>th</sup>, the legitimate views of most Muslims to what was taking place were frequently ignored within the context of the powerful emotions generated by the acts of terrorism attributed to militant Islam and the responses of the Government itself.

## **Criteria for inclusion in the chronology**

The nature of the September 11th attacks meant that the response was internationalised. What followed was dominated by what the United States government termed the 'war on terror' and, with it, the US-led invasions of first, Afghanistan and then, Iraq, and their respective aftermaths. Whilst the Al Qaida movement was placed on the defensive with the loss of its 'safe havens' in Afghanistan, following the invasion of that country, it was still able to embolden members of its own movement, and other militant Islamic groups that shared similar ideals, to carry out terrorist attacks on people in countries which it opposed. The international time-line chronology sets out the major events in this so-called 'war on terror' and the various responses of militant terrorist groups.

What has happened in the UK since September 11<sup>th</sup> is a reflection on what has taken place on the international scene. The events have been grouped in the following way:

- Actual or potential terrorist attacks by militant Islamic groups in the UK. In the period covered by this chronology there are two actual terrorist attacks of which the July 2005 bombings in central London caused extensive casualties. There are also two attacks where the explosive materials do not explode or are neutralised before they go off. There are a further incidents listed which the authorities believed were terrorist in nature at the time and which were foiled at an early stage before explosive devices were actually assembled. In some of these incidents no charges were brought against persons after police questioning. In other cases trials have taken place with some defendants being found guilty and others not. There are also cases which have yet to go to trial.
- Involvement of UK military forces in the US-led 'war on terror' in Afghanistan and Iraq.
- The high priority given to the passage of legislation to combat terrorism and the attention devoted by the police and security services to monitoring and thwarting the activities of militant Muslim groups planning potential acts of terrorism. By the end of 2006 five Acts of Parliament have been passed which wholly or partly widened the definition of what constituted a terrorist offence, gave powers to government ministers to place restrictions on suspected terrorists without the need for a trial and introduced measures that established a new and distinct set of police powers and procedures in suspected terrorist cases beyond those related to ordinary crime.
- Increasing public concern about levels of migration into the UK, particularly non-white migration from countries outside the European Common Market, and the exploitation of the issue by political parties, in particular, the nationalist and racist British National Party (BNP). For a substantial section of the public levels of migration into the UK have become connected to domestic and global acts of terrorism by militant Islamic groups. Although the connection is unwarranted it has provided a favourable climate for the Government to promote and pass legislation restricting migration into the UK and the entitlement of migrants (it includes asylum seekers) to seek work and receive support from public funds. In the chronology four pieces of legislation

are listed imposing such restrictions. The legislation contributes, for example, to a fall in the number of claims for asylum from over 100,000 in the year 2002 to 23,500 in the year 2006.

- A greater public focus on how the Islamic faith is practised by Muslim communities, be it women wearing veils or Muslims protesting about unfair criticisms of their faith. From 2006 onwards this is increasingly reflected in parts of the UK media (press) who look for opportunities to portray Muslims as seeking to impose their own cultures and values on the rest of the UK's population..

Major events in all of these categories have influenced how Muslims see themselves in the UK and regard their relationship with non-Muslim communities. The National (UK) chronology sets out most of the noteworthy events from 2001 to September 2007. The chronology seeks to include all the major events. They are, however, numerous. Whilst every attempt has been made to incorporate them all, some incidents will have been omitted which readers may feel should have been included .



## YEAR 2001

### INTERNATIONAL TIMELINE

*September 11 2001*

#### **Terrorist attacks on the United States (commonly known as 9/11)**

In the morning, four commercial passenger jet airliners on internal flights to California are hijacked by 19 persons associated with the Al-Qaida movement. Each team of hijackers includes a trained pilot and they take over the piloting of each plane with the intention of crashing them into strategic buildings. What unfolds is as follows:

- At 8.46am, American Airlines flight 11 crashes into the northern tower of the World Trade Centre in New York. At 10.28 am, the building collapses.
- At 9.03am, Untitled Airlines flight 175 crashes into the south tower of the World Trade Centre in New York. At 9.56 am, the building collapses.
- At 9.38 am, American Airlines flight 77 crashes into the Pentagon building (HQ of the US defence department) in Washington DC.
- At 10.03am, United Airlines flight 93 crashes into a field in South West Pennsylvania, rather than the terrorists' intended destination of the US capital as a result of the passengers /flight crew from the airliner attempting to retake control of the plane.

Apart from the 19 hijackers, 2,974 people die as a result of these attacks. The majority are US citizens, but they also include persons from a range of nationalities and faiths, including Muslims.

The attacks cause widespread confusion across the United States. All international civilian air traffic is banned from landing on US soil for three days, and aircraft already in flight, approaching the US from other countries, are either turned back or redirected to airports in Canada and Mexico. Also unsubstantiated rumours of further attacks are reported during the day by the US media. The three main stock exchanges in the US do not open and remain closed until September 17<sup>th</sup>. None of their facilities is damaged in the attacks but major damage to a telephone exchange facility near the World Trade Centre means that businesses involved at the stock exchanges have difficulty communicating with one another. When the stock markets reopen, US stock loses \$1.2 trillion in value in a week (one of the largest declines in history) before gradually recovering.

*September 11 2001*

**US President, George Bush, addresses the nation**

The President opens his address to the nation by saying ‘Today, our way of life, our very freedom came under attack in a series of deliberate and deadly terrorist acts’, and adds ‘America was targeted for attack because we’re the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world’. The President reassures his audience by saying ‘Our military is powerful and it’s prepared.....the functions of our government continue without interruption... our financial institutions remain strong and the American economy will be open for business as well’. He continues: ‘The search is underway for those who are behind these evil acts. I’ve directed the full resources of our intelligence and law enforcement communities to find those responsible and bring them to justice. We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbour them’. The President ends by quoting from Psalm 23.

**September onwards the aftermath of 9/11**

*September 27 2001*

The F.B.I. releases details of the 19 hijackers, as they made little attempt to disguise their identities before boarding the planes they hijacked. Fifteen are from Saudi Arabia, two from the United Arab Emirates, one from Egypt, and one from Lebanon. Most are educated and come from well-to-do backgrounds. It subsequently transpires that they are largely motivated by hatred towards US foreign policy and military involvement in the Middle East. Details are also released of a number of suspected accomplices not on the hijacked planes.

The attacks lead the FBI into mounting the largest and most complex investigation in its history to find who is responsible. It involves over 7,000 special agents. From the outset, the US Government believes that Al Qaida is responsible for the attacks. It points to the movement’s leader, Osman bin Laden’s, known declaration of a holy war against the US and a ‘fatwa’ signed by Bin Laden and others in 1998 calling for the killing of American civilians. It is also based on intercepted communications from the Al Qaida hierarchy by the US National Security Agency and intelligence agencies from other countries. This belief is reinforced as the FBI inquiries continue. In February 6<sup>th</sup> 2002, they state, in testimony before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, that the evidence linking Al Qaida to the 9/11 attacks is clear and irrefutable.

Initially Al-Qaida leader, Bin Laden, denies involvement in 9/11. In a statement broadcast by Qatar’s Al Jazeera TVG satellite news channel on September 16<sup>th</sup>, Bin Laden states, ‘I stress that I have not carried out this act which appears to have been carried out by individuals with their own motivation’. However, on December 13<sup>th</sup>, various news networks broadcast a videotape, recovered by US forces in Afghanistan, in which Bin Laden admits foreknowledge of the attacks. On December 27<sup>th</sup>, in a video released for the media Bin Laden states, ‘Terrorism against America deserves to be praised because it is a response to injustice aimed at forcing America to stop its

support for Israel which kills our people.’ As time elapses, Bin Laden, in released video tapes, accepts more direct responsibility for the 9/11 attacks. On October 30<sup>th</sup> 2004, Bin Laden, in a tape aired on the Al Jazeera news channel, tells the American people that he ordered the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks because ‘we are a free people’ who wanted to ‘regain the freedom of our nation, Palestine’.

In the US and elsewhere, various conspiracy theories have emerged on the 9/11 attacks, suggesting that individuals outside of the Al Qaida organisation carried out the attacks. Most mainstream commentators and analysts of what took place on 9/11 do not believe these theories are credible.

### ***September 2001***

#### **US public response**

There is widely expressed gratitude towards uniformed public safety workers (particularly fire fighters) in the light of the risks taken at the sites of the attacks to rescue people and the death toll amongst these workers when the World Trade Centre buildings collapse. Public opinion unites around the President, with George W Bush receiving overwhelming support. Polls show his job approval rating soaring to 86%.

Leading US Muslim organisations swiftly condemn the attacks and call upon ‘Muslim Americans to come forward with their skills and resources to help alleviate the sufferings of the affected people and their families’. Nevertheless, the CNN news channel carries reports of numerous incidents of harassment, assaults and verbal abuse of ‘Middle-Eastern looking people’, including Sikhs, as they are stereotypically associated with Muslims. It includes the murder of one Sikh person, Balbir Singh Sodhi, who is fatally shot. CNN also reports attacks on mosques and other religious buildings, including the firebombing of a Hindu temple.

### ***September 20 2001***

#### **US Congress presidential Speech**

In a widely publicised speech to a joint session of Congress (House of Representatives and the Senate), US President, George W Bush, says ‘the evidence we have gathered all points to a collection of loosely-affiliated terrorist organizations known as Al Qaida..... a fringe organisation that perverts the peaceful teaching of Islam and whose directive commands them to kill Christians and Jews, to kill all Americans, and make no distinction between military and civilians’. The President signals out the Taliban government of Afghanistan as supporting and providing training bases for Al Qaida and issues them with an ultimatum to stop doing this (see below) and adds, ‘they will hand over the terrorists or they will share in their fate’. The President uses the phrase ‘Our war on terror’, which is soon translated in succeeding years into ‘the war on terrorism’. The President acknowledges ‘the civilised world is rallying to America’s side’ and says ‘every nation in every region now has a decision to make. Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbour or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime’. The President ends his speech

with the words ‘In all that lies before us, may God grant us wisdom and may he watch over the United States of America’.

### ***September 2001 onwards***

#### **More powers introduced in the US to combat terrorism**

The Homeland Security Act is passed by Congress to create a more effective and informed organisation to deal with security, known as the Department of Homeland Security. The Patriot Act is passed by Congress to help the detection and prosecution of terrorism and other crimes. Leading US civil liberty groups argue that this Act circumvents certain civil rights protections, such as protection against surveillance by Federal agencies. The US Government also initiates a secret National Security Agency operation to ‘eavesdrop on telephone and e-mail communications between the US and people overseas without a warrant to do so’.

### ***September 18 2001***

A Joint Congressional Resolution, known as 107-40, authorises the use of military force ‘to deter and prevent acts of international terrorism against the United States’. Under this power, 5,000 foreign nationals are detained. Also under the Alien Registration Act of 1940, 80,000 Arab and Muslim immigrants are fingerprinted and registered.

### ***September 2001***

#### **International response**

There is immediate widespread condemnation of the 9/11 attacks by governments across the world and in leading media journals. For example:

- The Russian Foreign Minister is quoted as saying on September 11<sup>th</sup>, ‘the Russian people sincerely mourn as nobody else with the American people and are in sympathy with them on this sorrowful day...It is impossible to be indifferent onlookers on how terrorists and their patrons sow panic and fear, trying to destabilise the situation in various countries . Russia has taken a firm and uncompromising stand on this question. It is necessary to pool the efforts of the entire international community to fight terrorism’.
- The Muslim Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in an official statement on September 11<sup>th</sup>, says, ‘Saudi Arabia strongly condemns such acts which contravene all religious values and human civilised concepts’. It also stresses the Kingdom’s steadfast position, condemning all forms of terrorism and its ongoing co operation with the international community to combat it.
- France’s highly respected and long established *Le Monde* newspaper, in a headline summing up international sympathy, states, ‘We are all Americans’.

Muslim Middle Eastern countries that historically have been viewed as being sympathetic to fundamental Muslim movements, such as Libya, Syria and Iran,

strongly denounce the 9/11 attacks. Libya's President, Col Muammer Gaddafi, is quoted as saying, 'everyone should put human considerations above political differences and stances and offer aid to the victims of this gruesome act'. Even the fundamental Muslim Taliban government of Afghanistan, where the Al Qaida movement is based, is quoted as saying 'we are not supporting terrorism.... we condemn this'. However, it goes on to say that the Al Qaida movement based in its country is not responsible for the attacks as it did not have the capability to carry them out, and suggests instead that it is the work of the United States' internal enemies or its major rivals. An exception to the chorus of condemnation is the Iraq government. Its state television describes the carnage as the operation of the century and states 'the American cowboy is reaping the fruits of his crimes against humanity'. The UK's BBC news also carries reports of some Palestinians celebrating jubilantly on hearing about the attacks.

The government of the large and influential Muslim country of Pakistan, whilst condemning the attacks (the country's president describes them as 'horrendous acts of terrorism'), initially urges caution about blaming its neighbour, Afghanistan, for the attacks. Pakistan is one of the few countries to recognise Afghanistan's Taliban government and to have diplomatic ties with it. Instead, the Pakistani government urges more dialogue with the Taliban government on resolving issues of terrorism, and says that evidence should be forthcoming to show that Al Qaida is responsible for the attacks. The Pakistan government, in the ensuing weeks, gradually re-aligns itself with the United States and takes an increasingly hard line against Al Qaida and the support given to it by the Taliban government.

Numerous countries, including the UK, India, Australia, France, Germany, Indonesia, China, Canada, Russia, Pakistan and Jordan, freeze the bank accounts of businesses and individuals suspected of having ties with Al Qaida.

### **War in Afghanistan**

After the 9/11 attacks the US Government quickly firms up its belief that the Al Qaida movement is responsible. The US President, in his September 20<sup>th</sup> speech to Congress, delivers an ultimatum to the Taliban government of Afghanistan to:

- Deliver Al Qaida leaders located in Afghanistan to the US.
- Close terrorist training camps in Afghanistan and hand over every terrorist and every person and their support structure to the appropriate authorities.
- Give the US full access to terrorist training camps to verify their closure.

The Taliban government rejects the ultimatum on September 21<sup>st</sup>, saying there is no evidence to link Al Qaida and its leader to the 9/11 attacks. Some covert diplomacy takes place with the Taliban government emissary in Pakistan to see if the situation can be resolved and thus avoid military retaliation from the US and its allies. It is to no avail.

United Nations resolutions passed in September pave the way for the United States to take action against Afghanistan for harbouring the terrorist group Al Qaida, that is suspected of being behind the 9/11 attacks. Key Middle Eastern Muslim countries (Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) that have hitherto recognised the Taliban government, withdraw their recognition. Whilst Pakistan maintains its diplomatic ties with the Taliban government, it offers the use of bases to the US for any military action. (This offer is taken up and Pakistan, in the months that follow, arrests over 600 supposed Al Qaida members, whom it hands over to the US.)

*October 7 2001*

### **Bombing of Afghanistan**

Military hostilities begin with aerial bombing of Afghanistan by the US and UK. It marks the beginning of the US administration's campaign known as the 'war on terrorism'. The purpose of the military action is to destroy Al Qaida, capture its leader, Osman Bin Laden, and remove the Taliban Government which has allowed Al Qaida to be based in Afghanistan. The US military's name for the conflict is 'Operation Enduring Freedom'. The ground forces are primarily supplied by the Afghan Northern Alliance, with support from US/UK special forces. (The Northern Alliance is a group of tribal leaders holding territory in Northern Afghanistan which has been involved in a military campaign against Taliban forces.) The aerial bombing quickly destroys the Taliban's air defences and communications and seriously damages Al Qaida's training sites. The aerial bombing switches to attacks on Taliban forces facing the Northern alliance and, by November 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Taliban forces are decimated. The invasion of Taliban-held Afghanistan begins. On November 12<sup>th</sup>, the capital, Kabul, falls to the Northern Alliance and, in the next twenty-four hours, it takes over all of the provinces bordering Iran. What are left of the Taliban forces fall back to the northern city of Kunduz where, with the help of Pakistani volunteers, they prepare to make a stand, to the Taliban movement's birthplace of Kandahar and to the Tora Bora cave complex on the Pakistani border. Here, nearly 2000 Taliban and Al Qaida fighters fortify themselves in bunkers and caves. By the beginning of December, the Northern Alliance takes control after heavy fighting, of Kunduz. By December 7<sup>th</sup> Kandahar falls and, by December 17<sup>th</sup>, the last cave complex is taken in Tora Bora. The military campaign to remove the Taliban government is over. There is no sign, however, of Osama Bin Laden and the Al Qaida leadership who, it is widely believed, slip away into the remote tribal areas in neighbouring Pakistan. The leader of the Taliban, Mullah Mohammed Omar, and other leaders of the Taliban also evade capture and are thought to have escaped to the tribal areas of Pakistan.

## **NATIONAL (THE UK) TIMELINE**

### **Before the event known as 9/11**

#### **Growing signs of worsening relations between Muslim and non-Muslim communities**

##### ***February 2001***

In February, a Government Home Office survey in four urban areas in England discovers widespread ignorance and unfair treatment directed at persons with a religious faith. Muslims are found to experience the highest levels of harassment and potential discrimination.

##### ***April 2001***

#### **Population census.**

Conducted every ten years, the census takes place in April. The results show that 7.9% of the population (around 4.6 million) describes itself as belonging to a black or minority ethnic group. The two main groups in the ethnic minority population are Asian (50%) and black (25%). The ethnic minority population, 45% lives in greater London. Other major areas of settlement are in urban areas in the West and East Midlands, West Yorkshire, and parts of North West England. For the first time, the census asks a question on religious faith: 1.5 million persons state that they are Muslims.

##### ***April – July 2001***

There are major disturbances in towns in northern England involving Asian Muslim younger people and white youths and/or the police. There is an initial outbreak of violence in Bradford in April, and a more major incident in Oldham in late May during the run up to the General Election. In the weeks following the election, there are major disturbances in Burnley, and again in Bradford. Further minor incidents take place in Accrington, Leeds and Stoke. Far-right political supporters are suspected of helping to foment the disorders in order to demonstrate to the white population the threat that Muslims pose to society and to gain a political dividend from this. The disturbances cause concern to the re-elected Labour Government and the new Home Secretary, David Blunkett. Local inquiries into what has happened and to learn lessons are launched in Burnley and Oldham. Nationally, the Home Secretary initiates a Home Office review, as well as sets up an independent team under an experienced local authority officer, Ted Cantle, to review what is happening to relations between communities in urban areas.

### ***July 2001***

A report entitled *Community Pride Not Prejudice: Making Diversity Work in Bradford*, written by former CRE Chairman Herman Ouseley, and completed before any disturbances occurred in Bradford, is published. Bradford has significant Asian Muslim communities. The report states: 'there are signs that communities are fragmenting along racial, cultural and faith lines. Segregation in schools is one indicator of this trend. Rather than seeing the emergence of a confident, multi-cultural district where people are respectful and have an understanding and tolerance for difference, peoples' attitudes appear to be hardening and intolerance towards differences is growing'.

### ***June 7 2001***

#### **General Election**

The general election sees the Labour Party retain power with a majority of 161 seats. The far-right British National Party, with its racist and nationalist ideology, contests 33 parliament constituencies. The BNP, in particular, targets and seeks to exploit resentment amongst the white population against Muslim communities. Whilst the BNP does not win a seat, its best results are in towns in northern England with significant Muslim communities. It receives over 16% of the vote in the Oldham West constituency, and over 11% of the vote in the Oldham East and Burnley constituencies. In Oldham, the BNP exploits fears in the white communities following the disturbances in late May. The BNP candidate in the Oldham West constituency is its party leader, Nick Griffin.

### ***September 11 2001***

#### **Prime Minister Tony Blair's response**

Tony Blair is scheduled to address the annual meeting of the Trade Union Congress in Brighton at the time of the attacks. He does not make his scheduled speech and returns to London. Instead, he makes a short statement in which he says 'there have been the most terrible, shocking events taking place in the U.S.A. within the last hour or so, including two hijacked planes being flown deliberately into the World Trade Centre. I'm afraid we can only imagine the terror and carnage there, and the many, many innocent people that will have lost their lives'. He goes on to send condolences to the American people, before saying, 'this mass terrorism is the new evil in our world today. It is perpetrated by fanatics who are utterly indifferent to the sanctity of human life and we, the democracies of the world, are going to have to come together to fight it together and eradicate this evil completely from our world'.

#### **The Muslim Council of Britain's response**

In a news release, the Council says, 'British Muslims, along with everyone else, are watching events in America with shock and horror. Whoever is responsible for these dreadful, wanton attacks, we condemn them utterly. These are senseless and evil acts that appal all people of conscience ..... no cause can justify this carnage. We hope

those responsible will swiftly be brought to justice for their unconscionable deeds'. The Council also adds a caution, 'Terror makes victims of us all, it is beyond reason. Terror on this scale must not be compounded by knee-jerk reactions that would make victims of other innocent peoples of the world. This would only add to the devastation caused'.

## **After the event (9/11)**

*September 21 2001*

### **The arrests of the Raissi family**

Lotfi Raissi, an Algerian-born pilot, is arrested by the Metropolitan Police following an extradition request from the United States authorities who believe he has crucial information about the 9/11 terrorist attacks. He is the first person to be arrested and accused of participation in the attacks. At the same time, Lotfi Raissi's French born wife, Sonia Raissi, is arrested along with his brother Mohammed Raissi. Sonia Raissi and Mohammed Raissi are both released without charge after a few days. In February 2002, Lotfi Raissi is released after a judge rules there is no evidence to connect him to any form of terrorism. On December 1<sup>st</sup> 2007, Mohammed Raissi wins an action for damages (he is claiming up to £150,000) in the High Court for wrongful arrest and false imprisonment. Sonia Raissi, however, in a joint action, is unsuccessful, as the court rules that it was reasonable for the police to suspect that she might be complicit in offences if her husband was possibly involved. The Metropolitan Police have the right to appeal. Meanwhile Lotfi Raissi pursues a case against the Home Office over their refusal to deny him compensation as a victim of a miscarriage of justice. In February 2007, the High Court rules that the Home Secretary is entitled to refuse Lotfi Raissi compensation. This decision is overturned by the Court of Appeal in February 2008 which orders the now Justice Secretary to consider awarding compensation to Lotfi Raissi.

**December 11 2001**

### **Reports published on inquiries into the summer disturbances**

The reports on the local inquiries in Burnley (known as the Clarke Report) and Oldham (known as the Ritchie Report) look beyond the events around the disturbances to the deeper and long-standing problems of race relations in the two towns. They both highlight deep-rooted separation of the majority white and the minority Asian (Muslim) populations and make recommendations on how this can be tackled by the relevant authorities. A national reports by the Independent Review Team, chaired by Ted Cante (known as the Cante Report) summarises the Team's conclusions after visits to Bradford, Oldham, Burnley, Leicester, Southall and Birmingham. The Review Team is struck by the ethnic polarisation of towns and cities resulting in many communities operating 'on a basis of a series of parallel lives. These lives do not seem to touch at any point, let alone overlap and promote any meaningful interchanges'. A Pakistani Muslim is quoted as saying 'when I leave this meeting with you I will go home and not see another white face until I come back here next week', and a young white man from a council estate as saying 'I never met

anyone on this estate who wasn't like us from around here'. The report says that some shared principles of citizenship should be developed that are owned across communities. At a more local level, it says that each area should develop a local community cohesion plan as a significant component of its Community Strategy.

The Government's report (known, after the relevant Minister, as the Denham Report) draws heavily on the findings and recommendations of these three reports as well as on the earlier Ouseley report on Bradford. It recognises that there is an increasing tendency for different ethnic groups to segregate themselves from each other and says community cohesion should be an explicit aim of government at national and local levels. It also commits the government to lead an open and constructive debate on what constitutes citizenship in a multi racial and multi-faith society.

*December 13 2001*

### **Anti-Terrorism Crime and Security Act**

Following a hurried and, at times, controversial passage through parliament, the Crime and Security Act becomes law. Its stated aim is to protect the nation from international terrorism. The Act gives the relevant Secretary of State the power to certify that a person is a terrorist or threat to national security and, if necessary, to detain the individual indefinitely. It also gives the police strengthened powers to carry out searches and examinations, take fingerprints and photographs, and remove facial covering to verify identity. These powers are not confined to suspected terrorist offences, but applied to any criminal offence. Within days of the Act becoming law, eight foreign nationals suspected of having links to international terrorism are detained. There is concern within ethnic minority communities that they could be unfairly targeted by the new powers given to the police. The Act also makes attacks on persons and property aggravated by religious hatred a criminal offence, as well as increases the maximum penalty for crimes related to racial and religious hatred.

## **YEAR 2002**

### **INTERNATIONAL TIMELINE**

#### *January to March 2002*

##### **Afghanistan**

Following a Loya Jirga or grand council, of major Afghan factions, tribal leaders and exiles, an Interim Afghan Government under Hamid Karzai is established in Kabul.

In January and February Al Qaida and Taliban forces regroup in the Shahi-Kot mountains of Pakta province bordering Pakistan. On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, Afghan and US forces launch an offensive against these forces. After some intense fighting, the remaining Al Qaida and Taliban forces retreat to the border areas of Pakistan where they establish sanctuaries among tribal protectors from which they launch cross-border guerrilla attacks against US and reconstituted Afghan National Army troops. Taliban forces also remain in hiding in the mountains of the southern provinces of Afghanistan that constitute their original heartland. For much of 2002, they tend to avoid contact with Afghan Government and US forces.

#### *February to April 2002*

##### **Guantanamo Bay Detention Camp**

The USA establishes a military prison and interrogation camp at its naval base in Guantanamo Bay. It holds people accused by the executive branch of the US Government of being Al Qaida and Taliban operatives. By July 2003, some 680 alleged Al Qaida and Taliban terrorists from 42 different countries are held at the prison. The legal status of the prison is not clear. The US Government classifies the detainees as 'enemy combatants', rather than prisoners of war, and rules that the Geneva Convention's Article 3 protecting detainees from torture and humiliating treatment, as well as a fair trial for any criminal charges brought against them, does not apply. The US courts in hearings brought before them on behalf of detainees partially accept that their power to intervene is restricted as the status of the prison is outside many US laws, although they do intervene to curb restrictions on detainees' rights in military tribunals set up to try some of the detainees. The use of the Guantanamo Detention Camp attracts increasing criticism from European Union member countries and other non-governmental organisations, such as Amnesty International. Criticism is directed at the legal status of the prison and the physical condition of the detainees. They cite reports of torture and of detainees being poorly treated.

## *Spring 2002*

### **Elections in France and Holland**

In April, the first round of voting for a new French President takes place. The extreme- right National Front candidate, Jean-Marie Le Pen, polls 16.9% of the national vote and comes second behind the incumbent president, Jacques Chirac, who is seeking re- election. In doing so, he beats the main opposition party candidate, the then Socialist Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin. Le Pen's success is, in large, due to him being able to exploit resentment amongst sections of the French white population about levels of migration into France and the threats posed to French society by its Muslim population. The shock of the first-round vote leads to the main political parties (both left and right) to join forces to stop the National Front. In the second round of voting, Jacques Chirac is easily re-elected with 86.5% of the vote.

In elections for a new Dutch government on May 15<sup>th</sup>, an anti-immigration party known as the Pim Fortuyn List comes second, with 17% of the votes cast. It gives the list 26 seats in the 150 member parliament. The Party leader, Pim Fortuyn, describes Islam as a 'backward culture', and suggests borders should be closed to Muslim immigrants. On the eve of the election, Pim Fortuyn is assassinated. The election leads to the formation of a coalition government. It collapses after little more than six months and, in new elections in January 2007, the Pim Fortuyn List becomes a minor party in parliament with just 8 seats and less than 6% of the votes cast.

### **Terrorist attacks associated with Al Qaida and Islamic terrorist movements**

#### *April 11 Tunisia*

Truck bomb destroys an historic synagogue in Djerba. It kills 21 people, including 14 German tourists.

#### *May 8 Pakistan*

A car bomb destroys a bus in Karachi killing 13 people. They are mostly French engineers working for the Pakistani navy.

#### *June 14 Pakistan*

A bomb explodes outside the American consulate in Karachi, killing 12 people.

#### *October 6 Yemen*

A dinghy filled with explosives rams a French-registered tanker, Limburg, off the coast of Yemen. One crew member is killed and 12 are injured.

#### *October 12 Indonesia*

Three bombs explode in the tourist resort of Bali. 202 people are killed including 89 Australians and 25 Britons.

### ***October 17 Philippines***

Two bombs explode in the city of Zamboanga killing 6 people. The next day a bomb explodes on a bus in the capital, Manilla, killing 3 people.

### ***November 28 Kenya***

A suicide bomber explodes a bomb in the Israeli owned Paradise Hotel in Mombassa: 13 people are killed and 80 are injured.

### **Build up to Iraq war**

#### ***September 12 2002***

US President, George W. Bush, formally begins making his case to the international community for an invasion of Iraq in his address to the United Nations (UN) Security Council. President Bush accuses Iraq of ignoring UN resolutions to cease the repression of its own people and the systematic persecution of minorities, of harbouring Al Qaida- type terrorists, and failing to comply with a succession of UN resolutions to destroy all weapons of mass destruction (primarily chemical weapons and missile systems to deliver them), as well as to allow for rigorous inspections to take place to demonstrate this. The President points out that it is four years since UN inspectors were last able to visit Iraq for weapons inspections. Key US allies in the NATO defence alliance, such as France and Germany, argue for continued diplomacy and weapons inspections, rather than the invasion of Iraq.

#### ***October 2002***

The US administration receives domestic authorisation for an invasion, with the US congress passing a resolution authorising the President to use any means necessary (including armed force) to achieve its objectives for dealing with Iraq. At this time, polls on US public opinion show a majority in favour of diplomacy, rather than an invasion of Iraq.

#### ***November 9 2002***

UN Security Council Resolution 1141: The passage of this resolution authorises the resumption of weapons inspections and promises serious consequences for Iraq if there is non compliance. Permanent Security Council member countries like Russia and France are clear that the resolution does not provide for the use of force to overthrow the Iraqi Government. The US Government and its strongest supporter, the UK, are more evasive on this point.

## **NATIONAL (THE UK) TIMELINE**

### **Levels of migration into the UK and public concern**

#### ***February 2002***

The Government, in a white paper entitled 'Secure Borders, *'Safe haven, Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain'*, sets out the government's strategy on nationality, immigration and asylum policy. It says migration will be managed to meet the social needs of the economy. It argues that if limited economic migration is allowed, abuse of the migration system will be reduced. It also commits the government to providing language teaching and citizenship education for those making a home in the UK. Home Secretary, David Blunkett, makes clear that he sees the proposals as a way forward to a workable and robust nationality and asylum system, without which 'we cannot defeat those who seek to stir up hate, intolerance and prejudice'.

#### ***February 8 2002***

Arranged marriages. Home Secretary, David Blunkett, proposes that Asian families who arrange marriages should seek spouses from Britain (and not from overseas) to aid integration and break down the 'terrible tension that exists when people are trapped between two cultures and backgrounds'. The remarks are widely interpreted as being directed towards Muslim communities in the UK.

#### ***May 2002***

There are growing attacks on levels of migration in the popular tabloids and local press This is typified by the *Wolverhampton Express and Star* which, in attacking government plans to deal with the growing number of persons seeking asylum in the UK, says 'the majority claiming asylum are single young men who have deserted their families to make a fast buck in Britain....the wisest plan would be to put them straight on the next plane back home'.

#### ***May 2***

### **Local council elections in England**

The British National Party (BNP) wins its first council seats for more than 10 years in the Lancashire town of Burnley. Three of its candidates are elected. The BNP plays on fears among some sections of the white population about the town's Muslim population following the disturbances in the previous year. The BNP also targets the Lancashire town of Oldham. It hopes to build on the success it achieved in the General Election in 2001 by further exploiting fears in the white population about the town's Muslim communities following the May 2001 disturbances there. Although the BNP receives 27.3% of the vote in the seats it contests, it narrowly fails to win a seat. This marks the high point of the BNP's electoral achievements in Oldham, and in succeeding elections its vote gradually declines.

*May 23 2002*

### **Sangatte refugee camp, France**

Following pressure from the U.K. government, the French government announces the closure of the Sangatte refugee camp in Calais. The UK government has come to view that the camp is a staging post for people wishing to enter the UK illegally. In the first six months of 2001, the rail companies operating the Channel Tunnel claim that they alone have stopped 18,500 people illegally trying to enter the UK. The camp was originally established by the French government and operated by the Red Cross in 1999 to accommodate the growing number of refugees then fleeing from the conflicts in the Balkans.

*May 23 2002*

### **Further signs of government concern over migration levels**

Government concern over immigration levels is reflected in leaked reports to newspapers that the Prime Minister is to take personal control of asylum policy and is considering mobilising Royal Navy warships to intercept people traffickers in the Mediterranean and carry out bulk deportations in RAF transport planes.

*October 2002*

### **Migration Watch formed**

Migration Watch is set up as an independent think tank by a former senior career diplomat, Sir Anthony Green. It claims that immigration from outside the EEC to the UK will be two million during the next decade and that this is contrary to the UK's interests. Migration Watch's views attract increasing coverage in the right-leaning press and its information is used by politicians and political parties wanting tougher immigration controls.

*End of 2002*

The Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act becomes law. The Act enables the government to implement a system for persons applying for British citizenship that requires such persons to show that they have 'sufficient knowledge of English and life in the UK'. They are also required to attend a formal ceremony when they obtain British citizenship at which they make an oath/pledge to the UK. The Act also tightens the criteria for the provision of benefits to asylum seekers, as well as giving the government power to open further detention centres for asylum seekers.

*Throughout 2002*

### **Public opinion surveys on public attitudes towards migration issues**

The opinion surveys show that the vast majority of people recognise that the UK is a multi-racial country and that the rights of different racial groups should be respected. A significant majority (up to 80%), however, believe that the UK's immigration

controls are not tough enough. (These views are also shared by persons from minority ethnic backgrounds.) The surveys also show that many people believe that the UK is receiving 25% of the world's refugees when it is in fact, receiving only 2%. Persons surveyed are found to exaggerate enormously the number of migrants living in the UK and the level of benefits that persons applying for asylum receive.

*2002*

**The handling of applications for asylum in the UK.**

In 2002, 110,000 applications for asylum are received. In the same period, 55,000 applications are rejected and 13,000 people who have had their asylum applications rejected are deported. These figures show the difficulties in removing applicants for asylum from the UK when their applications are rejected. The situation is not helped by the length of time applicants for asylum can wait for their applications to be determined and by some applicants voluntarily leaving the UK without informing the immigration authorities. The disparity between the number of asylum applications rejected and the number of persons deported attracts critical comment from some sections of the media and centre right politicians.

## **YEAR 2003**

### **INTERNATIONAL TIMELINE**

#### **Build up to Iraq war**

*January, February 2003*

#### **Peace initiatives from Iraq**

Iraqi government emissaries make attempts through Egypt, Syria, Turkey, France and Germany, as well as through US officials known to them, to say they are prepared to discuss and satisfy US concerns over weapons of mass destruction and ties with Al Qaida. Iraq, however, is not willing for its President, Saddam Hussein, to stand down. Nothing comes from these initiatives.

*February 2003*

#### **US Secretary of State addresses United Nations**

US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, presents evidence that Iraq has chemical and biological weapons and ties to Al Qaida (claims that subsequently are widely discredited). He goes on to argue that this makes Iraq a threat to world peace. The US, with the support of the UK and Spain, proposes a UN resolution authorising the use of force in Iraq. US allies, Canada, Germany and France, as well as Russia and China, urge continued diplomacy and more time for weapon inspections to take place. They point to the progress made by the UN inspection team, led by Hans Blix, since it returned to Iraq in January, and its reports that no weapons of mass destruction are being found. Facing the prospect of not getting UN Security Council approval, the US withdraws its resolution. The US does not seek any further UN support for its plans to invade Iraq. Its decision not to do so prompts a continuing debate over whether the US and allied invasion of Iraq is, or is not, contrary to international law. Critics argue that a further UN resolution specifically authorising military force is necessary. The US and its supporters say that the use of force was authorised by the UN in Resolution 678 passed in November 1990 at the time of Iraq's invasion of its neighbour, Kuwait. This authorised member states to restore peace and security in the area. The US argues that this is what its invasion of Iraq sought to achieve.

*February 15/16 2003*

#### **Widespread protests against invasion of Iraq**

World-wide protests take place against an invasion of and war with Iraq. Between 6 and 10 million people are estimated to have participated in protests in more than 800

cities world-wide. It is recognised to be one of the largest world wide protests ever to take place on a single issue.

### *January – March 2003*

#### **US public opinion**

In the weeks leading up to the invasion, most public opinion polls show support for an invasion of Iraq at between 55% and 65%. When people are specifically asked if more time should be given for weapons inspectors to look for weapons of mass destruction and whether specific UN approval should be given for an invasion, public opinion is more evenly split.

### *March 17 2003*

US President Bush, in an address to the nation, demands that the Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and his two sons, Uday and Qusay, who are closely involved in running the country, surrender and leave Iraq. A 48-hour deadline is given. The Iraqi Government rejects this demand and maintains it has met UN resolutions requiring it not to have chemical and other weapons of mass destruction.

### *March 2003*

#### **Countries supporting the US position**

The US Government announces 49 countries who are joining in a ‘coalition of the willing’ in favour of forcibly removing Saddam Hussein from power. It includes prominent European Union countries, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, and the UK, as well as a number of eastern European countries which are about to join the European Union. Japan and Australia also support the US. In some of these supporting countries there is significant opposition to the war. The US also says there are some 15 other nations who support military action but which wish to remain anonymous.

In Europe, France, Germany and Russia continue their opposition to the war. In January, the European Parliament passes a resolution stating ‘a pre-emptive strike would not be in accordance with international law and the UN Charter and would lead to a deeper crisis involving other countries in the region’. In the Middle East, the Arab League, with the exception of Kuwait (its hostility to Iraq stems from Iraq’s invasion of its country in 1991), opposes military action, as do the 52 member countries of the African Union and large Muslim countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, Bangladesh and Pakistan.

International support and opposition to the US position is not clear cut. Some countries like Turkey and Saudi Arabia, who are not willing for the US to mount an invasion from their countries, nevertheless do allow their air space /military bases to be used for logistical support by the US and its allies in the invasion of Iraq.

## **Invasion of Iraq**

### ***March 20 2003***

It involves some 248,000 US military personnel, 45,000 from the UK, and small contingents from Australia, Denmark and Poland. It is announced by an aerial bombardment of the Iraqi capital Baghdad and is followed, shortly afterwards, by an invasion of southern Iraq by US and UK land forces based in Kuwait and other small Persian Gulf states. US President, George Bush, speaking that day, says the objective of the invasion is to disarm Iraq of weapons of mass destruction, end Saddam Hussein's support for terrorism, and free the Iraqi people.

### ***March 26 2003***

Offensive military operations begin in Northern Iraq from the Kurdish protection zone or Iraq Kurdistan. They involve Kurdish irregular forces supported by US paratroopers and other special force units.

### ***April 6 2003***

UK forces enter Iraq's second largest city, the south Iraqi city of Basra.

### ***April 9 2003***

The capital of Iraq is formally occupied by US forces and the Government of Saddam Hussein collapses. Saddam Hussein vanishes and his whereabouts are unknown.

### ***April 2003***

The fall of Baghdad immediately sees the regional Iraqi cities of Al-Kut and Nasiriyah declare war upon each other as new groups seek to establish dominance in Iraq with the collapse of the Saddam Hussein regime. US forces get the cities to cease hostilities. It is however, a foretaste of the tensions and violence between different groups to come.

### ***April 2003***

#### **US public opinion**

A poll conducted by the Washington Post newspaper/ABC News finds 72% of the public supports the invasion. A poll for CNN News finds that 79% of the public believes the war is justified even if no illegal weapons are ever found.

## ***May 1***

### **Bush speech on aircraft carrier**

US President George W Bush lands on an American aircraft carrier in the Persian Gulf and, in a widely reported media event, announces the end of major combat operations in Iraq. Clearly visible to TV cameras in the background as the US President makes his speech is a banner stating 'mission accomplished'. Some critics describe the event as a theatrical, premature and expensive stunt. The President's White House Office points out that the President in his speech acknowledged that there was still difficult work to do in Iraq.

### **Media coverage**

The invasion is the most widely and closely reported war in military history. Nearly 800 journalists are embedded with US forces to report, under controlled conditions, military activity. US media reporting is largely sympathetic to the invasion. International media coverage is more varied. The Arab-language news channel, Al-Jazeera, whose film footage is widely used by other media and watched by Muslim audiences in particular, shows scenes of civilian casualties.

### **Casualties**

The US and UK military forces have 173 personnel killed in action during the invasion (US140 and UK33) and some 550 personnel wounded. Figures for Iraqi casualties are more variable. The most reliable estimates suggest that Iraqi military fatalities are between five and ten thousand, and civilian fatalities between three and eight thousand.

### **After the invasion of Iraq**

## ***May 2003***

### **Coalition Provisional Authority**

US appoint their ambassador, Paul Bremer, as civil administrator, and a transitional government is created, known as the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA). At a press conference, Bremer says 'we will provide the conditions for Iraqis to govern themselves in the future. To that end the CPA will work with responsible Iraqis to begin the process of establishing a government representative of all the people of Iraq'. It is a theme repeatedly used by the US President and other leading US Government officials at the time. On May 23<sup>rd</sup>, Bremer formally orders the dissolution of the Iraqi army and other entities of Saddam Hussein's Baathist state. This decision not to use what remained of the Iraqi military to help maintain order at this time becomes a subject of much debate.

## **Looting**

Most serious is the looting of cached weaponry and ordnance. As many as 250,000 tons of explosives are unaccounted for by October. It is used to fuel the forthcoming insurgency. There is also some looting of pieces from Iraq's museums. Commentators argue the looting is due to the US and allied forces not having sufficient troop numbers to guard key institutions as military hostilities cease.

## **Search for key members of the Iraqi government**

US forces promptly begin searching for fugitives from Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath party and government. Key figures are gradually rounded up. On July 23<sup>rd</sup>, Saddam Hussein's sons, Uday and Qusey, are killed in a raid by US troops. On December 13<sup>th</sup>, Saddam Hussein is captured in Adwar, a village 15 kilometres from Tikrit.

*June 1 2003*

## **Baghdad**

There is a report of an attack on US troops in Baghdad eastern neighbourhood of Azamiyah. About a dozen Iraqi fighters in the Abu Hanifa mosque shoot and toss grenades at US army troops. Two US soldiers are injured. The Americans return fire and two Iraqis are reported killed. It is the first of what is to become a series of sustained attacks on US and coalition forces in the months and years ahead.

*July 13 2003*

## **First steps towards an Iraqi government**

The Iraqi Governing Council is formed under the authority of the CPA and starts to assume some government functions from September. In November, it issues a timetable for transferring the country to Iraqi control.

*August 2003*

## **Significant civilian casualties from bombings**

On August 7<sup>th</sup>, a truck bomb kills 19 people outside the Jordanian Embassy in Baghdad. On August 19<sup>th</sup>, a truck bomb explodes at the UN headquarters in Baghdad. It kills top UN envoy, Sergio Viera de Mello, and 21 other people. On August 29<sup>th</sup>, influential Shiite cleric, Ayatollah Mohammed Baqr al Hakim, is killed by a car bomb blast as he leaves his mosque after Friday prayers. A further 84 other people are killed in the blast.

### ***October 2003***

The US sponsored Iraq survey group to look for Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), in a report issued on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, finds little evidence of their existence. It says that although plans existed, they were dormant. It does find a clandestine network of biological laboratories capable of developing chemical weapons. On October 16<sup>th</sup>, the UN Security Council issues resolution 1511 to provide for a multinational force to assist in the reconstruction of Iraq. It preserves, however, US control on Iraq. On October 26<sup>th</sup>, the night time curfew in Baghdad is lifted to accommodate the observation of Ramadan. It has been in existence since Baghdad fell to US forces six months earlier.

### ***December 2003***

The Japanese government approves the sending of 1,000 troops to Iraq to help in the reconstruction. The troops begin deployment in January.

## **Terrorist attacks associated with Al Qaida and Islamic terrorist movements**

### ***February 28 2003***

#### **Pakistan**

Gunmen kill two policemen in an attack on the US consulate in Karachi.

### ***March 4 2003***

#### **Philippines**

A bomb explodes at the airport in the town of Davao: 21 people are killed.

### ***May 12 2003***

#### **Saudi Arabia**

There are attacks on three compounds containing Europeans and Americans. In the capital, Riyadh, 26 people are killed.

### ***May 16 2003***

#### **Morocco**

There are a series of suicide bombings in Casablanca: 33 civilians are killed and also 12 suicide bombers.

*August 5 2003*

**Indonesia**

A car suicide bomb outside the Marriott Hotel in Jakarta kills 12 people.

*November 15 2003*

**Turkey**

Two truck bombs explode outside synagogues in Istanbul, killing 27 people.

*November 20 2003*

**Turkey**

Truck bombs explode at the HSBC bank and British consulate in Istanbul, killing 30 people.

**Afghanistan**

From late 2002 onwards, the Taliban begins a recruitment drive in the Pashtun areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan to find recruits for a renewed 'jihad' (holy war) against the Afghan government and the US led coalition. By the summer, major bases are created in the mountainous tribal areas of Pakistan by both the Taliban and Al Qaida to train new recruits in guerrilla warfare and terrorist tactics. The Pakistan authorities appear unable to stop the establishment of these bases or the passage of fighters into Afghanistan to engage Afghan and US forces in guerrilla warfare. The Taliban also begin building up guerrilla forces within their heartlands of Afghanistan. It is reported that the Taliban leader, Mullah Omar, has named a ten-man leadership council to prosecute the war of resistance with himself at the head. The build up of Taliban resistance results in Afghan and US forces preparing offensive military operations against them. Whilst some military success is achieved, the Taliban are never defeated.

**NATIONAL (UK) TIMELINE**

*January 5 2003*

**London, Wood Green ricin plot**

Six Algerian men (all Muslim) are arrested by police following a raid on a flat in Wood Green on suspicion of manufacturing ricin intended for use in a terrorist poison attack on the London underground. In the following week, nine other men and women are arrested in London, Bournemouth and Manchester for terrorist acts that include the manufacture of ricin. The large circulation tabloid news paper, *the Sun*, reports on

'the discovery of a factory of death'. Other newspapers carry front-page headlines, '250,000 of us could have died', 'Poison gang on the loose', and 'Killer with no antidote'. The Director of Public Health for London urges the public not to be alarmed by some of the media reporting.

A month later, US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, uses the incident as part of his evidence of a global terrorist network to the United Nations and the US Congress in making the case for military intervention in Iraq. He refers to those arrested as the 'UK poison cell'.

Five of the persons arrested are eventually charged and brought to trial. The others are released. Only one person charged is eventually convicted. He is Kamel Bourgass who is sentenced to 17 years for conspiring with other unknown persons to commit a public nuisance by the use of poisons and /or explosives to cause disruption, fear, or injury. It is based on evidence from his handwritten notes on how to make ricin and some other poisons. During the trial, it emerges publicly for the first time that the fact that no ricin had been found was known to the Government within a few days of the original arrests in January 2003. Kamel Bourgass is given a life sentence for the murder while he was being arrested of a police officer, DC Oaks.

## **Build up to Iraq War**

*February 16 2003*

### **London march against Iraq War**

Hundreds of thousands of people take to the streets of London to voice their opposition to military action in Iraq. At least 750,000 people take part and it could be over one million. The march is organised by the Stop the War Coalition, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and the Muslim Association of Britain. The Metropolitan Police says it is one of the largest demonstrations it has ever experienced and it is overwhelmingly peaceful in nature. Prominent speakers at the protest are former US Presidential candidate, Jesse Jackson, ex-Labour Government Minister, Mo Mowlem, Liberal Democrat Party leader, Charles Kennedy, London Mayor, Ken Livingston and playwright, Harold Pinter. Prime Minister, Tony Blair, in a message directed at the protesters, talks of the 'bloody consequences' if Iraq is not confronted.

*March 18 2003*

### **Parliament debates invasion of Iraq**

The government receives the support of the majority of MPs for British military forces to participate in a US-led invasion of Iraq. The government's case is that its purpose is to 'disarm Iraq of weapons of mass destruction' and 'not regime change' (although it admits it would welcome this). The government receives the support of 412 MPs. It includes 254 Labour and 146 Conservative MPs, but 84 Labour and 52 Liberal Democrat MPs, plus a handful of Conservative MPs, vote against the government. cabinet minister and former Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, resigns

from the government and, in the debate, describes the approach of the Prime Minister in supporting the US as 'reckless'.

## **Levels of migration into the UK and public concern**

*January 2003*

### **Continuing media attacks on so-called 'bogus' asylum seekers**

There are virulent attacks in the tabloid press on persons entering the UK and applying, on the grounds of asylum, to stay. *The Sun's* 'daily asylum madness campaign' persuades 385,000 of its readers to sign up to its petition 'I call upon Prime Minister Tony Blair to protect Britain before it is too late'. Other tabloid newspaper headlines around this time include the fictitious and misleading headlines, '1 in 4 asylum seekers ends up in the UK', 'asylum blamed for aids crisis in Britain' and 'luxury life of asylum seekers'. One of the most notorious and false headlines appears in *The Sun* newspaper which accuses asylum seekers of killing and spit-roasting swans from royal parks in London.

*January 14 2003*

### **Killing of a police officer in Manchester**

Public concern about migration and its alleged links to terrorism is heightened when a special branch police officer (DC Oaks) is killed in a raid on a flat in the Crumpsall district of Manchester. The three men in the flat are of North African origin and, apart from any involvement in terrorist activities, are also suspected of living illegally in the UK. The murder of the police officer attracts widespread publicity and is used by right-wing politicians to claim that the chaotic state of the immigration system means people are getting into the UK to pursue terrorist activities. It soon brings electoral dividends for the far-right British National Party (BNP). For the first time, a wins a council seat in a by-election in Halifax, West Yorkshire.

*April 2003*

### **Tighter controls on asylum applications but need for skilled migrants recognised**

On April 1<sup>st</sup>, new rules are introduced to restrict the grounds on which asylum seekers can appeal against a decision not to admit them to the UK. They remove the right to appeal where an applicant for asylum either resides in or has travelled from a country which is deemed as a safe haven. Shortly afterwards, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his budget speech, announces a range of measures to make it easier for migrants to work in the UK in those industries where there are labour shortages. In particular, the measures target overseas graduates in technology subjects, engineers, and construction workers. There are also measures to help lower-skilled migrants to enter the food processing and hospitality industries where there are labour shortages. The need for migrants to meet labour shortages is reflected in the increase in work permits given to persons from overseas countries to work in the UK. They increase from 68,000 in 1998, to 170,000 in 2002.

*April 3 2003*

### **Court cases arising from the Oldham disturbances of 2001**

One of the last trials of persons facing prosecution for crimes during these disturbances starts in the Manchester Crown Court. It involves a group of 12 white men, women and youths charged with causing various violent disorder offences in May 2001 that sparked the disturbances. The court hears evidence of attacks on Asian people and on their homes and businesses in the Glodwick area of Oldham. Evidence is also given that the defendants have far-right political views. The defendants are found guilty in the jury trial and ten receive jail sentences of up to nine months. The sentences are criticised as being too lenient by some Muslim commentators, as some Asian youths found guilty of criminal behaviour in the disturbances received longer prison sentences. The main reason for the difference is that charges of riot (which attract longer custodial sentences) are dropped against the white defendants in this case, due to lack of evidence, whereas this was not the case for some of the Asian youths charged with criminal offences.

*May 1 2003*

### **Local council elections in England**

The British National Party builds on its previous election success in Burnley and wins a further five seats. It becomes the second largest party on the council with eight seats. This proves to be the high point of the BNP's success in the town. In subsequent elections, it loses seats and, by 2007, the number of BNP councillors in Burnley is reduced to four. In these elections, the BNP also wins for the first time four seats in the West Midlands. They are all in predominantly white working-class wards in urban areas (Sandwell, Dudley and Stoke). Whilst the BNP targets Muslims communities and links them to terrorism in its election campaign material, the towns where the BNP wins seats do not have the largest Asian Muslim communities in the West Midlands.

*September 2003*

### **Fall in asylum-seeker applications**

Prime Minister Tony Blair, in a BBC TV interview talks, about the Government's target of halving the number of claims from persons seeking asylum in the UK. Subsequent Home Office figures shows that in the final three months of 2003, the number of claims for asylum falls from 22,030 in 2002 to 11,955 in 2003, and says this is due to measures taken to deter unfounded claims and the deportation of a record average of more than 1,500 persons per month whose asylum claims have been rejected. . The Conservative Party-aligned *Daily Telegraph* newspaper, however, following the Prime Minister's September interview, runs a major story saying over 300,000 refugees who have been ordered out of Britain in the last 13 years have failed

to leave and have disappeared. It also claims that currently 200 asylum seekers a day are disappearing and carries a quote from the shadow Conservative Party Home Secretary condemning the chaos in the asylum system. In contrast groups supporting asylum seekers claim that the Government is deliberately under playing the number of applications for asylum that are successful in order to appease public concerns about levels of migration into the UK.

### **Criminal Justice Act 2003**

This is a wide-ranging Act designed to modernise many areas of the criminal justice system. Certain provisions specifically relate to suspected terrorist cases. The Act doubles the period of detention of a terrorist suspect for questioning by the police to 14 days. It is justified by the claim that forensic analysis of chemical weapons materials might not be complete in seven days.



## **YEAR 2004**

### **INTERNATIONAL TIMELINE**

#### **Iraq**

##### **Developing insurgency**

Throughout the year, the insurgency develops as a reaction to local events and to the realisation that the US military and authorities are unable to bring about security in Iraq. The insurgents comprise two main groups: the Arab Sunnis who comprise around 17% of the population and who previously dominated the Government of Saddam Hussein, and the Arab Shi'ites who comprise around 60% of the population and suffered persecution from Saddam Hussein's government. The Sunnis fear the Shias will dominate Iraq in future and also oppose the occupation by US and coalition forces. They are allied with foreign Mujahedin (Al Qaida) fighters who enter Iraq to fight a jihad against US/coalition forces. The Sunni militants (often Al Qaida) frequently use suicide car bombs against Shi'ite civilians and the mainly Shi'ite Iraqi police stations. The Shi'ites have their own militia grouped around the leading Shi'ite cleric Muqtadaal Sadir and known as the Mahdi Army. Some members of the Shi'ite-dominated Iraqi security forces are involved with the Mahdi army. They show a particular zeal for vigilante justice in response to Sunni attacks. It includes death squad style killings with persons being kidnapped and killed (particularly if ransom money is not paid) and their bodies dumped on the road side. The strength of the Sunni and Shi'ite insurgents is estimated to be between 50,000 and 60,000.

The lack of security as a result of the insurgency leads to growing criticism of the US and coalition authorities as well as of the Iraqi leaders seen as being most closely tied to them. Iraqis who believe in and advocate a secular approach to the Iraqis' future find themselves sidelined by religious factions. It also leads to Baghdad becoming split into Sunni and Shi'ite enclaves. Mixed neighbourhoods of Shi'ite and Sunni Muslims can no longer co-exist.

##### ***March 2004***

Almost 200 people are killed on March 2<sup>nd</sup> in a series of bomb blasts in Baghdad and Karbala at the climax of the Shi'a festival of Ashurah. On March 8<sup>th</sup>, a provisional constitution for a new Iraqi government is agreed.

##### ***April 2004***

Insurgents begin kidnapping and assassinating foreign civilians working in Iraq for contractors /sub contractors engaged in reconstruction projects and providing supporting functions to the US and coalition forces. Lucrative contracts (largely from the US Government) attract a range of contractors to Iraq. They employ up to 182,000 people, of whom 118,000 are Iraqis and 21,000 Americans. Some of their work is

highly dangerous, such as protecting military convoys and key government personnel. Iraqis working for these contractors are amongst the casualties.

#### ***April 18 2004***

The newly-elected socialist government in Spain withdraws its troops from the coalition forces in Iraq. Pictures are also broadcast across the world by the media of Iraqi detainees in the Abu Ghraib prison being humiliated by US soldiers. They lead to growing criticism of US involvement in Iraq, particularly amongst Muslim communities in many countries.

#### ***June 2004***

The Iraqi Interim government, led by Prime Minister Iyad Allawi, comes into being. UN resolution 1546 on June 8<sup>th</sup> transfers authority from the Coalition Provisional Authority to the Interim Government. On June 28<sup>th</sup>, the US-led Coalition Provisional Authority formally transfers sovereignty of Iraqi territory to the Interim Government and Ambassador Paul Bremer departs.

#### ***July 2004***

The Philippines government withdraws its personnel from coalition forces.

### **Terrorist attacks associated with Al Qaida and Islamic terrorist movements**

#### ***February 27 2004***

##### **Philippines**

A TV set filled with explosives explodes on a ferry at sea that has departed from Manila 90 minutes earlier, killing 116 people.

#### ***March 11 2004***

##### **Spain**

Ten bombs explode on four commuter trains in Madrid, killing 191 people and injuring 2050. Three people (believed to be the ringleaders) suspected of involvement in the attacks blow themselves up a month later in a house in Madrid, as police move in to arrest them. In October 2007, after a four month trial of 28 defendants charged with various offences relating to the March 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, 21 are found guilty. Three defendants are convicted of mass murder (they receive terms of life imprisonment) and eighteen are found guilty of lesser offences.

*May 1 2004*

**Saudi Arabia**

Gunmen attack a petro-chemical plant at Yanbu where Europeans are working, killing 7 people.

*May 29 2004*

**Saudi Arabia**

Terrorists take 50 hostages in attacks on oil industry installations and a foreign workers housing complex at Khobar. The hostages are ultimately released by armed forces. In the incident, 22 people are killed.

*September 9 2004*

**Indonesia**

A car bomb explodes outside the Australian Embassy in Jakarta, killing 11 people.

*October 7 2004*

**Israel**

Bombs explode at a number of tourist hotels in the Sinai Peninsula: 34 people are killed, mostly Israelis.

*June 10 2004*

**Europe, European Parliamentary elections**

In European countries outside of the UK, the election results are estimated to give far-right and nationalist parties some 45 seats, double the number of the previous parliament. The main countries where these parliamentary members are elected are France, Italy and Poland. In other countries, such as Austria and Holland, where far-right nationalist parties had enjoyed some domestic electoral success, there are sharp falls in the votes received by these parties. The consensus amongst political commentators is that far-right/nationalist parties have done less well than expected, given the levels of public disillusionment with European Union institutions and concerns about migration. It is also predicted that these parties will have little influence in the European Parliament, as they tend to have their own very narrow nationalistic agendas.

*July 22 2004*

**United States 9/11 Commission Report**

The report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States is published. The Commission was formed in late 2002 to prepare a full and complete

account of the circumstances surrounding the 9/11 attacks, including preparedness for and the immediate response to, the attacks. The report determines that the animosity towards the United States felt by the architects of and the hijackers involved in the 9/11 attacks stems from their profound disagreement with US policy and actions in the Middle East. It also states that the plotters of the 9/11 attacks spent up to half a million dollars to plan and conduct the attacks, but accepts that the actual sources of these funds remain unknown.

### *November 2004*

#### **US Presidential election**

US President George Bush is re-elected to serve a further term of four years, with a clear, if narrow, majority over his Democratic Party rival, Senator John Kerry. He secures just less than 51% of the votes cast and secures 286 Electoral College votes (16 more than the required 270). The election campaign is widely seen as a referendum on President Bush's performance during his first four years and, in particular, his conduct of the 'War on Terrorism' and the validity of the invasion of Iraq. The election result suggests that a slim majority of the US public backs its President's actions.

## **NATIONAL (UK) TIMELINE**

### *January 1 2004*

#### **Extradition Act 2003**

The Act comes into force and covers all import and export extradition requests. Under the Act, a judge, when hearing a request for extradition of a person from the UK to a foreign country to face criminal charges, must be satisfied that there is sufficient evidence to establish a prima facie case against the person concerned. This requirement to provide prima facie evidence does not apply to extradition requests of UK residents from the US and a small number of other Commonwealth countries. This causes controversy, given the US record of treating persons suspected of terrorism since 9/11. There is also concern that if the UK wants to extradite a person from the US to face criminal charges in the UK it has to meet a more rigorous test, i.e. satisfy the US authorities that there is a prima facie case to be answered.

### *16 March 2004*

#### **Public opinion survey on Iraq war**

Findings from an ICM poll of British attitudes on the Iraq war one year later, for the BBC Newsnight programme, show that 48% of persons responding to the survey believe it was right to take military action and 43% believe it was wrong. The poll shows that nearly half of respondents believe the UK's close relationship with the US is in the UK's interests. The picture changes when people are asked for their views on

the closeness of the UK Prime Minister, Tony Blair, with US President, George Bush: 29% believe it is bad for the UK and only 25% believe it is good.

### ***March 30 2004***

#### **Operation Crevice**

Police arrest seven men of Pakistani origin in response to reports of terrorist cells operating in the Thames Valley, Sussex, Surrey, and Bedfordshire. In some of the men's homes, quantities of ammonium nitrate fertilizer and aluminium powder are found which can be used to make explosives.

The trial of the seven men begins in March 2006 and lasts until April 2007. A lot of the prosecution's evidence is based on an informant, Mohammed J Babar, who has already been found guilty of terrorist offences in the USA. The reported targets of the terrorist cells are said to be the Blue Water shopping centre in Kent, a London night club, and London synagogues. Five of the men are found guilty of conspiring to cause explosions likely to endanger life and are sentenced to life imprisonment. The other two men are not found guilty.

### ***May 2004***

#### **Enlargement of European Union (EU)**

The EU is enlarged to twenty-five member states. It includes Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, small Baltic states such as Latvia and Estonia, and the Commonwealth Mediterranean countries, Malta and Cyprus. The increase in the size of the EU leads to speculation in some UK tabloid newspapers that there will be a large influx of foreign workers into the UK who will take jobs from British workers. This is a view exploited by anti UK and far-right political parties.

### ***June 10 2004***

#### **Local council elections in England**

In local council elections in predominantly urban areas, the BNP for the first time wins four council seats in Bradford, with its significant Muslim population. The number of BNP councillors in England rises to twenty-one. Overall, however, the BNP does less well than it expected. Its average share of the vote where it contests elections is similar to the previous council elections in 2003.

### ***June 10 2004***

#### **European Parliamentary elections**

The British National Party (BNP) fields a full list of candidates (75) for the eleven regional /country constituencies in the UK. It receives a total of 808,200 votes, which represents 4.9% of the votes cast. Under the proportional voting system for electing

members to the European Parliament, the BNP fails to have any candidates elected. This is mainly due to the strong vote (16.1% of votes cast) for the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), whose right-wing nationalistic agenda takes votes away from the more overtly racist BNP. The BNP's best results are in the West Yorkshire and West Midlands regional constituencies, where the BNP again seek to exploit fears within the white population about the significant Muslim communities in these areas.

*July 15 2004*

### **BBC television documentary on the British National Party**

An undercover investigation by a BBC reporter reveals that the BNP is a party racked by racism and violence. Party leader, Nick Griffin, is shown at a party meeting in Keighley, West Yorkshire, saying that 'Islam is a wicked, vicious faith', and that the Quran authorises Muslims to rape white women and children. The party founder, J Tyndall, is shown making a speech in which he claims that the only things that Africans and Asians have produced is black magic, witchcraft, cannibalism, and aids. Other BNP members are shown boasting about putting excrement through Asian shop letter boxes and wanting to blow up mosques and kill worshippers. The programme is watched by four million viewers and attracts widespread and critical broadcast and tabloid newspaper coverage of the BNP. After police inquiries, charges for incitement to racial hatred are brought against the BNP party leader and one of his leading cohorts, Mark Collett. The cases are heard before juries in Leeds in 2006. There is a retrial after the jury fails to reach a verdict in the first hearing in early 2006. Ultimately, the defendants are acquitted at a second trial in November. The BNP claims it is a victory for freedom of speech. The prosecuting authorities, however, say that the acquittals are due to legal constraints on what constitutes incitement to racial hatred.

**August 3 2004**

### **Financial buildings plot**

A group of fourteen Muslim men are arrested by the police as they are suspected of planning attacks on financial buildings in the US and the London rail and underground systems. They are commonly known as the 'Luton cell' as they all come from the Luton area. At the time of the arrests, the group has no funding, vehicles or access to bomb- making equipment. Incriminating information is found, however, of plans to carry out explosions on buildings and the London underground. The plans for the attacks are suspected of being approved by Al Qaida. The timing of the men's arrests is believed to have been prompted by the leaking of the identity of an Al Qaida double agent.

Criminal charges are brought against eight of the arrested men. No, or only minor, charges are brought against the other six men who are all released from custody. The suspected leader of the group, Dhiren Barot, pleads guilty at an early stage in the inquiries and, in October 2006, is sentenced at his trial to life imprisonment. The trial of the other seven men commences in the spring of 2007.

***September 16 2004***

**Iraq: kidnapping and killing of British contract worker, Kenneth Bigley.**

The first high profile case of a British contract worker being kidnapped takes place. Kenneth Bigley is a civilian engineer from Liverpool working on reconstruction projects in Iraq. He is abducted with two US citizens in the al-Mansour district of Baghdad. Two days later the Tawhid and Jihad (Oneness of God and Jihad) Islamist group led by the Jordanian Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi release a video of the kidnapped men. They say the men will be killed (beheaded) within 48 hours unless Iraqi women held by coalition forces are released (in reality no women are being held). The two Americans are duly executed.

Kenneth Bigley's case becomes a major public (and thus media) issue in the UK. The Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary (Jack Straw) make contact with the Bigley family, saying everything is being done, short of direct negotiations with the kidnappers, to secure Kenneth Bigley's release. Leaflets from the British Embassy are distributed in Baghdad asking for information. The Muslim Council of Britain publicly condemns the kidnapping and sends a delegation to Iraq to negotiate Bigley's release and three leaders of Middle Eastern countries publicly appeal for his release. Two further videos are released by the kidnappers showing Bigley pleading for his life.

On October 8<sup>th</sup> middle east news channels report that Bigley had been killed the previous day. His body has never been recovered. A multi-faith memorial service is held for him in Liverpool on November 13<sup>th</sup>. It is attended by the Prime Minister. On October 19<sup>th</sup> an Irish born aid worker, Margaret Hassan, who held British, Irish and Iraqi citizenship, is kidnapped and killed two weeks later.

***September 24 2004***

**London red mercury plot**

Police arrest four men at the Holiday Brent Cross for trying to buy 'red mercury' a mythical substance - which could be used to make a dirty bomb - from an undercover reporter from the *News of the World* newspaper. Three of the men are charged with trying to set up funding or property for the purposes of terrorism, as well as conspiring to obtain a highly dangerous substance for the same purposes. One man is released a few days later without trial. At the end of the three men's trial in July 2005, the jury clears them of all criminal charges.

The men's lawyers say the not-guilty verdict by the jury is a great tribute to the jury system and English justice and a dark day for the *News of the World*. The *News of the World* defends its actions by saying it is entirely satisfied that its undercover reporter

conducted his investigation using wholly proper methods which included close liaison with the police.

### ***October 2004***

#### **Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants) Act 2004**

The Act is passed and is brought into force in early 2005 through a series of commencement orders bringing in new procedural rules. The Act establishes a single tier tribunal known as the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal, to hear all appeals against Home Office decisions on asylum and immigration decisions. Appeals from this tribunal to the higher courts are restricted and curbs placed on the obtainment of legal aid in such cases. It also introduces a range of measures to tackle abuse of the immigration/asylum system and fraudulent claims. It includes the introduction of rules to prevent people from marrying non-citizens for the sole purpose of allowing them to become residents of the UK. They are more commonly known as rules to prevent 'sham marriages'. In a landmark judgement in a case brought before the High Court in April 2006, the court rules that these rules breach human rights laws as they require immigrants from outside the European Union to require permission from the Home Office to marry anywhere other than in an Anglican Church and this unfairly disadvantages, without any good reason, not only non-Anglican Christians, but also persons of other faiths e.g. Jews, Muslims and Hindus.

### ***December 16 2004***

#### **Terror detainees win Lords appeal**

The highest UK court, the House of Lords, rules that the indefinite detention of foreign nationals suspected of being terrorists is incompatible with human rights laws. The case is brought by eight of the detained suspected terrorists and is determined by the House of Lords after conflicting decisions in the lower courts over the legality of indefinite detention. The detainees' solicitor says the detention has driven four of his clients to 'madness', with two being held in the Broadmoor prison hospital. The new Home Secretary, Charles Clarke, says the men will remain in detention until the law is reviewed.

## **YEAR 2005**

### **INTERNATIONAL TIMELINE**

#### **Iraq**

*January 30 2005*

#### **Elections for transitional National Assembly**

The Arab Shi'ite parties obtain an absolute majority. The Kurdish parties have the second highest number of seats. The Arab Sunni population and its respective political parties largely boycott the election and end up with only a handful of seats in the legislature. In April, Jalal Talabani (a Kurd) becomes President, and Ibrahim al-Jaafari becomes Prime Minister. One of the early tasks of the new parliament is to draft a new constitution.

*August 2005*

#### **Iraqi public opinion**

An opinion poll carried out for the UK Ministry of Defence by Iraqi University researchers is leaked to the UK media. It finds that 82% of the Iraqi population are strongly opposed to the presence of US and other coalition troops and less than one percent believe that coalition troops are responsible for any improvement in security.

*October 2005*

A new constitution is formally ratified by the Assembly. It provides for a 275 member Council of Representatives. The new constitution, through the voting system and the composition of the legislature, seeks to ensure a balance of representation between the three main population/religious groupings (the majority Shi'ite Arab population and the minority Arab Sunni and Kurdish Sunni populations). It also stipulates that 25% of the seats in the new legislature must be occupied by women.

*December 15 2005*

Voting takes place for a permanent Council of Representatives (legislature). There is a high turnout with up to 70% of the electorate voting. There is a low level of violence during polling. No political grouping or ethnic/religious faction has a majority of seats in the new legislature. The Shi'ite United Iraqi Alliance is the largest group with 128 (41%) of the seats in the legislature.

**Terrorist attacks associated with Al Qaida and Islamic terrorist movements.**

*July 23 2005*

**Egypt**

Bomb attacks occur at the resort of Sharm el-Sheikh, killing 88 people.

*August 17 2005*

**Bangladesh**

There are 500 explosions across the country and 2 people are killed. In March 2007, six so-called Islamic militants convicted of masterminding the attacks are executed in a move seen as an attempt by the Bangladeshi authorities to snuff out extremist violence in this majority Muslim country.

*October 1 2005*

**Indonesia**

Bombs explode south of Bali, killing 23 people.

*October 29 2005*

**India**

Three bombs explode in Delhi, killing 59 people and injuring over 200. A previously unheard-of Islamic group claims responsibility.

*November 9 2005*

**Jordan**

There are co-ordinated bomb attacks on three United States-owned hotels in Amman: 63 people are killed.

*December 31 2005*

**Indonesia**

A nail bomb explodes in Palu, killing 8 people.

## **NATIONAL (UK) TIMELINE**

*March 11 2005*

### **Prevention of Terrorism Act**

The Act receives Royal assent and is primarily intended to deal with the House of Lords ruling in December that the indefinite detention of foreign nationals is incompatible with human rights legislation. The Act replaces indefinite detention in prison with 'control orders' which allows the Home Secretary or the Courts to apply to any person resident in the UK (British and non-British persons) restrictions on their movements where it is considered necessary to prevent the involvement of that individual in terrorism-related activity. Some commentators have described it as a form of house arrest. This section of the Act is subject to annual review by parliament and to date it has been renewed.

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, eleven control orders are issued on suspected terrorists held in prison so that they can be released. By October, only three of these orders are still in force.

*April 2005*

### **General Election campaign and the immigration issue**

The Conservative Party makes what it terms 'controlled immigration' one of its top five campaign issues. It says it will place an annual limit on the number of people who can settle in Britain so that immigration is substantially reduced. It accuses the Labour Government of letting immigration get out of control and describes the system for assessing asylum-seeker applications to the UK as being in chaos. The issue is highlighted for voters in individual letters from the Conservative Party leader and in campaign advertising. The Labour Party rejects Conservative criticism. Prime Minister Tony Blair, in a speech at the major UK entry port of Dover (April 22<sup>nd</sup>), says Conservative proposals to control immigration are impractical, that strict controls are in place, and that immigration has brought and continues to bring, economic and social benefits to the UK. The British National Party (BNP) follows its traditional line on immigration, calling for a complete halt, and voluntary resettlement to countries of origin for migrants already legally settled in the UK. The nationalist United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), in its candidates' electoral addresses across the UK, gives prominence to immigration with the slogan 'say no to uncontrolled immigration'. As the election campaign progresses, immigration receives less media attention compared with other issues, and opinion polls suggest that immigration, for most people, will not determine how they vote.

*May 5 2005*

### **General Election**

The Labour Party remains in Government, with a parliamentary majority of 66 seats. The BNP contests 119 parliamentary seats. It receives a total of 192,750 votes, or an average vote of 1,620 (4.2% vote share) in the constituencies where it stands. The BNP's best results are in the constituencies of Barking (16.9% of votes cast), Dewsbury (13.1%), and Burnley (10.3%). In Oldham, there is a significant fall in the BNP's vote compared to the 2001 general election. The BNP party leader, Nick Griffin, contests the Keighley constituency in Bradford. He hopes to exploit concerns in the white population about cases in 2004 of young Asian (Muslim) men exploiting young white girls for sex and drugs, known as 'grooming'. The issue had also been highlighted in an ITV Channel Four documentary. The BNP leader receives just 9% of the votes cast and comes fourth behind the three mainstream political parties.

*July 7 2005*

### **London bombings**

Four bombs explode on the transport network in London towards the end of the morning rush hour. Three bombs explode on tube trains and one on a bus. Over 50 people are killed and some 700 are injured. The planters of the bombs kill themselves in the process. Police inquiries establish that they are all Muslims, with three being British nationals of Pakistani ethnic origin, and one a British national of Jamaican ethnic origin. There is evidence suggesting they have come under the influence of the Al Qaida terrorist network, with two of the bombers known to have visited Pakistan shortly before the attack. Government ministers and the police publicly appeal for Muslim communities in the UK not to be stigmatised or subject to reprisals as a result of the bombings. However, in the immediate aftermath, there are reports of attacks on mosques and other Islamic institutions in the London boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Merton and, elsewhere, in Birkenhead, Bristol, Telford, and West Yorkshire. The head of the Muslim Council of Britain, Sir Iqbal Sacranie, visits West Yorkshire, where three of the suicide bombers came from, and meets some of their relatives. He says the families concerned are in a state of shock at what has happened. He also says that Muslims condemn such terrorist activities and asks the question about what Muslim communities themselves have been doing (i.e. to deal with extreme Islamic beliefs). The highest-ranking Asian Police Officer in the UK, Metropolitan Police Assistant Commissioner Tariq Ghaffur, in an interview, says Muslims and their leaders must do more than just condemn the bombings. He also urges Muslims and their leaders to inform on potential terrorists and their supporters.

Shortly afterwards on July 14<sup>th</sup>, in a council by election for a new councillor in the London borough of Barking and Dagenham, the BNP seeks to exploit public concern about the bombings with an electoral leaflet showing an aerial photograph of the bus devastated by a bomb, with the slogan 'maybe now it's time to start listening to the

BNP'. The BNP however, fail to win the election and come second with 19% of the votes cast, which is well behind the winning Labour Party candidate.

### ***July 21 2005***

#### **Failed London bombings**

Four bombs are planted on the London transport network but fail to explode properly. The following day CCTV images of four suspects wanted in connection the bombings are released. By July 29<sup>th</sup>, three suspects are arrested. A fourth suspect is arrested in Italy and later extradited to the UK. In July 2007 the suspected bombers are each found guilty of conspiracy to murder and sentenced to jail for a minimum of 40 years. They are all Muslim men aged in their twenties.

### ***July 22 2005***

#### **Shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes**

Whilst searching for the suspected bombers, armed Metropolitan Police officers shoot dead a Brazilian national, Jean Charles de Menezes, inside Stockwell Tube Station, as they mistakenly assume him to be one of the suspects. The events around the shooting quickly become a matter of dispute and the issue a long-running controversy. The shooting automatically triggers an investigation by the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC), which leads to the Metropolitan Police being charged with failing in its duty to protect the public under health and safety legislation. No charges are laid against individual police officers. In November 2007, the Metropolitan Police is found guilty in a trial before a jury of a breach of health and safety legislation. Shortly after the trial finishes, the IPCC investigation report is made public. The report accuses the head of the Metropolitan Police, Sir Ian Blair, of trying to block the investigation. This is disputed by the Metropolitan Police.

### ***July 2005***

#### **You Gov surveys on public attitudes on incidents**

A You Gov /Daily Telegraph survey carried out on July 8<sup>th</sup> of a representative sample of 1854 adults finds:

- High satisfaction ratings (around 90%) with the way the government and the emergency services dealt with the July 7<sup>th</sup> bombings in London.
- Over 90% of respondents believe further terrorist attacks are likely.
- 72% of respondents believe the UK's role in Iraq has made the UK more vulnerable to attacks by Islamic terrorists.
- 87% of respondents believe most British Muslims are peaceful law-abiding citizens who deplore terrorist acts. However, a significant number believe that there is a minority of Muslims who has no loyalty to the UK and who condones terrorist attacks.

- 70% of respondents believes it may be necessary to restrict the activities of persons who are suspected of terrorism but where there is insufficient evidence to convict them.
- 88% of respondents says July 7<sup>th</sup> bombings will have little or no effect on the way they lead their lives.
- Immigration (including asylum) remains as one of the top issues which respondents believe is facing the country.

A further You Gov poll carried out between July 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of a representative sample of 526 British Muslim adults finds:

- 88% of respondents believes the July 7<sup>th</sup> bombings were not justified.
- 72% of respondents believes July 7<sup>th</sup> bombings have made relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in the UK worse and even more (88%) believe relations will deteriorate if there are more terrorist attacks.
- At least half of respondents say they have been subject to abuse/object of suspicion since the July 7<sup>th</sup> bombings.
- 79% of respondents say they are very or fairly loyal to the UK.
- 82% of respondents says they have no direct experience of Muslim groups trying to radicalise Muslims by preaching hatred against the west.
- 68% of respondents believes Muslim communities have a responsibility to try to prevent terrorist crimes and help bring to justice those who commit them. Opinion, however, is more evenly split over the willingness of Muslim communities to approach the police and whether Muslims charged with suspected terrorist offences will receive a fair trial.

*September 22 2005*

### **UK becoming a segregated society**

The Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality, Trevor Phillips, in a widely-publicised speech delivered to the Manchester Council for Community Relations, suggests that Britain is 'sleepwalking into segregation'. He says that society is becoming more divided by race and religion, both in terms of where people live, and in the composition of schools. The speech attracts support as well as criticism. The critics suggest that residential segregation by ethnicity is not increasing but is either static or falling, as there is a movement by ethnic minority groups to live in new areas of settlement. The debate is broadened by some commentators who suggest that the failure of ethnic minority communities to become integrated into society is due to the public policy of multi-culturalism, which encourages ethnic minority communities to retain their separate and distinctive cultural identities. Muslim communities are often singled out as separating themselves from other communities. A detailed study of census population data and the ethnic make-up of school pupils, published in early 2007 by Race Equality West Midlands, found that in some urban areas in the North of England and the West Midlands, Muslim communities are quite highly segregated from the white population in terms of residence, and this pattern is repeated in schools. However, in other urban areas in the UK, the Asian Muslim population is less residentially segregated from the white population than other ethnic minority groups.

*October 22 2005*

**Birmingham Handsworth Lozells disturbance**

Violence between black and Asian Muslim youths flares up in Lozells Rd Handsworth on the evening of Saturday October 22<sup>nd</sup>. It results in property being damaged, twenty-five people being hospitalised, four with stab wounds, and two people killed. The incident is triggered by rumours spread by pirate radio stations and web sites frequented by many black youths about an accident at an Asian-owned Beauty Queen Salon in Lozells Rd selling black beauty and hair products. It is put about that a fourteen year old black girl has been raped by its owner and eighteen or more Pakistani men after she was accused of trying to steal a wig. In the run up to the violence, there is a demonstration by black youths outside the Beauty Queen salon with allegations being made that Asian businesses are not letting blacks do business and driving out Afro-Caribbeans. In the early evening, a meeting is called at the New Testament Church by community leaders supposedly to defuse tensions. As the meeting breaks up, black youths claim they are confronted by a group of Asian youths shouting 'kill the niggers' and they have to defend themselves. Asian youths say that black youths emerge from the church meeting and side streets armed with bricks and baseball bats intent on attacking Asian shops and the local mosque which they seek to protect. The police report that their enquiries can find no evidence to either confirm or deny the allegations of a rape.

The chairman of a local Caribbean community centre is quoted as saying 'we have never had black on Asian violence... it is something new and terrible ... we seem to be destroying what is best about this country, that people of different cultures learn to live together'. Other commentators close to what happened say it was rooted in resentment by black people that Asians (Muslims) were selling their (black) beauty products and the eventual involvement of activists who wanted to turn it into a race war.



## YEAR 2006

### INTERNATIONAL TIMELINE

#### *February 2006*

##### **Cartoons caricaturing the Prophet Mohammed**

Cartoons first published in an obscure Danish magazine, *Jyllands-Posten* in September 2005, caricaturing the Prophet Mohammed are published in Danish, Norwegian, French, and German newspapers. The cartoons were originally published by the magazine, after a Danish writer of children books had complained that he was unable to find an illustrator for his book about the Prophet because no one dared to break an Islamic tenet banning the portrayal of his image. Some of the cartoons are not critical of Islam, whereas others are deliberately provocative towards Muslims. One of the most controversial cartoons shows the prophet wearing a turban shaped like a bomb with a burning fuse. The widespread newspaper coverage causes consternation in Muslim communities and leads to a wave of protests in Muslim countries and elsewhere. In London, there is a protest by Muslims outside of the Danish Embassy in Knightsbridge. It includes a group of young Muslim men dressed up as suicide bombers. One of the leaders is subsequently found guilty (January 2007) of soliciting murder and stirring up racial hatred. In Palestine, armed factions threaten to kidnap Europeans. In Pakistan, 300 Islamic students chant 'death to Denmark' and 'death to France'. In Syria, the Danish Embassy is stormed and set alight by an angry mob. Amongst non-Muslims in European countries, a significant number view the protests as an over-reaction to harmless cartoons and see freedom of speech as being threatened.

#### *July 12 2006*

##### **Israel Lebanon war**

Conflict between Israel: armed forces and Muslim Hezbollah para-military groups flares up again over the security of and the disputed border territories between Northern Israel and Southern Lebanon. The conflict is prompted by Hezbollah groups firing rockets into Northern Israel and attacking an armed Israeli border patrol inside Israeli territory. It leads to two Israeli soldiers being captured. A rescue attempt by Israel fails. Hezbollah says it took this action because Israel had broken promises to release Hezbollah prisoners. Israel regards the attack as an act of war by Lebanon and responds by launching massive air and artillery attacks on targets in Lebanon, including Beirut international airport. It also mounts a naval blockade of Lebanon and invades the southern part of the country. The conflict lasts 33 days with the infrastructure of southern Lebanon being severely damaged. The Hezbollah para-military forces stoutly resist the Israeli invasion and attack Northern Israel with rockets. Nearly one million Lebanese citizens are estimated to be displaced, as well as half a million Israelis, most of whom, however, are able to return with their homes still intact.

The United States Government supports Israel's right to self-defence, as do some other Western European Governments, including the UK. The US President describes the conflict as being part of the war on terrorism. In the Middle East, Saudi Arabia says Hezbollah is responsible. However, other countries (Syria, Iran, Jordan and Egypt) take a critical view and criticise Israeli actions. The Lebanese Government (comprising both Muslim and Christian parties) appeals to the United Nations for a ceasefire. Across the world, there are demonstrations appealing for a ceasefire and denouncing the scale of the Israeli attacks. There is particular concern amongst Muslim communities about the destruction of Muslim villages and towns and the rising civilian casualties. Leading commentators suggest the United States and their allies hesitate to call for a ceasefire to give the Israelis the opportunity to defeat the Hezbollah guerrillas. This does not happen.

*July 31 2006*

### **Afghanistan**

The NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) assumes command of the southern provinces of Afghanistan where the Taliban are most active. ISAF is an international stabilisation force authorised by the United Nations Security Council in December 2001. By the end of 2006, it consist of about 32,000 personnel from 34 countries. The ISAF force deployed in the southern provinces comes primarily from the UK, Canada and the Netherlands. It is the first time that UK military forces in Afghanistan have been systematically engaged in fighting with the Taliban, as previously they had been involved in largely peace-keeping duties around the capital Kabul. A series of operations were launched by these NATO forces to root out and clear Taliban forces from these provinces. They were involved in some intense fighting with the Taliban which continued into 2007.

*August 14 2006*

### **Ceasefire, Israel Lebanon war**

On August 11<sup>th</sup>, the United Nations Security Council in resolution 1701 seeks to bring an end to hostilities with the support of both the Israeli and Lebanon governments. It provides for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon, the deployment of regular Lebanese army units and United Nations forces in the southern part of the country, and the disarmament of the Hezbollah para-military forces. A ceasefire comes into effect on August 14<sup>th</sup> and Israeli forces begin withdrawing and removing their blockade (completed end of September). Lebanese and United Nations forces are deployed in southern Lebanon. No disarmament takes place of Hezbollah para-military forces.

There are conflicting views on who gained most from the conflict. The immediate reaction of many commentators is that Israel was the loser in the war. By the end of August, a poll in Israel shows that 63% of the population believes Prime Minister Olmert should resign over mishandling the war. Subsequently, Prime Minister Olmert admits there were mistakes, and a Commission is established to review what took

place. Contrastingly, some Arab commentators point out that Hezbollah has been weakened because, whilst its forces remain intact, it has lost its 'kingdom' (southern Lebanon) with the arrival of regular Lebanese army units and United Nations forces. The Hezbollah leader, Hassan Nasrallah, is reported to have apologised to the Lebanese people, saying 'if we had known that the incident which sparked the war would have led to this, we would not have done it'.

*September 11 2006*

### **Does anyone have the faintest idea where Osama bin Laden is?**

A leading article in the UK national newspaper *The Guardian* by journalist Declan Walsh asks if anyone really knows where Osama Bin Laden is five years after the 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington. It is a question asked by other media reporters. In the article, it says the United States has spent billions of dollars looking for him to no avail. It claims that the last reliable information on Bin Laden's whereabouts was in December 2001 when, following the fall of the Afghanistan capital Kabul, he and his entourage escaped to the White mountains on the Afghanistan/Pakistan border and hid in the Tora Bora underground caverns. Although bombed by United States aircraft and hunted by Afghan militias, Bin Laden escaped to what is believed to be the remote North Waziristan tribal area of Pakistan. Since then, his whereabouts have been mainly based on conjecture. Security experts believe Bin Laden is surrounded by two or three concentric circles of security, with a small corps of battle-hardened men at their centre. He communicates only through handwritten notes carried by trusted couriers and travels at night, possibly in disguise. This has not, however, prevented al Qaida from releasing some 37 video and audio recordings since 9/11, including some showing Bin Laden.

The article points out that the failure to find Bin Laden has led to recriminations between the United States and Pakistan. US officials claim the powerful Pakistan intelligence agency, ISI, has not looked very hard for Bin Laden and, at worst, helped him out. Pakistan however, angrily rejects this claim, pointing to the 600 Al Qaida suspects they have killed or detained since the 9/11 attacks.

*September 12 2006*

### **Pope Benedict XVI Islam controversy**

Pope Benedict gives a lecture at the University of Regensburg in Germany, where he had previously been a professor of theology, entitled 'Faith, Reason and the University – Memories and Reflections'. The lecture focuses mainly on Christianity, using references from Jewish and Greek thinking, Protestant theology, and modern secularism. Islam features in part of the lecture. The Pope quotes from a passage written in 1391 expressing the views of one of the last medieval rulers of Constantinople before its fall to the Muslim Ottoman Empire. The passage is: 'show me just what Mohammed brought that was new and there you will find things only bad and inhuman such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached'.

The Pope's use of this passage in his lecture leads to strong criticism from governments of Muslim countries. The Prime Minister of Turkey is quoted as saying

'I believe it is a must for the Pope to retract his ugly and unfortunate remarks on Islam. These remarks go against the truth and heart of our faith'. Statements from the US and Western European governments are more cautious. They talk about respect for the Pope's sincerity in his speech but warn about increasing tensions and lack of respect between persons of different faiths.

There are also protests against the Pope's remarks. On the West Bank of the disputed Jordan/Israel territory in the town of Nablus, Greek and Anglican churches are firebombed. In Turkey, there are calls to bring legal proceedings against the Pope and cancel his visit to the country in November. In Basra, Iraq, effigies of the Pope and Jesus are burnt. Outside Westminster Cathedral in London some one hundred protesters hold placards attacking the Pope.

The Vatican's initial response to the criticism is that the Pope's remarks have been taken out of context. However, as this does not stop the controversy, the Pope issues a statement on September 17<sup>th</sup> saying 'I am deeply sorry for the reactions in some countries to a few passages in my address which were considered offensive to the sensibility of Muslims. They were quotations from a medieval tract and do not express my personal thoughts'. On September 25<sup>th</sup>, the Pope holds an audience with diplomats and ambassadors from Muslim countries in an effort to mend relations. On October 12<sup>th</sup>, 38 top Muslim scholars and clerics across many Muslim countries issue an open letter saying they accept the Pope's sorrow and assurances that the quote did not reflect his personal opinions. This brings the immediate controversy to an end.

### ***November 2006***

The United National Security Council warns that Afghanistan may become a 'failed state' due to increasing Taliban violence, growing illegal drug production, and fragile state institutions. Declassified intelligence documents show that the Taliban and allied group sanctuaries in Afghanistan have increased fourfold in the last year. By 2005, Afghanistan has again become the world's largest opium producer (it is responsible for 90% of world production and it is estimated to account for 52% of the country's GDP). Most of the opium is sold in Europe and Russia. In 2000, the Taliban government issued a ban on opium production and production fell sharply. The removal of the Taliban led to a revival in opium production in spite of US coalition efforts to curb it. The connivance of the Afghan government in the increase in opium production is suspected. The Taliban increasingly cream off revenue from opium production in provinces where they have influence.

### **Iraq**

#### ***May 20 2006***

After six months of negotiations, a 'government of national unity' representing all the main ethnic/religious groupings is established under the Prime Minister, Nouri al Maliki. It succeeds the transitional government.

### ***November 23 2006***

Five car bombings, mortar rounds and other attacks kill 281 people across Iraq. It is one the highest number of fatalities in a single day known in Iraq.

### ***September – November 2006***

#### **US public opinion on invasion of Iraq**

Public opinion polls conducted for the main US news agencies show a slim majority of the public (51-55%) believing that the US should not have been involved in invading Iraq.

### ***November 2006***

#### **Developing genocide in Iraq**

In a publication entitled ‘The Occupation War and Resistance in Iraq’, veteran middle east correspondent and *The Independent* newspaper journalist, Patrick Cockburn, says Baghdad is under siege. He says well armed Sunni tribes now largely surround Baghdad, making it hazardous for Shias to leave Baghdad by road. Meanwhile, Baghdad itself is being broken up into a dozen or more hostile districts along sectarian lines, the majority of which are controlled by the Shia Mehdi army which follows the nationalist cleric Muqtuda al-Sadr. In Baghdad, it has become lethally dangerous for a Sunni to wander into a Shia controlled neighbourhood and vice versa. In formerly mixed Shia and Sunni neighbourhoods the minority community is finding itself obliged to move to neighbourhoods where it is the majority. The reality is that militias are growing stronger by the day, as the Sunni and Shia communities no longer trust the Iraqi police and army to defend them. Further, nearly all the main players in Iraq politics have their own militias with the Shia cleric Muqtuda al-Sadr and his Mehdi army being an essential prop to the Prime Minister, Mr Maliki. As a result, it is difficult for US and coalition forces to move against these militias.

Cockburn warns that with upwards of 1000 Iraqis dying every week there is a danger of genocidal conflict developing between the minority Sunnis and the majority Shias.

### ***November 7 2006***

#### **United States mid-term elections**

Elections for all seats to the US House of Representatives (Congress) and one third of seats to the US Senate are held, as well as elections for 36 state governorships and many state legislatures. The opposition Democratic Party gains control of the Senate and the Congress from the Republican Party. It also wins a majority of the state governorships and state legislatures from the Republican Party. There is a wide consensus amongst political commentators, supported by public opinion polling, that the war in Iraq is considered to be the most important election issue by the largest segment of the public. Voters concerned about this issue blame the US President, George Bush, and his Republican Party, and vote heavily for the Democrats. The Democrats campaign on a timetable to withdraw US forces from Iraq.

## NATIONAL (UK) TIMELINE

*February 2006*

### **Cartoons caricaturing the Prophet Mohammed**

Most of the main media outlets, including the BBC, refrain from publishing the cartoons that originally appeared in the Danish magazine, '*Jyllands-Posten*', to avoid causing offence to their audiences. In the *Independent on Sunday* newspaper, the Muslim writer, Ziauddin Sardar, likens the cartoons to anti-Semitic images published in Europe in the 1920s and 30s with Muslims being demonised as violent, backward and fanatical. He says 'freedom of expression is about creating an open market place for ideas and debate where all, including the marginalised, can take part as equals'. Other media commentators take a different view. Minette Marrin in *The Sunday Times* says, 'Muslims are trading respect for fear; freedom of speech depends on people accepting that criticism of belief is not necessarily intended to insult. It is arguable that it has been the lack of freedom of speech, along with excessive respect for authority and religion, that has for centuries held back and impoverished the once-great civilisation of Islam'. *The Sunday Times* also publishes a You Gov opinion poll which shows that 86% of people polled believes the protests by Muslim communities against the cartoons to be 'a gross over-reaction'.

*February 16 2006*

### **Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006**

Royal assent for the Act is received. It makes it a criminal offence to intentionally use words or behaviour to incite (stir up) hatred against somebody because of their religious belief. It is the government's third attempt to bring in such an offence.

The government originally sought to extend the existing provisions, making incitement to racial hatred a criminal offence, to religious hatred, during the passage of the 2001 Anti-Terrorism Crime and Security Act through parliament, in the immediate aftermath of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks. It was rejected in the House of Lords because it posed unnecessary restrictions on freedom of speech, and this was eventually accepted by the Government. In early 2005, the government again sought to legislate, but had to drop its proposals because of the pending General Election. However, the Labour Party in its manifesto made a commitment to outlaw incitement to religious hatred and, on its return to government, again brought forward legislation modelled on the existing incitement to racial hatred laws.

There is opposition from the two main opposition political parties and from some Labour MPs. It leads to the government being defeated in the House of Commons on the issue and having to accept a narrower offence for religious hatred than is the case for racial hatred in order to satisfy concerns about safeguarding freedom of speech.

Throughout the debates on the government proposals to legislate in this area, there is support from most Muslim leaders and groups. They believe such legislation is necessary to protect them from some of the more vivid and extreme attacks on their faith. There is opposition however, from other religious and non-religious groups,

civil rights groups and comedians/satirists who believe the legislation places unnecessary curbs on freedom of speech.

*March 30 2006*

### **Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006**

The Act becomes law and is implemented in the ensuing months in a series of commencement orders. The Act makes it a civil offence for employers to employ persons who have no valid permit to work in the UK, places further restrictions on who can appeal against Home Office decisions to refuse entry to the UK, and gives more powers to the police/immigration authorities to obtain information on immigrant arrivals in the UK and, if necessary, prevent them from entering. The Home Office says, in 2006, 180,000 people are stopped from boarding planes bound for the UK for reasons of immigration control.

The Act also give powers to the Home Secretary to deprive a person of British citizenship if it is 'conducive to the public good'. One of the first persons to be affected by this latter provision is an inmate in the US Guantanamo Bay prison, David Matthew. An Australian by birth, he is granted British citizenship in July 2005 by virtue of maternal heritage after a lengthy legal battle with the Home office. He seeks British citizenship as he considers it will force the British Government to petition the US authorities to release him from prison. However, the Home Secretary then strips him of his British citizenship as it is 'conducive to the public good'.

*April 2006*

### **Terrorism Act 2006**

This Act starts to come into force. It is drafted in the aftermath of the July 2005 London bombings and is considered necessary by the government to respond to an unparalleled security threat. The Act makes it a criminal offence to make statements or disseminate publications which encourage or glorify directly or indirectly, acts of terrorism. It also makes it a criminal offence to provide or receive training in terrorist activities, or to be at a place where such training is going on. These are extra-territorial offences, i.e. persons can be tried before UK courts whether they committed these offences in the UK or abroad. The Home Secretary is also given wider powers to proscribe terrorist groups, and the police can detain suspects of terrorism for up to 28 days (previously it was 14 days) before they are required to charge them with any criminal offence.

Some of the Act's provisions are controversial. It is argued by civil liberty groups and others that the offence relating to the encouragement of terrorism is too widely drawn and could prevent legitimate but passionate expressions of speech. It is also argued that the Home Secretary can now proscribe, not only organisations that promote terrorism, like Al Qaida, but also non-violent groups who believe that terrorism might be a legitimate form of opposing gross acts of tyranny in foreign countries. The most controversial part of the Act's passage through Parliament (it also attracted considerable media attention) was a proposal by the government for the police to

detain terrorist suspects for up to 90 days without bringing any charges against them. The proposal received public support from the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). On November 9<sup>th</sup> 2005 the House of Commons rejected the government's proposal and voted for a maximum period of 28 days' detention. The government's defeat is due to a significant minority of Labour MPs voting against the government, along with the main Conservative and Liberal Democrat opposition parties.

*May 4 2006*

### **Local council elections in England**

The British National Party achieves its best-ever results. It increases its number of councillors to 48 in 16 local authorities. In total, it receives some 235,000 votes and, in the council seats it contests, its average share of the votes cast is 18%. The BNP's best result is in the London borough of Barking & Dagenham, where it has 12 councillors elected and becomes the main opposition group in the Labour-controlled authority. The BNP also gains three seats in each of the elections to councils in Epping (Essex), Stoke on Trent and Sandwell in the West Midlands. The BNP's campaign is helped in the run-up to the elections by the Labour MP for Barking and Government Minister, Margaret Hodge, being widely quoted in the media as saying that whilst canvassing in her constituency she had 'found as many as eight-out-of-ten white families admitting they were tempted to vote for the BNP' and 'part of the reason they switch to the BNP is that they felt no one else is listening to them'. The BNP campaign is further helped in late April by the Government's admission that foreign nationals who had served terms of imprisonment in the UK for criminal offences and been recommended for deportation when they finished their prison sentences were being allowed to go free. This situation receives widespread media coverage and gives succour to the BNP's long-standing claim about uncontrolled immigration into the UK. The view of political commentators is that, given the favourable political climate for the BNP in these elections, it did not do as well as it had hoped. In a number of urban areas outside of London (including some with significant Muslim communities) which the BNP targeted, its vote did not increase and it failed to win seats.

*May 25 2006*

### **Oldham**

On the eve of the fifth anniversary of the disturbances in the town, Ted Cante, the author of the 2001 report on community cohesion, publishes a report on the progress that has been made in Oldham to achieve racial harmony and community cohesion. The report's three broad messages are:

- Few other towns have done as much as Oldham to seek to build community cohesion.
- Segregation and division between Oldham's communities (in essence its white and Asian Muslim populations) is still deeply entrenched.

- Many sections of the community are reluctant to embrace positive change to improve relations between communities. Unless the communities want change, change cannot happen.

### ***June 2 2006***

#### **Forest Gate raid, East London**

Early in the morning, police raid two houses in Landsdown Rd, Forest Gate acting on intelligence that there are chemical weapons located at the premises. Two young Muslim men are arrested, one of whom, Mohammad A Kahar, is shot in the shoulder by the police. A neighbouring terraced house that is rented out by the father of the two arrest men is also raided. No chemical materials are found and the two arrested men are released without charge on the evening of June 9<sup>th</sup>. Some 250 police officers are involved in the raid and inquiries. It subsequently transpires that the operation costs the Metropolitan Police around £2.2 million.

Protests by Muslim groups take place outside the Metropolitan Police HQ, Scotland Yard, and a sister of one of the arrested men is quoted as saying ‘she hoped the protests will highlight the fact no other innocent family shall be forced to go through the same nightmare’. On June 18<sup>th</sup>, 5,000 people from a broad cross-section of local communities march through Newham to Forest Gate Police Station to protest against the violent nature of the raid.

There is a mix of reactions to the raid. Prime Minister Tony Blair fully supports the police saying ‘You can only imagine if they (the police) fail to take action and something terrible happens what an outcry there would be’. Metropolitan Police Assistant Commissioner, Andy Haymen, says the police had ‘no choice but to act’, but also apologises for the disruption and inconvenience the raids cause. The arrested men, following their release, say they want a full apology from the police. The Muslim Council of Britain says they hope lessons will be learnt.

The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) launches inquiries into the raid as a result of the shooting and complaints from people in neighbouring houses to those raided. The IPCC finds the shooting is accidental and concludes the police did not use excessive force. It does, however, urge the police to make a public apology to the families involved. These families in turn criticise the IPCC for not investigating the circumstance that led to the police making what was an abortive raid.

### ***June 2006***

#### **Poll shows British Muslims are the most anti – western in Europe**

A poll conducted by the Washington USA based Pew Global Attitudes Project in 13 countries finds:

- A significant majority of British Muslims views western populations as selfish, arrogant, greedy and violent. This is far more than Islamic minorities in other western European countries.

- Only 32% of British Muslims has a favourable opinion of Jews compared to 71% of French Muslims.
- British Muslims are more pessimistic than Muslims in Germany, France, and Spain about the feasibility of living in a modern society whilst remaining devout.
- Generally, the attitudes of British Muslims more closely resemble public opinion in Islamic countries in the Middle East and Asia than elsewhere in Europe.
- In contrast, 63% of Britons overall has a favourable opinion of Muslims. This is similar to what was found in a similar poll in 2004.

***June 26 2006***

### **Operation Bracco**

Police in Greater Manchester arrest two men, Omar Al Tamimi and Yusuff Abdullah living in Bolton. Al Tamimi is charged with possessing articles and information which could be used to aid terrorism, and with the acquisition of criminal property. Abdullah is charged with benefiting from the proceeds of crime. At their trial in July 2007, Al Tamimi denies all charges, but Abdullah pleads guilty. During the trial at Manchester Crown Court, the prosecution provides evidence of material being found on computers belonging to Al Tamimi on how to make terrorist weapons and run terrorist cells. Al Tamimi is found guilty and given a nine year prison sentence. He is described by the judge as 'a sleeper for some sort of terrorist organisation'. Abdullah is sentenced to three years imprisonment.

***July 12 2006***

### **Israel Lebanon war**

When the conflict starts the Government is hesitant about calling for an immediate ceasefire. The Foreign Secretary, Margaret Beckett, says calls for the violence to end can only be realised if the ending of the conflict is on terms that become part of a long term peace plan. A poll in *The Guardian* national newspaper on July 22<sup>nd</sup> shows that a majority of the people polled (63%) think the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, is too close the United States, and only 22% believe that the Israeli response to the Hezbollah attack is proportionate (the majority believe Israel has over-reacted). By the end of July, the Senior Government Minister and former Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, questions publicly the scale of the Israeli response (his Blackburn constituency has a significant Muslim population). By August, the UK Government is working at the United Nations for a ceasefire, which eventually takes place on August 14<sup>th</sup>.

***July 2006***

### **Young Muslim men jailed for having terrorist material on their computers**

Five young Muslim men are jailed for up to three years after being found guilty in a trial before a jury of possessing Islamist ideological CDs and computer downloads which, the prosecution claims, was part of their preparation to train in Pakistan before fighting in Afghanistan. The men are charged under section 57 of the Terrorism Act

2000, which makes it an offence to have books or items useful to a terrorist. The five men, Awaab Iqbal, Aitzaz Zafar, Ahmed Malik, Akbar Butt (all students at Bradford University) and Mohammed Raja, deny the charges and say they were researching ideology about violent jihad, but had no intention of using it.

In February 2008 the Court of Appeal quashes the decision and releases the men. The Court of Appeal's reason is that there 'was nothing that evidenced expressly the use, or intention to use, the extremist literature to incite each other to do this (commit acts of terrorism)'. The Court also expresses the view that the prosecution's case was so weak it should never have gone before a jury.

### ***August 9/10 2006***

#### **Transatlantic aircraft plot**

The police arrest 25 British-born Muslims, some of whom are of Pakistani descent, in London, Birmingham and High Wycombe. They are suspected of planning to detonate liquid explosives carried in hand luggage, with the aim of destroying as many as ten aircraft in mid-flight from the UK to the United States. The police say they had been observing the plot for months and decided to make arrests in August in order to disrupt what was being planned. Of the suspects, 17 are later charged with various terrorism offences and 8 of the suspects are released without charge. The trials of those charged are expected to commence in 2008.

A few hours before the arrests on August 9<sup>th</sup>, Home Secretary, John Reid, in a major speech to the leading think tank, *Demos*, hints at a new round of anti-terror legislation and says the country is facing 'probably the most sustained period of severe threat since the end of the second world war'. On August 10<sup>th</sup>, Reid, with Transport Secretary Douglas Alexander, breaks the news of the suspected plot and the arrests.

Unprecedented security measures are put in place by the government immediately following the arrests. The terror alert level is raised from 'critical' to 'severe', signalling a terrorist attack is believed to be imminent (it is downgraded to 'critical' again on August 15<sup>th</sup>). Passengers are forbidden from taking nearly all liquids on to planes flying to the US and, apart from essential items, hand luggage is banned on all flights from the UK. The extra security checks on passengers that flow from these restrictions cause long delays at major UK airports, as well as flight delays and cancellations. British Airways says in the following days 1,280 flights are cancelled at a cost of £40 million, and smaller airlines like Ryanair cancel 500 flights. From August 15<sup>th</sup> onwards, under pressure from airline operators, the restrictions are gradually lifted over the next five months.

### ***August 12 2006***

#### **Open letter to Prime Minister**

An open letter is sent to the Prime Minister by 38 Muslim groups and six Muslim peers and MPs criticising British foreign policy. The letter says 'current government policy risks putting civilians at increased risk both in the UK and abroad'. The letter refers to the 'debacle in Iraq' and 'the ammunition it gives to extremists who threaten

us all'. The letter makes it clear 'attacking civilians is never justified', but calls for a re-assessment of foreign policy as 'such a move would make us all safer'. Home Secretary, John Reid, describes the letter as a 'dreadful misjudgement' and says 'no government worth its salt would be supported by the British people if our foreign policy, or any other aspect of policy is being dictated by terrorists'. Former Conservative Party leader and ex-Home Secretary, Michael Howard, describes the letter as 'giving ammunition to extremists' and 'it's a form of blackmail'.

### *August/September 2006*

#### **Manchester Cheetham Hill terrorism arrests**

Muslim taxi driver, Habib Ahmed, is arrested at his home in Manchester on August 23rd and subsequently charged with collecting information about potential terrorist targets and travelling to Pakistan for terrorist training. His wife is arrested in September and charged with supplying money to him knowing that it could be used for terrorist acts. The pair are also suspected of being linked to the militant Islamic group, Al-Muhajiroun. Two other Muslim men, friends of Ahmed, are arrested on September 2<sup>nd</sup> but are subsequently released without charge.

### *September 2 2006*

#### **London**

Fourteen men are arrested by police and south in east London on suspicion of preparing terrorist acts. Twelve of the men are arrested as they eat in a Chinese restaurant in the Borough area of London. As part of the same operation, an Islamic school in East Sussex, the Jameah Islameah School, for boys aged between 11 and 16, is cordoned off and searched. As at February 2008, seven of these men were found guilty or pleaded guilty to receiving training in terrorism or soliciting murder. Following a five month trial at Woolwich Crown Court, they are in the process of receiving sentences.

### *September 21 2006*

#### **East London: Home Secretary clashes with Islamic radicals**

Home Secretary, John Reid, goes to Waltham Forest at the invitation of the local council to urge Muslim community leaders to tackle extremism. It flows from a campaign being led by the local Muslim community, entitled '250,000 people, one community', to help repair the damage caused by the fact that many of those charged with the August airline plot came from the area. The Home Secretary's speech is trailed beforehand in tabloid newspapers, in which he warns Muslim parents that 'fanatics are looking to groom and brainwash your children for suicide bombing' and they 'should look for the tell tale signs or lose them forever'. He is strongly criticised by a number of radical Islamic leaders at the meeting, and some of them have to be escorted by stewards from the event. The Home Secretary is unrepentant and says, 'however, sensitive these issues are, we must never allow ourselves to be shouted down. I should be able to go to any part of Britain and discuss these matters'.

**October 2006**

### **Muslim PC in Israeli embassy row**

Press reports emerge of a Muslim PC, Alexander Omar, in the Metropolitan Police diplomatic protection squad asking not to be stationed outside the Israeli embassy during the height of the Israeli/Lebanon war in August because of his family background (his wife is Lebanese) and fears of being a target for Islamic terrorist groups. His police superiors say he was not deployed outside the embassy after a risk assessment was carried out of his suitability, and it had nothing to do with his personal views. The story provokes fierce controversy over whether police officers can 'pick and choose' their duties for moral reasons, and that it suggests Muslim officers are getting preferential treatment. A spokesman for the Muslim Council of Britain urges caution: 'Any person joining the police force, no matter what their religious background, has a duty to help in upholding the law and should be carrying out their duty as any other police officer'.

**October 16 2006**

### **Targeting Muslim extremists**

The national political left-of-centre newspaper, *The Guardian*, runs a major story saying the Department of Education has drawn up a series of proposals to send to universities and other centres of higher education asking lecturers and university staff to spy on 'Asian looking' and Muslim students, who they suspect of involvement in Islamic extremism and supporting terrorist violence, and to volunteer information to the police. The document is purported to claim that university Islamic societies have become increasingly political in recent years and discusses monitoring their leaflets and speakers. The document warns of talent spotting by terrorists on campuses and of students being 'groomed' for terrorism.

The President of the Federation of Student Islamic Societies, Wakkas Khan, is quoted as saying: 'It sounds to me to be potentially the widest infringement of the rights of Muslim students that there has ever been in this country. It is clearly targeting Muslim students and treating them to a higher level of suspicion and scrutiny. It sounds like you're guilty until your proven innocent'.

On the same day, Communities Secretary, Ruth Kelly, holds a meeting with representatives from around twenty key local authorities and senior police officers in a new drive to root out extremists from Muslim and other communities. Before the meeting, Ruth Kelly, in an advanced text, is quoted as asking the meeting whether people were doing enough to tackle extremism in schools, colleges and universities, and whether 'hot spot' neighbourhoods and sections of the community had been identified which could be breeding grounds. In an attempt to show the focus is not only on Muslim communities Ruth Kelly is quoted as saying 'This is not just a problem for Muslim communities. The far right is still with us, still poisonous, still trying to exploit and create divisions'. In spite of this emphasis, the right-wing tabloid *The Daily Mail* national newspaper carries the headline 'Kelly unveils Muslim hotspots in Britain'.

*October 2006*

### **Government minister calls on Muslim women to take off the veil**

Jack Straw, MP for Blackburn, with its large Muslim community, and a long standing Cabinet Minister, in an article in the *Lancashire Evening Telegraph*, encourages Islamic women to stop wearing the veil (known as the Niqab) covering their faces, saying the practice hinders community relations. He also says that for sometime he has asked women who come to his constituency surgeries with problems wearing a full veil to remove it from their face when he speaks to them so that he can make a better judgement about the issues they are raising, and that it has not caused any problems. Jack Straw repeats these comments on a local radio station and the story then attracts national media coverage and debate.

The chair of the Muslim Council for Britain's social and family committee says 'Mr Straw's comments have exacerbated tensions ...this is going to do great damage to the Muslim community. Again, we are being singled out by this government as the problem. Women have the right to wear a veil and this is just another example of blatant Muslim bashing by this government.' The Chair of the Islamic Human Rights Commission expresses similar sentiments and is quoted as saying, 'Would he say to the Jewish people living in Stamford Hill (London) that they shouldn't dress like Orthodox Jews?'. However, the Muslim Labour peer, Baroness Uddin, says, 'I think there needs to be a debate ...I think the Muslim community needs to address this, not just throw its hands up'. Similar sentiments are expressed by Ghayasuddin Siddiqui, the leader of the Muslim Parliament of Great Britain, who points out that only 5% of Muslim women wear veils (niqabs).

Cabinet colleagues of Jack Straw generally support his right to raise the issue, but take different views over whether Muslim women should remove their veils. The Conservative Party Shadow Home Secretary, David Davis, in a national newspaper article, says the stances of some Muslim leaders is creating the risk of 'voluntary apartheid' in the UK, although Conservative party leader, David Cameron, shortly afterwards, seeks to close the debate by indicating in a TV interview that the issue had received a full airing and the debate should move on.

*October 20 2006*

### **Muslim teacher who refuses to remove veil loses tribunal case**

A 24-year old teaching assistant, Aishah Azmi, who was sacked for refusing to remove her veil when teaching in a primary school in Dewsbury West Yorkshire, loses her claim that she was discriminated against because of her religious beliefs and that she had suffered harassment. The Employment Tribunal does, however, rule that she has been victimised by her employers in the way they dealt with her case. The popular press hail the tribunal decision as a victory for 'common sense'. The government minister with specific responsibility for race relations, Phil Woolas, welcomes the tribunal's decision. Subsequent government guidance says that, in furtherance of good teaching practice, veils should not be worn by teachers in the

classroom. A similar view is taken by health authorities who, in what is described as an 'aid to good communications', do not expect Muslim doctors to wear veils when communicating with colleagues and patients.

***October 24 2006***

**Public wants British troops to withdraw from Iraq**

A survey for *The Guardian* newspaper finds that 61% of people surveyed want British troops to leave Iraq by the end of 2006. This compares with 51% who favoured withdrawal of British troops in 2005. A separate poll in *The Independent* newspaper shows that 62% of the people interviewed wants the immediate withdrawal of British troops. A large majority (72%) thinks the war in Iraq is un-winnable and a similar majority believes that Iraq will descend into civil war if American and British troops pull out.

***November 13 2006***

**Prime Minister accused of 'playing to a tabloid agenda' in terror fight**

The widely respected Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust, in a publication entitled 'The Rules of the Game: Terrorism, Community and Human Rights', says the Government's counter-terrorism campaign is often driven by party political and electoral motives that are submerging its own sensible counter-terrorism strategy. In particular, it points to the actions of the Home Secretary, John Reid, having a 'boomerang effect' by alienating the Muslim communities whose trust and co-operation are vital in defeating extremism. One of the study's authors is quoted as saying 'the Government has a sensible strategy for dealing with terrorism but John Reid and Tony Blair have been playing to the tabloid gallery, raising suspicions they are trying to win over the white working class vote'.

***December 4 2006***

**Think tank says ministers are 'failing to reach Muslims'**

Think tank Demos publishes a report entitled 'Bringing it Home', which says 'In the meeting rooms of Whitehall ministers are assuring Muslim leaders of the need for partnerships but in briefings to the media they are talking of the need for Muslims to 'get serious' about terrorism, spy on their children, and put up with inconveniences in the greater good of national security'. The report argues 'the government has been reluctant to engage with the many reasonable grievances of the community, from Iraq to social justice, for fear that this could suggest the terrorists have just cause, or the government is somehow complicit'. One of the report's authors is quoted in the media as saying 'the government response has been largely security led with a capital S .... they've gone down the legislative route looking at police powers. When you look at how they've tried to engage with the Muslim community, you can tell they've not really taken it seriously'.

The Communities Minister, Phil Woolas, in a response to the report recognises its contribution to the debate but says 'it is based on evidence that pre dates the establishment of the new Department for Communities and Local Government specifically set up in May 2006 to give greater focus to issues of promoting community cohesion'.

*December 8 2006*

### **Conform to our society says Prime Minister**

Prime Minister Tony Blair, in a speech in Downing Street, London, says 'Multicultural Britain should not be dispensed with and we should celebrate it but the London bombings of July 2005 have thrown the concept into sharp relief. ...there is not generalised extremism; instead it is a new and virulent form of ideology associated with a minority of our Muslim community, particularly those originating from certain countries'. He goes on to say, 'If you come here lawfully we welcome you. If you are permitted to stay here permanently, you become an equal member of our community and become one of us.... Being British means the right to be different, but also the duty to integrate'. The Muslim Council of Britain calls the Prime Minister's speech 'alarming' and says, if the Government wishes to promote multiculturalism, it should be giving more help to deprived communities, rather than investing in illegal occupations (i.e. Iraq).

*2006*

### **Fall in asylum applications**

The Home office says in 2006 23,510 claims for asylum in the UK are received. This is 9% less than in 2005 and the lowest number of claims since 1993.

## **YEAR 2007**

### **INTERNATIONAL TIMELINE**

#### **Iraq**

##### ***March 31 2007***

Truck bombs planted by insurgents kill over 500 people in Qahtaniya, north-western Iraq. It is the deadliest single insurgent bombing in the country.

##### ***April 18 2007***

Four bombings in Baghdad kill at least 183 people. Nationwide, the number of people killed or found dead is 233. It is one of the worst days for fatalities in Iraq.

##### ***June-September 2007***

#### **Reports on casualties in Iraq**

##### ***June 2007***

A UN High Commissioner Report estimates that over 4.2 million Iraqis (16% of the population) have lost their homes since the invasion in 2003, and 2.2 million have fled to neighbouring countries . In some months, up to 100,000 Iraqis flee to Syria and Jordan. Up to 40% of Iraq's middle class is estimated to have fled to escape systematic persecution and many have no desire to return. All kinds of people are targeted by militias/insurgents or criminal gangs. Since April 2003, at least 2000 doctors have been killed and, in the first four months of 2006 alone, 331 school teachers are believed to have been killed. The UN also reports that 50% of Iraqi Christians have left Iraq since April 2003 to escape targeting from so-called Islamic extremists, and they comprise 40% of the refugees.

##### ***July 2007***

It is reported that since the invasion of Iraq in March 2003, amongst the employees of US-funded contractors and sub-contractors operating in Iraq, 933 have been killed and 10,569 wounded. Amongst the fatalities, 224 are from the US.

##### ***September 2007***

By the end of September, nearly 3,000 US military personnel have been killed since combat operations ended on May 1<sup>st</sup> 2003. For the UK, it is 137. For the Iraqi security forces raised by and aligned with the US and allied forces since the occupation, a total of 7,479 police and military personnel have been killed.

### *September 2007*

The September death toll for US troops is 42, which is one of the lowest fatality figures since the insurgency started. US army commanders attribute this fall, along with a possible reduction in sectarian killings, to the 30,000 extra US troops sent to Iraq during the summer (the number of US troops now totals 154,000) to combat the violence. They also say it is due to better security measures in Baghdad's neighbourhoods to restrict the movement of insurgents, and the increasing use of local sheiks and their militias to fight insurgents. There are reports that the Sunni population is turning against the foreign mujahedin (Al Qaida) fighters, as they begin to see their activities as working against their own communities. Other commentators, however, predict that the drop in violence and with it, US fatalities, will only be temporary unless there is a lasting settlement between the Sunni and Shia political groups.

### *September 2007*

#### **Iraqi fatalities**

UK polling agency, Opinion Research Business (ORB), on the basis of polling a representative sample of 1500 households, estimates that the violent death toll of Iraqis since the 2003 invasion could be over 1.2million. This figure is consistent with another household survey (known as the Lancet study) published in June 2006. Other reports suggest a lower number of deaths. According to Iraqi Body Count (a group that relies for information on English language media including Arabic media written in English), 80,000 civilian deaths took place from April 2003 to September 2007. An Iraqi Government Health Minister in November 2006, using information on bodies daily brought to morgues and hospitals, estimated that 130,000 Iraqis had died.

### *May-September 2007*

#### **US public opinion on Iraq involvement**

Public opinion polls conducted for the main US news agencies show 65% of the public disapproving of US involvement in Iraq. This is an increase on previous polls and reflects public concern about US military casualties and the difficulties the US is having in Iraq.

### *August 2007*

#### **Afghanistan conflict casualties**

By August, the Taliban and allied groups are estimated to have had between 5,000 and 15,000 of their personnel killed since the conflict started in 2001, and over 4,000 captured. In the same period, it is estimated that Afghan security forces have had 5,800 killed, and US and Coalition forces have had 701 killed. US losses are 445, and the UK's 81. Most of the UK's losses have occurred since British forces have been engaged in heavy fighting following their deployment to the southern provinces in July 2006. The increasing number of British casualties starts to attract more media

coverage in the UK of the Afghanistan conflict, and there is some increase in public and political interest in events.

The recent history of Afghanistan is largely one of conflict which civilians have frequently been caught up in. Human rights abuses against citizens (including killings and torture) have occurred under successive governments and from the armies of tribal war lords and more ideological groups like the Taliban and Al Qaida. In government, the Taliban was notorious for its human rights abuses against women, and women holding public positions have again been singled out by the Taliban in their guerrilla war from 2002 onwards. In the 2001 war, the number of civilian casualties resulting from the aerial bombing (largely carried out by US forces) is estimated to have been 1,200 and 5,000. Since that time, further citizens have died as a result of US aerial bombings in support of offensive action against Taliban forces. Such civilian deaths are often used by Muslim groups publicly to attack US and coalition force involvement in Afghanistan. Even the Afghanistan government has been moved to formally complain on occasions about the unnecessary civilian casualties resulting from aerial bombing. The ongoing conflict is expected to show a record number of civilian deaths in Afghanistan in 2007.

*August 2007*

### **Guantanamo Bay detention camp**

By August, some 420 detainees have been released and approximately 355 detainees remain at the prison. More than a fifth have been cleared for release but, according to US sources, this cannot take place because of the difficulty in finding places to send them to. US sources also say they eventually intend to put 60/80 detainees on trial and free the rest. The Associated Press news agency in 2007 tracks down 245 of the detainees released. It finds that 205 are freed of all charges when they return to their home countries. It includes three UK Muslims who were released in 2004 after being captured during the Afghanistan war apparently fighting with Taliban forces. They are known to the media as the 'Tipton three' as they come from the West Midlands town of Tipton. Following their release they issue a dossier accusing the US authorities of torture during their detention.

**September**

### **Terrorist attacks thwarted in Europe**

*September 4 2007*

### **Copenhagen Denmark**

Two men are charged by Danish police with planning a terrorist attack and attempted murder. A further six are arrested after a building is evacuated and large quantities of explosives uncovered. The suspects are men of Pakistani, Afghan, and Palestinian origin and their movements show trips to Pakistan over a period of a year or more.

*September 5 2007*

**Frankfurt, Germany**

German officials arrest three men suspected of planning large-scale chemical explosions at Frankfurt airport and Ramstein US military base. The men are alleged to belong to the German wing of the Islamic Jihad Union. The mastermind behind the planned attacks is a man of German origin who converted to Islam in his late teens. Two of the suspects are believed to have received training in terrorism in Pakistan.

*September 2007*

**International Institute for Strategic Studies report (IISS)**

The respected London based IISS, in its annual review of world affairs, says there is increasing evidence that 'core Al Qaida is proving adaptable and resilient and has retained an ability to plan and coordinate large-scale attacks in the western world despite the attrition it has suffered', and 'the threat from Islamist terrorism remains as high as ever and looks set to get worse'. In the case of Iraq, the IISS review delivers a pessimistic outlook expressing scepticism about the strength and integrity of Iraqi forces and the capability of Iraq's Prime Minister, Nuri al-Maliki, to forge a stable government based on national consensus. Terrorism experts responding to the IISS report accept that Al Qaida is recovering from its near extinction in 2001 at the conclusion of the Afghanistan war and that it is capable of terrorist assaults, but not on the scale of 9/11.

A senior UK official with knowledge of the situation in Afghanistan is quoted as saying 'there is a danger that the south and east of Afghanistan, which is already well beyond the authority of Kabul, will effectively translate de facto autonomy into independence. In turn, it raises the spectre of the confederation of warlord states, in the process of emerging on the Pakistani side of the border, effectively trebling in size with the addition of the Taliban controlled zones in Afghanistan. It would be the United Taliban Emirates and it would be a very nasty place indeed. It would be the biggest and most defensible terrorist safe haven the world has ever seen'.

The 2007 Failed Study Index, produced by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace's Foreign Policy magazine moves Iraq from the world's fourth most unstable country in 2006, to the world's second most unstable country in 2007.

## **NATIONAL (UK) TIMELINE**

### *January*

#### **UK Borders Bill**

The Bill is introduced into Parliament. The Bill equips the new Border and Immigration Agency (part of the Home Office) with a wide range of new powers to deter, detect and deport persons breaking immigration rules and to ensure that those foreign nationals legally resident in the UK abide by these rules. The Bill receives Royal Assent and becomes law on October 31<sup>st</sup> 2007. The new powers include greater authority for immigration officers to tackle illegal working and fraud, the introduction of compulsory ID cards in 2008 for foreign nationals in the UK subject to immigration control and the automatic consideration of foreign nationals for deportation if they have committed a serious offence and been sentenced to imprisonment

By the time the Bill becomes law the Home Office is releasing and prompting figures from the Border and Immigration Agency showing that in the first nine months of 2007 the number of applications for asylum has fallen again, that over 9000 failed asylum seekers have been deported and that 1000 more foreign national prisoners have been deported than for the whole of 2006.

### *January 23 2007*

#### **Five arrested in anti-terror raids**

Two men, Bilal Mohammed and Rizwan Ditta, from Halifax are arrested and detained by police on the suspicion of the commission, preparation and instigation of acts of terrorism. In a separate operation in the Cheetham Hill and Longsight areas of Manchester, two men, believed to be Asian, are arrested and detained by police on suspected terrorist support and facilitation. Reports suggest the arrests are connected with a Pakistani man who escaped from police at a Mosque after claiming he wanted to undertake training in Afghanistan. One of the arrested men is subsequently released.

On January 31<sup>st</sup> Bilal Mohammed and Rizwan Ditta are remanded in custody charged with possessing extremist material that includes an Al Qaida training film and computer file called the Hamas bomb.

*January 29 2007*

### **Young Muslims more attracted to political forms of Islam**

A poll by the right-of-centre Policy Exchange think tank of 1003 Muslims in the UK finds:

- 62% of 16 to 24-year-old Muslims feel they have much in common with non-Muslim's, compared with 71% of Muslims over the age of 55.
- 37% of 16 to 24-year-old Muslims would prefer to live under Sharia law, compared with 17% of Muslims aged over 55.
- 74% of 16 to 24 year old Muslims prefer Muslim women to wear the hijab compared with 28% of Muslims aged over 55.
- 13% of 16 to 24-year-old Muslims admire organisation like Al Qaida, compared with just 3% of Muslims aged over 55.

Whilst the poll found more support amongst younger Muslims for political forms of Islam, it also found that an equal number (37%) of 16 to 24-year-old Muslims wanted Sharia law to reflect modern ideas about, for example, equality for women, human rights and tolerance for religious conversion. Also, nearly half of the Muslims polled said 'British society offers strong moral and cultural values', and 84% said they had been treated fairly in British society.

The report's author is quoted as saying 'The emergence of a strong Muslim identity in Britain is, in part, a result of multicultural policies implemented since the 1980s which have emphasised difference at the expense of shared national identity'. Conservative party opposition leader, David Cameron, is quoted as saying 'the poll shows the extent to which multiculturalism has failed' and 'big changes are needed to break down barriers of extremism, uncontrolled migration, poverty and poor education'.

*January 31 2007*

### **Plot to behead British Muslim Soldier**

Early in the morning, police raid eight homes and four businesses including a corner store, two Islamic bookshops and an Internet café around the Sparkhill area of Birmingham. It leads, to the arrest of nine Muslim men mostly of Pakistani origin. According to media reports, they are suspected of planning to kidnap a British Muslim soldier, torture him, force him to 'apologise' for fighting in the Iraq war, and behead him. A videotape of the murder is to be released on the Internet for propaganda purposes. Five men are subsequently charged with terrorist offences and one man with failure to disclose information. Three men are released without charge. One of these men is later quoted as saying 'It's a police state for Muslims; it's not a police state for anyone else because the terror laws are designed specifically for Muslims...'

The court case commences in January 2008. It emerges that the case is more than a plot to kill a British Muslim soldier but also involves the supply of goods to terrorist groups and their training camps in Pakistan. Ring leader, Parvis Khan, a former charity worker from Birmingham pleads guilty and receives life imprisonment. Four

other men are found guilty of lesser offences relating to the failure to disclose information and supplying of equipment to terrorist groups. They receive prison sentences ranging from two to seven years. One man is found not guilty.

***February 2 2007***

### **Muslims getting the same treatment as Jewish Migrants**

In an article in the left-of-centre *The Guardian* national newspaper, Maleiha Malik (a law lecturer at Kings College, London) points out that when Jewish migrants were fleeing from Central and Eastern Europe to the UK in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century they came with a religious faith that contained strict religious laws, gender inequality and distinctive dress codes. There were warnings about such migration leading to self-segregation. A minority were also closely associated with political movements such as anarchism and later, Bolshevism. A few Jewish anarchists even engaged in violent attacks, such as the bombing of the Greenwich Observatory in 1894. Later the Russian revolution and communism was seen by some commentators as a part of a Jewish conspiracy to replace European nations with their own religious nation. It is argued that this history of British Jews provides an illuminating comparison with the position that British Muslims currently find themselves in. They are now frequently portrayed as a social group that is openly and aggressively trying to impose its own religion on national culture. Further, the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 and its aftermath have generated new fears and hostilities.

The author concludes by saying that if we are to deal with terrorist issues facing the UK, we must abandon delusions about seeing it as fighting a war and instead treat it as a crime that threatens all citizens, including Muslims.

***March 4 2007***

### **Half of Muslim schools not inspected**

The political right-of-centre *Sunday Telegraph* national newspaper reports that an analysis of the 114 independent (privately funded) Islamic schools in England, registered with the Department of Education and Skills shows Ofsted reports available for only 53. It claims most of the other schools were inspected more than five years ago and, because of a gap in the then law, those reports have never been made public.

The report says these gaps in monitoring come at a time when questions are being raised about whether some Muslim schools are adequately preparing children for life in Britain. It quotes the shadow Conservative Party education spokesman, as saying 'It is not acceptable that a significant number (schools) in a particular category, namely, independent Muslim schools, appears to be escaping the rigour of the inspection regime'.

An Ofsted official is reported as saying a full reported inspection will be completed on all independent Muslim schools in the next year. The chair of the Association of Muslim schools is quoted saying, 'Ofsted has not found anything that should worry people about Muslim schools'. He then goes on to compare pupils coming out of Muslim schools with pupils coming out of comprehensive schools. He claims 'there

is a marked improvement in results in Muslim schools, a higher number of young people progressing to higher education and a far higher proportion going on to work in the professions’.

*May 3 2007*

### **Local council elections in England**

Most local authorities have elections with some 10,500 seats being contested. The British National Party contests some 7% of these seats, mainly in urban areas. The BNP’s core message in its campaign leaflets continues to be around race and religion, and attacks on Muslim communities and their faith are frequent. The BNP receives around 300,000 votes but its average share of the vote at 14.6% in the seats it contests is lower than in 2006. The BNP has a net gain of one seat to give it 50 councillors (it loses most of the council seats it is defending and this nearly cancels out the seats it gains from other parties). For the second successive year, the BNP contests all seats in the elections to Birmingham City Council. Whilst it wins no seats, a clear pattern emerges. The BNP does less well in multi-racial areas, including areas with significant Muslim communities. The BNP polls best in areas with largely white working-class or lower-middle-class populations.

*June 14 2007*

### **Out Shared Future - Report of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (CIC)**

The CIC (Commission on Integration and Cohesion) was established in August 2006 by the Communities and Local Government Secretary of State, Ruth Kelly, to identify good practice in local areas, to build local communities, and to offer practical recommendations to central and local government to promote integration and cohesion. The Commission is an independent body chaired by the Chief Executive of the London borough of Ealing and supported by 13 other Commissioners. In its report, *Our Shared Future*, the Commission:

- In defining a cohesive society, places more emphasis on a shared future of common interests and experiences, rather than on diversity and difference.
- Says local councils should identify areas where mass immigration may unsettle communities, and the government should provide support with specialist integration teams.
- Recommends the cutting back of public body language translation services and the reinvesting of the money in English language classes.
- Recommends that businesses which benefit from foreign workers should pay towards English lessons.
- Recommends ending the public funding of single-issue groups servicing a particular ethnic minority community and which cannot show they benefit the wider community.
- Advocates that local authorities and other agencies should mainstream integration and cohesion into their sustainable cohesion strategies.

- Says its research shows that three quarters of those surveyed said they preferred to live in ethnically mixed neighbourhoods.
- Quotes its chairman as saying that 'whilst tensions do exist, the UK remains predominantly united'.

Communities Secretary, Ruth Kelly, commenting on the report says 'It is only by facing these issues head on that we can continue to benefit from migration and diversity while maintaining the bonds that tie us all together'. Days before the report is published, she questions the value of public language translation services in a BBC politics show programme, saying 'It's quite possible for someone to come here from Pakistan or elsewhere in the world and to find that materials are routinely translated into their mother tongue and therefore not have the incentive to learn English' and 'If you arrive in this country and for the first six months you don't attempt to learn English, the evidence suggests that you're unlikely ever to'.

*June, 29/30 2007*

### **London car bombs/Glasgow airport attack**

On June 29<sup>th</sup>, two parked cars with explosive materials are discovered parked in the Haymarket area of central London. The explosives are detonated before they can explode. A forensic examination shows that the explosive materials consist of petrol cans, gas canisters, a quantity of nails and a mobile phone-based trigger. There are conflicting reports as to whether the explosive devices are constructed in a way that could have been detonated.

On the afternoon of June 30<sup>th</sup>, a dark green Cherokee jeep loaded with propane canisters is driven into the glass doors of the main airport terminal at Glasgow Airport and is set ablaze. Both of the occupants of the car are arrested at the scene. One of the men is Bilal Abdullah, a British-born Muslim doctor of Iraqi descent, working at the Royal Alexandra Hospital in nearby Paisley. The other man, who is also a doctor, Kafeel Ahmed, suffers from severe burns and dies shortly afterwards of his injuries. In the aftermath of the attack the airport is evacuated and all flights suspended. It reopens again the following morning. The newly-appointed Home Secretary, Jacqui Smith, immediately announces that the UK terrorism threat level is being elevated from 'critical' to 'severe' meaning 'further attacks are expected imminently'. It results in extra police being deployed at key transport interchanges and major events. It is lowered again on July 4<sup>th</sup>. On July 1<sup>st</sup>, the new Prime Minister Gordon Brown, says 'it is clear we are dealing, in general terms, with people who are associated with Al Qaida'.

Police report that evidence recovered from the scene of the Glasgow airport attacks links it to the explosives found in cars in London the previous day. On the night of June 30<sup>th</sup>, police arrest a Jordanian Muslim doctor, Mohammed Asha, and his wife whilst they are travelling by car on the M6 motorway in Cheshire. In the next few days, they arrest the brother of Kafeel Ahmed (also a doctor), and two Saudi medical students working at the Royal Alexandra hospital. The two medical students and Dr. Asha's wife are subsequently released without charge. The rest are charged with terrorist offences. The court case has yet to take place.

On July 2<sup>nd</sup>, police in Australia following information on the July 29/30<sup>th</sup> incidents received from the UK police, arrest two Muslim doctors in Queensland. Because of insufficient evidence, they are subsequently released.

**2007**

### **Racist murders of Muslims**

The independent Institute of Race Relations charity monitors serious racial violence in the UK in the absence of any systematic monitoring of this crime by public bodies. It releases figures showing that between February 2003 and December 2007 there were 33 murders in the UK where racism was a motive (on average 7 a year). The vast majority of these murders (88%) were perpetrated by white persons on persons of ethnic minority origin. The remaining 12% were white persons who were victims of attacks by persons from minority ethnic groups. All the victims were males. Significantly, in the post 9/11 climate, 40% of the persons murdered were Muslims (usually Pakistanis or asylum seekers). Asian men working as cabbies or in take-away food outlets were particularly at risk. In the 2001 census Muslim comprised 1.5 million of the UK population or 2.6% of the total. Muslims in the same census comprised around 32% of the black and ethnic minority population.

### **Report claims hate literature found in UK Mosques**

Research conducted during the year by the right-of-centre Policy Exchange think tank and published in October finds extremist literature in a quarter of the 100 mainstream mosques and Islamic institutions it visited. There are estimated to be 1500 Islamic establishments (mosques) in the UK. The literature encourages hatred of gays, Christians and Jews, calls for women to be subjugated, advocates British Muslims segregating themselves from non-Muslims, and for unbelievers to be treated as second-class citizens. The Director of the Policy Exchange is quoted as saying 'it is clearly intolerable that hate literature is pedalled at some British mosques' and 'I am sure the majority of moderate Muslims will be horrified as everyone else that (these) pamphlets found their way into the UK's mosques'. The tabloid newspaper, *The Sun's* headline for the story, is 'One in four British mosques is in the grip of extremism' and, *The Times*, in a front page story has the headline 'Lessons in hate found at leading mosques'.

The BBC Newsnight programme is originally offered the report by Policy Exchange on an exclusive basis to help its promotion. When the BBC makes inquiries for a programme on the issue, it finds that some of the receipts purporting to show the sale of extremist material from certain mosques are forged and that some of the material comes from bookshops unconnected to the mosques quoted in the report. The Newsnight programme runs a critical story on the report in December.

The Policy Exchange stands by its report with its chairman quoted as saying 'Newsnight told a small story about dodgy receipts to kill a much bigger story of extremist literature in mosques'. Other commentators, however, say that the exposure of faked evidence in a think tank report is part of a campaign in parts of the UK media to convince people that jihadist terror attacks in the UK are not due, for example, to

British policy and involvement in the Middle East, but to a hatred by Muslims of western cultures and freedoms. The Muslim Council of Britain, in a press release, says the report ‘plumbs new depths in the ongoing and transparent attempts to try and de-legitimise popular mainstream Islamic institutions in the UK and replace them with those which are subservient to neo-conservative aims’.

### ***Post-September***

#### **Muslim Council of Britain**

The General Secretary of the Muslim Council of Britain, Dr M A Bari, in an interview with the national *Daily Telegraph* newspaper sums up the views of many UK Muslims when he describes the government’s approach to terrorism as ‘creating an air thick with suspicion and unease... it is not good for the Muslim community, it is not good for society’. He adds ‘I think it is creating a scare in the community and wider society. It probably helps some people who try to recruit the young to terrorism’ In the interview, Dr Bari also cites Nazi Germany in the 1930s as an example of how peoples minds could be poisoned against a community. Dr Bari’s comments are prompted by claims made by the head of the MI5 intelligence service, Jonathan Evans, that there are 2000 people living in the UK who pose a terrorism-related danger, and that youths aged 15 are being groomed to be suicide bombers.

#### **Media coverage of Muslims and Islam**

Research commissioned by the Mayor of London, Ken Livingston, shows that in one week in 2007 91% of articles in national newspapers about Muslims are negative. Only 4% of the 352 articles studied are found to be positive. Among the examples of negative reporting is a news article which claimed that Christmas was being banned in one area because it offended Muslims. The report’s researchers found the article to be ‘inaccurate and alarmist’.

### ***December 27 2007***

#### **Killing of former Pakistani Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto**

Ms Bhutto, a former Prime Minister in Pakistan and first woman to hold such a position in an Islamic country, is killed by the action of a suicide gunman whilst leaving an election rally in Rawalpindi. She is leader of the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) and is campaigning ahead of elections due on January 8 (subsequently postponed to February). She had returned from self imposed exile in October after years living away from Pakistan where she had faced corruption charges from her last period as Prime Minister (she strongly denied these charges). Her return was the result of a power sharing agreement with Pakistani President Musharraf. He granted an amnesty over the court cases she was facing.

Ms Bhutto, with a more secular approach to politics and opposition to terrorism, had the tacit support of many western governments and was expected to do well in the elections. However, her views and periods as Prime Minister meant she had enemies within Pakistan. On her return to Pakistan, reports appeared quoting militant or pro-Taliban leaders in the North West region bordering Afghanistan as threatening to kill

her. Some commentators view her killing as the result of the creeping ‘Talibanisation’ in Pakistan, with Muslims calling for Islamic law, and opposition to the United States becoming more powerful and active in Pakistani politics.

### **Preventing Violent Extremism policy**

The Government develops a ‘Preventing Violent Extremism’ strategy in response to the need to combat violent extremism and to ensure Muslim communities are not burdened with distrust and Islamophobia, but are allowed to become an integrated and integral part of British society.

The Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has a lead role in this strategy which it sees as enabling ‘local communities to be able to challenge robustly the ideas of those extremists who seek to undermine our way of life’. The DCLG aims to work with mainstream Muslim organisations to achieve these ends by:

- Broadening the provision of citizenship education in supplementary schools and Madrassahs.
- Ensuring the most effective use of the education system to promote faith understanding.
- Supporting local authorities to work with their communities in tackling violent extremism.
- Increasing the number of forums on extremism and Islamophobia (supporting local authorities to deliver at least 40 such forums by April 2008).
- Supporting the development of ‘tackling violent extremism roadshows’.
- Fundamentally rebalancing its engagement towards those organisations that uphold shared values and reject and condemn violent extremism (giving them priority in funding).
- Strengthening the role that women can play in their communities (by initially publishing a good practice guide on effective initiatives to strengthen the role of Muslim women).
- Working with the Charity Commission to raise standards of governance in mosques.
- Delivering a new fully-accredited continuous professional development programme for faith leaders (from September 2007).
- Establishing a framework of minimum requirements for all imams engaged by the state.

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