



Anwar al-Awlaki: The UK Connection

Centre for Social Cohesion Press Release 11 November 2009

In a briefing paper released today, [*Anwar al-Awlaki: The UK Connection*](#), the Centre for Social Cohesion (CSC) can reveal an extensive post 9/11 network of UK organisations which have promoted and defended pro al-Qaeda preacher Anwar al-Awlaki. Nidal Hassan, the gunman suspected of carrying out the 5 November 2009 attack on Fort Hood, Texas, had been in previous contact with Awlaki.

The CSC has consistently warned of the danger posed by Awlaki, who is linked to a variety of terrorist plots, including 9/11. Awlaki has been championed as a moderate voice in the UK by university Islamic societies, Muslim groups, a government official and a Prospective Parliamentary Candidate. He is now being hunted by Yemeni authorities over his links to al-Qaeda. Awlaki was in direct email correspondence with Hassan, and after the Fort Hood massacre, has since referred to Hassan as a 'hero'.

Universities

- **City University:** On 1 April 2009, the City University Islamic Society's annual dinner was to feature a video message from Awlaki. He was only prevented from speaking after pressure was exerted by the CSC on university authorities, despite protests from the City Islamic Society.
- **Westminster University:** On 7 April 2006, the Westminster University Islamic Society held their annual dinner, which was scheduled to include a video link up with Awlaki.
- **University of London:** In June 2003, the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB) organised a series of talks which advertised speeches by Awlaki. These were held in conjunction with colleges within the University of London, including the School of Oriental and African Studies, Imperial College, King's College London and the London School of Economics.
- **Federation of Student Islamic Societies (FOSIS):** FOSIS is an umbrella group of university Islamic societies which claims to represent Muslim students in the UK and Ireland. In 2003, their annual conference included Awlaki as a 'distinguished' guest.

East London Mosque (ELM)

Awlaki has spoken at the ELM on at least two occasions.

- In January 2009, the CSC exclusively revealed in the *Daily Telegraph* that Awlaki was due to deliver a video message at the ELM in January 2009. However, the ELM was unwilling to cancel Awlaki's video message or condemn his beliefs.
- At a December 2003 event at the ELM on terror arrests in the UK, Awlaki urged Muslims never to report on or turn over their fellow Muslims, as 'You dont hand over a Muslim to the enemies'.

Islamic Forum Europe (IFE)

- IFE, which operates out of ELM and shares many of the same trustees and senior management, invited Awlaki to speak at its 'expoislamia' event in October 2003.

Cordoba Foundation

In a speech last year, Conservative Party leader David Cameron identified the Cordoba Foundation as 'a front for the Muslim Brotherhood'.

- In August 2009, Cordoba sponsored an event in the Kensington and Chelsea Town Hall that was to feature a video address from Awlaki. The event was only cancelled at the last minute after pressure from the local council. The CSC had repeatedly informed the council of Awlaki's extremist nature, urging them to take action.
- According to the TaxPayers' Alliance, Cordoba received £38,000 of tax payer money between 2007-2008 as part of the government's Prevent agenda.

Muslim Association of Britain

The MAB is widely referred to as the official arm of the Muslim Brotherhood in the UK.

- In June 2003, the MAB website advertised eight separate events they had organised which featured Awlaki. Louise Ellman MP raised her concerns over the MAB's links to Awlaki in Parliament.
- In 2002, the MAB's official newspaper, *Inspire*, ran an advert for their 'Winter Camp', which included Awlaki as one of the invited speakers.

Prospective Parliamentary Candidate

- **Osama Saeed** is a Scottish National Party Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Glasgow Central. He is also the chief executive of the Scottish Islamic Foundation, which was granted £200,000 by the Scottish Executive in 2008. In his blog post relating to the 2006 arrest of Awlaki in Yemen, Saeed wrote that: *Imam Anwar Al-Awlaki was originally hounded in the US because two of the 9/11 bombers happened to pray at his mosque. Many of my Muslim readers will either know him personally or have heard his lectures. He preached nothing but peace, and I pray he will be able to do so again.*

Government civil servant and advisor on Islamic extremism

- **Azad Ali** is a civil servant at the Treasury and an advisor on Islamic extremism to a Whitehall counterterrorism panel that provides advice to Keir Starmer, the Director of Public Prosecutions, and the UK's most senior prosecutor. On 5 November 2008, Ali said of Awlaki: *I really do love him for the sake of Allah, he has an uncanny way of explaining things to people which is endearing.*
- On 19 November 2008, Ali again wrote favourably of Awlaki: *You may take Shaykh Anwar Awlaki as an example. Reading his blogs, one cannot help but feel his frustration at the constant denial of legitimate Islamic principles. Worse is the complete incompetence of some Muslims to distinguish between Jihad and acts of murder.*

Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens, CSC Research Fellow, says:

"Awlaki not only shares al-Qaeda's world-view and ideology, but is highly adept at disseminating it. He has a history of extremism which pre-dates 9/11, and there can be no excuse for those in this country who continue to defend and promote him.

"Any continued support or promotion of Awlaki in the UK must be met with robust denunciations by both the government and those who previously championed him."

Press enquiries: 0207 222 8909 / 07538 248610 / pressoffice@socialcohesion.co.uk

The Centre for Social Cohesion is an independent think tank

***The Centre for Social Cohesion * Clutha House * 10 Storey's Gate * London * SW1P 3AY*
*0207 222 8909 * mail@socialcohesion.co.uk ***