



Hizb ut-Tahrir

Australia

Media Information Pack
June 2011

Introduction

This information pack is in the form of a series of short sections that concisely answer and elaborate upon fundamental matters about Hizb ut-Tahrir, with an eye to present accurate information about the party and to dispel common misconceptions and misrepresentations related to it.

The following areas are addressed:

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What is Hizb ut-Tahrir?

Hizb ut-Tahrir¹ is a global Islamic political party established in 1953 under the leadership of its founder - the honourable scholar, thinker, author, and judge in the Court of Appeals in Jerusalem - Taqiuddin an-Nabhani.

The current leader of the party is the erudite scholar Ata ibn Khaleel Abu Rashta. He resides in and works from the Muslim world. During his tenure as party spokesman in Jordan in the early 90s he was detained for several years as a prisoner of conscience. Since assuming the leadership of the party he has addressed conferences in Yemen, Pakistan, Indonesia and Palestine.

The party leadership centrally oversees the work of the party throughout the world, and the party globally represents one entity.

Due to the extreme persecution faced by our members in the Muslim world, we do not aid the tyrannical rulers by revealing the precise whereabouts of the party's leadership.

Where does Hizb ut-Tahrir work?

The party is active throughout the Middle East, Central Asia, South-East Asia, Africa, the Indian Subcontinent, Europe, Australasia and the Americas. It operates in over forty countries in the Muslim World, as well as numerous other countries outside this region.

Hizb ut-Tahrir's Objective

Exclusive to the Muslim world, our political aim is the re-establishment of the Islamic Caliphate as an independent state - having an elected and accountable ruler, an independent judiciary, political parties, the rule of law and equitable rights for all citizens regardless of race, religion, ethnicity or ideology. Citizens of the Caliphate have every right to be involved in politics and accounting the ruler, as the role of the ruler (Caliph) is that of a servant to the masses, governing them with justice.

The current situation in the Muslim world is a lamentable one, with deeply embedded corruption, open oppression, injustice, no accountability, disregard for rule of law and discrimination. These are real problems which affect millions of people every day, and these are problems which Hizb ut-Tahrir works to change.

¹ 'Hizb ut-Tahrir' is an Arabic phrase roughly meaning 'The Party of Liberation'. The reference to liberation is in the context of liberating the Muslim World from the yolk of foreign subjugation, in all its forms.

Hizb ut-Tahrir and the Caliphate

The Caliphate² is a state based ideologically and politically on Islam. Its responsibility is to equitably manage the affairs of all citizens, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, through the implementation of the laws of Islam (Shari'ah) in their capacity as divine laws which, given their divine origin, are the most suitable laws for humanity.

The ruling system of the Caliphate bears no resemblance to any of the governments in the Muslim world today. It is a unique system, different from any other in terms of its political philosophy, form of government, and aims and methodologies, for the simple reason that its source is divine and not man-made. The systems of ruling that exist in the Muslim World at present, on the other hand, are all the fruits of a colonial legacy.

The Caliph is the head of state in the Caliphate. He is not a king or dictator but an elected leader whose authority to rule must be given willingly through a particular contract of ruling. He is not like the Pope. He is not a spiritual head, nor is he infallible. His post is an executive post of governance. He can make mistakes, which is why checks and balances exist within the Islamic ruling system to ensure he and his government remain accountable.

The Caliph is not appointed by God, and the Caliphate is not a theocracy as understood in Western political and religious discourse. Its legislation is not restricted to religious and moral codes alone. The Shari'ah is a comprehensive system that legislates on political, social, economic, foreign policy and judicial matters. Economic progress, elimination of poverty and enhancing the people's standard of living are all goals the Caliphate aims to achieve. This is completely opposite to the backward, medieval theocracies founded in Europe during the middle ages where the poor were forced to work and live in squalid conditions in return for the promise of heaven. Historically the Caliphate was an immensely wealthy state with a flourishing economy, high standard of living and a world leader in industry and scientific research for centuries.

Further, the Caliphate is not a totalitarian state. It cannot spy on its citizens. Everyone in the Caliphate has the right to express his or her opposition to policies of the state without fear of arrest or imprisonment. Torture and imprisonment without trial is completely forbidden, and these rules are not allowed to be bent on grounds of political expediency as we see occurring in modern Western democracies. Non-Muslims are protected by the state and not forced to leave their religions or to adopt Islamic values. Rather non-Muslim citizens are protected and their homes, properties and lives cannot be violated. They have the same rights and responsibilities as Muslims.

As for foreign policy, the Caliphate is an expansionist state but it does not conquer new lands in order to steal their wealth and resources. Rather its foreign policy is to convey the Islamic message with the best interests of others at heart. Historically the Caliphate did not conquer lands to fill the coffers back in the capital, as the British Empire did for example. Rather it sought to develop those lands and bring the standard of living of its people up to match and even exceed its own, and was highly successful at this.

This is the Caliphate which Hizb ut-Tahrir works to establish in the Muslim World.

² 'Caliphate' is the latinised version of the Arabic 'Khilafah'; both terms refer to what is otherwise known as the Islamic State.

Hizb ut-Tahrir's Method of Work

Hizb ut-Tahrir was established with the objective of re-establishing Islam in state and society in the Muslim world through intellectual and political means alone. Through such means the change is sought upon the basis of mass popular support and support from influential power points or institutions of society.

The party outlines its methodology in the book *"The Methodology of Hizb ut-Tahrir for Change"* which is widely available. A fairly accurate account is also given in Suha Taji-Farouki's independent and referenced work³.

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

Even though our work is exclusively intellectual and political, it is still unwelcome by the unrepresentative dictators and despots - stooges of foreign powers - who rule the Muslim world. They are completely intolerant to anyone who has ideas different to their own, or those who challenge their unjust rule. As a result, our members have been imprisoned, tortured and even killed for their beliefs. Since its inception to the current day, our members have never resorted to armed struggle or violence as a way of bringing about political change.

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

Is Hizb ut-Tahrir linked with any other groups?

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

With respect to the founder of Hizb ut-Tahrir, Taqiuddin an-Nabhani, the allegation that he was a member of the Muslim Brotherhood is incorrect and without foundation. A biography of the founder of the party can be found at our website.⁴

Are women involved in Hizb ut-Tahrir?

There is no difference, in origin, in the responsibility on men and women towards working for societal change in Islam. It is a communal obligation that applies to both, within their capacities. Women in Hizb ut-Tahrir play an active role undertaking intellectual and political work - such as calling the rulers of the Muslim world to account and struggling against oppression and injustice. Many female members of Hizb ut-Tahrir have been imprisoned for their beliefs and activism by a number of the regimes in the Muslim world. In accordance with the Islamic etiquettes, women's activities are mostly separate or segregated from men's activities. _____

³ Suha Taji-Farouki, *A Fundamental Quest – Hizb ut-Tahrir and the Search for the Islamic Caliphate*, Grey Seal, London 1996.

⁴ <http://hizb-australia.org/hizbut-tahrir/hizb-ut-tahrir-founders/243-sheikh-muhammad-taqiuddin-al-nabhani->

Hizb ut-Tahrir's Work in Australia

Hizb ut-Tahrir's roots in Australia stretch back to the early 1990s. It has ever since been highly active within the Muslim community on the grassroots level, with great success in the spreading of its ideas of Islamic political activism and Islamic revivalism.

Our primary political aim, as mentioned above, is the re-establishment of the Caliphate in the Muslim world. We are not working to establish such a state in Australia. Our work in Australia is aimed at supporting the global effort to re-establish the Caliphate in the Muslim world, whilst also projecting a positive image of Islam in the West.

The reason we operate in the West, given our primary goal is relevant to the Muslim World, is two-fold. One, in a globalised world any serious political work cannot be bound by geography. Two, the reality of the intimate role Western Governments in the politics of the Muslim World means they form a central part of the struggle for Islam in the Muslim World. Indeed, it is Western governments that are the major obstacle to positive change in the Muslim World.

Further, with growing numbers of Muslim living in the West, Western Governments have brought the struggle home by adopting similar agendas locally.⁵ This includes the attempt to re-construct Islam on the model of the Christian reformation by promoting a secular, apolitical, so called 'moderate' version of Islam. They have sought to force the Muslims to 'integrate' by abandoning Islamic values and ideals, and accepting Western secular liberal values instead.

Thus, in Australia, as in other Western nations, our work with the Muslim community is focused on directing Muslims to resist the dilution of their Islam and, conversely, to make a positive contribution to society based upon the preservation of their Islamic identity. We reject both integration and isolation, and advocate positive interaction in society based solely upon Islam. We believe the Muslim community, with its Islamic values and culture, can present itself as a sublime model of tranquillity, prosperity and positivity.

⁵ See Badar, U, *The Struggle for Islam in the West*, www.hizb-australia.org, 03/07/2010, attached in appendix.

Hizb ut-Tahrir and Violence

Hizb ut-Tahrir has no history of violence or militancy anywhere in the world. Our rejection of violence as a methodology for political change is clearly stated in our literature. Unlike Western notions of political expediency, we do not believe that the ‘ends justify the means’.

Hizb ut-Tahrir has maintained this non-violent method from its inception, in spite of operating under some of the harshest regimes in the world. External sources, from both political establishments and academia, have acknowledged this fact, as shown in the following references.

“The group’s non-violent ideology has displayed remarkable continuity over five decades. Originally directed at Arab Muslims, its vision of a return to an Islamic way of life through the agency of a new pan-Islamic state attracts adherents around the world...Hizb ut-Tahrir has remained remarkably consistent in ideology and strategy.”⁶

“Hizb ut-Tahrir [HT] is an independent political party that is active in many countries across the world. HT’s activities centre on intellectual reasoning, logic arguments and political lobbying. The party adheres to the Islamic Shariah law in all aspects of its work. It considers violence or armed struggle against the regime, as a method to re-establish the Islamic State, a violation of the Islamic Shariah.”⁷

“Hizb ut-Tahrir is a completely non-violent organisation.”⁸

“Hizb ut-Tahrir does not advocate a violent overthrow of Muslim regimes...Instead HT believes in winning over mass support, believing that one day these supporters will rise up in peaceful demonstrations and overthrow the regimes of Central Asia.”⁹

Hizb ut-Tahrir and the ‘Conveyor Belt’ for Terrorism theory

We reject the charge made by some that the party, though non-violent itself, incites others to commit violent acts. The ‘conveyor belt’ allegation is superficial and unsubstantiated. It is no more than a futile attempt to link Hizb ut-Tahrir to violence. Many independent academics have rejected this allegation¹⁰. Hizb ut-Tahrir has also publicly responded to the claim, originally introduced in an article by Zeyno Baran¹¹. The full text of the reply from Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain, authored by Dr Abdullah Robin, to the Nixon Center is attached in the appendix.

Is Hizb ut-Tahrir an extremist group?

There is nothing ‘extreme’ about wanting representative, accountable governance in the Muslim World, or wanting the end of foreign interference there by removing the despots who rule. There is nothing ‘extreme’ about accounting Western governments as to their invasion of Muslim lands, and their spilling the blood of men, woman, children and the elderly, uprooting entire towns and villages, and pillaging of resources. These are the principles that drive Hizb ut-Tahrir.

Having said this, the reality of contemporary discourse is that terms like ‘extreme’, ‘fundamentalist’ and ‘radical’ - and their opposites like ‘moderate’ and ‘progressive’ – are politicised terms having no objective meaning. Western Governments and media use them as a political tool to sway public opinion in one direction or another. Hizb ut-Tahrir seeks to go beyond such superficial labels and engage in genuine and substantive debate. _____

⁶ International: Hizb ut-Tahrir channels disaffection, *Oxford Analytica Report*, 08 Jan 2008.

⁷ Restricted Home Office Documents 19/8/03, Released to Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain 1/6/05 under FOI Act, UK.

⁸ Craig Murray, the ex-British ambassador to Uzbekistan, *Al-Jazeera*, 17/5/05.

⁹ Rashid, Ahmed, *Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia*, Yale University Press, 25 Jan 2002.

¹⁰ See for example: Jean Francois-Mayer, *Hizb ut-Tahrir, the next Al-Qaida, Really?* p. 9, PSIO, Geneva 2004.

¹¹ Director of international-security and energy programs at the Nixon Centre (US).

Why is Hizb ut-Tahrir banned in Muslim countries?

Hizb ut-Tahrir is at the forefront of political activism in the Muslim world, challenging and accounting the tyrannical rulers of the Muslim world such as Colonel Gaddafi in Libya, Asif Ali Zardari in Pakistan, Hosni Mubarak (previously) in Egypt, Islam Karimov in Uzbekistan, and King Abdullah in Saudi Arabia. The response of these regimes to our work has been the imprisonment, torture and murder of our members.

Whilst our challenge to these regimes has been upon an intellectual and political basis, through encouragement of debate and discussion, these Western backed regimes, being bankrupt of an ideological retort, have resorted to banning and silencing the party through violent means. These regimes tolerate no opposition whatsoever; all opposition parties which seek to change the status quo are banned.

Despite the banning of Hizb ut-Tahrir and the intimidation of its members, the thoughts of the party have nevertheless successfully permeated throughout society in the Muslim World.

Is Hizb ut-Tahrir banned in Western countries?

Despite various reports in Western media to the contrary, Hizb ut-Tahrir is not banned in any Western nation.¹² Hizb ut-Tahrir operates actively and legally in the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia, as well as many other European nations, and has been doing so for decades now.

In August 2005, British Prime Minister Tony Blair announced an *intent* to ban Hizb ut-Tahrir. The proposal fell flat on its face in the absence of any evidence upon which to ban Hizb ut-Tahrir.

“In relation to the question from the Leader of the Opposition, I confirm what the Prime Minister said: we have recently carried out two reviews of Hizb ut-Tahrir and we have decided that there is insufficient evidence to ban it.”¹³

The proposal was widely opposed from various sectors of British society, as the following references show.

“I agree with the two Muslim MPs who oppose the banning of Hizb ut-Tahrir (Islamist clerics face treason charges, August 8). As a scholar who has some knowledge of their operations in the UK and abroad, I am convinced their modus operandi is through traditional political campaigning, not violence. Believing that nation states in the Middle East are artificial creations of western powers to divide Muslims and exploit oil resources, they seek social justice through the formation of a single Islamic state that serves the poor rather than corrupt clients of foreign powers. They argue that violence cannot be used to take control of the state, but the state can use the military to defend itself against other states. As a political geographer and Christian socialist, I believe their historical analysis is correct and their conclusion well-reasoned. I cannot share their vision, for it ultimately maintains the Quranic commitment to just war theory that is as much part of the Middle East's problems as the variants deployed by George Bush and Tony Blair. However, they are not terrorists and parliament must resist this unreasonable attack on freedom of speech.”¹⁴

“Hizb ut-Tahrir is to be proscribed. If necessary, powers to proscribe terrorist organisations are to be

¹² The only exception to this is a ban of activities – but not membership or association – in Germany, on spurious grounds of anti-Semitism; a ban subject to legal challenge since its inception.

¹³ Former Home Secretary John Reid, PM's Questions, 4 July 2007; Hansard Column 955 - 4 July 2007.

¹⁴ Dr Nick Megoran, Cambridge University, 09/08/2005, *The Guardian*.

extended - presumably into the realms of non-terrorist extreme political parties. I certainly have very little in common with this organisation. But it is anathema to democracy to ban non-violent political organisations, however extreme. Surely it is unwise to emulate the banning tendencies of Middle Eastern regimes that radicalised generations of dissenters by similar policies. In months and years to come, will we see the banning of extreme rightwing or leftwing political parties?"¹⁵

"The proposal to ban the non-violent organisation Hizb ut-Tahrir is, in our view, unwarranted, unjust and unwise, and runs counter to all the principles which Western democracies are currently trying to promote abroad. Any disagreement with a political organisation must be expressed through debate not censorship. Whatever objections one may have to someone else's point of view, we must uphold their right to hold and articulate those views. If it is suggested that any laws have been broken by any individuals or groups then this must be proven by due legal process. Criminalising the mere possession of certain opinions is the hallmark of dictatorships, not democracies."¹⁶

"I am also concerned about proscribing non-violent organisations, such as Hizb ut-Tahrir. Doing so will drive it underground and alienate whole sections of our Muslim community. They are intelligent people, who do not espouse violence but do want a debate about the principles of Sharia law and so on."¹⁷

The motive for Blair's action was later reported to be a deal with Pakistan's dictator General Pervez Musharaf¹⁸, indicative of the expedient politics of Western Governments.

Banning an Islamic political movement with a history of non-violent activism exceeding fifty years would be descending a very slippery slope, descending which will not be merely 'changing the rules of the game', as Tony Blair said in August 2005, but changing society fundamentally. It will prove that modern liberal societies cannot tolerate the peaceful expression of ideas that disagree with it and seek to intellectually challenge it.

¹⁵ Shami Chakrabarti, Director of Liberty (National Council for Civil Liberties), 8/8/2005, *The Guardian*.

¹⁶ Joint statement by over 180 prominent Muslim organisations and individuals from around the UK.

¹⁷ Baroness Kennedy of The Shaws; Hansard: Column 1445, 21 Nov 2005.

¹⁸ See <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2006/dec/24/religion.uk>

Media reports on Hizb ut-Tahrir in Australia

The proposal by Tony Blair to ban Hizb ut-Tahrir in Britain in August 2005 was incorrectly translated in the Australian media as a ban, as opposed to a mere proposal to ban, perpetuating the falsity that Hizb ut-Tahrir is banned in Britain. This was little more than a ploy by sensationalist media outlets (perpetuated by lazy journalism that foregoes verification of fact), as they sought to raise the straw-man of a question: if the party is banned in Britain, then why not here? In reality, it had never been banned in Britain at all.

In Australia, Government agencies like ASIO have long ascertained that Hizb ut-Tahrir is purely a political party which has no links to violence whatsoever. The lack of any advice by ASIO to the Government to ban the party, which has operated in Australia for well over a decade now, is proof of this. The Government however has opportunistically jumped on the sensationalist media bandwagon for time to time with claims that investigations are underway and that Hizb ut-Tahrir is an 'extreme' party being looked into.

Surprisingly such 'investigations' arise after media hysteria following a major incident like the London bombings of July 2005 or when Hizb ut-Tahrir organises a major event like its first conference in January 2007, as if the authorities are oblivious to Hizb ut-Tahrir's existence and operation prior to these events. Naturally, all such 'investigations' have invariably led to the perpetuation of the status quo, despite the sensationalist rhetoric, as such 'investigations' have no basis at all.

Following Hizb ut-Tahrir's first major conference in Australia in 2007, numerous media reports carried inaccurate claims. It was said that Hizb ut-Tahrir was linked to the July 2005 London bombings, that it was working to implement Islamic Law in Australia, and that it was banned in Britain. It was also alleged that Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and Khalid Sheikh Mohammed were members of Hizb ut-Tahrir. All of these claims are entirely without basis and completely wrong.

More recently, during a Senate estimates hearing on legal and constitutional affairs in May 2011, Senator Russell Troad regurgitated old allegations made in tabloid newspapers claiming that Hizb ut-Tahrir advocated the use of violence as a legitimate means of political expression. He alleged that Hizb ut-Tahrir had called for the destruction of Hindus in Kashmir, Russians in Chechnya and Jews in 'Israel', and that it 'incite[s] violence against particular members of the community'¹⁹.

Conflating between the advocacy of occupied peoples' right to resist and the use of violence as a means of political expression is a type of cheap expedience that politicians in Australia and Britain have done on multiple occasions. Evidently, the common link between Kashmir, Chechnya and 'Israel' is that they all represent occupied land, unjustly invaded by a foreign aggressor. Thus what Hizb ut-Tahrir has, unashamedly, called for, and will continue to call for, is the reversal of unjust occupations. The correct way of dealing with military occupations is to resist militarily.

Of note is the fact that Senator's Troad remarks came in the context of his probing the head of ASIO, David Irvine, as to why members of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Britain had been allowed to come into Australia and partake in Hizb ut-Tahrir's second major conference in Australia in July 2010. This represents the new low Australian policymakers have fallen to, whereby the rhetoric of 'freedom of speech' and 'democracy' is only matched by actions that seek to suppress views they disagree with.

¹⁹ Proof Committee Hansard, Senate, Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation, Committee Estimates (Public), Wednesday, 25 May 2011, <http://bit.ly/kmG3Hs>, p.93.

Hizb ut-Tahrir and Australian involvement in Afghanistan

Hizb ut-Tahrir has maintained from the very beginning of the Western invasion of Afghanistan, that the war was unjust and unjustifiable. The United States merely used 9/11 as a pretext for war through which it would consolidate its economic and political interests in the region, similar to how it used the pretext of Saddam Hussein and, non-existent, WMDs to invade Iraq.

As for Australian involvement in the invasion of Afghanistan, it has little to do with any threat to national security. Rather it represents the continuation of a superficially thought out acquiescence to American foreign policy. The subjugation of Australian foreign policy to foreign powers has, and continues, to utilise Australian blood cheaply for the attainment of the imperial agendas of others, in particular Britain and America.

It has been suggested in the media that Hizb ut-Tahrir has labelled the Australian troops in Afghanistan 'terrorists'.²⁰ In reality we have maintained that the question of Australia's involvement in the war is one related to the actions of Australian policymakers, not the troops. Whilst any soldiers – regardless of nationality, race or religion – are not absolved of blame for wrong actions on grounds of obeying orders, the reality is that it was not the troops who decided to go to Afghanistan. It was the policymakers who sent them there.

It is evident that the war in Afghanistan has been a resounding failure. It is war that has dragged on for ten long and arduous years and still there is no clear end in sight. Two and half thousand coalition troops have died and thousands of innocent Afghans have died. It has produced systematic abuses at the hand of Coalition forces such as those witnessed at Bagram airbase, and it has seen to the wholesale destruction of Afghanistan.

The only responsible course of action for the Australian Government is to withdraw their troops, end the invasion, and, if it has the political will, to end this shameful legacy of serving the imperial agendas of others, which will no doubt gain ignoble mention in the chronicles of history.

In June 2011, Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia issued an open letter to the people of Australia on the issue of Australian involvement in Afghanistan. The letter is attached in the appendix.

²⁰Dunn M, *Muslim leader Uthman Badar calls Aussie troops 'terrorists'*, Sun Herald, 23/10/2010 ;<http://bit.ly/muHy2A>

Hizb ut-Tahrir and charges of anti-Semitism

We reject decisively the charge of anti-Semitism.²¹ Islam is a message directed to all humankind, without distinction of race or ethnicity. At the same time we decisively reject the illegitimate state of 'Israel' and Hizb ut-Tahrir, like the overwhelming majority of Muslims and other Islamic organisations, is opposed to the continued occupation of Palestine by 'Israel'.

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

To equate opposition to Israel with anti-Semitism is disingenuous and untenable.

In Australia, the charge of anti-Semitism against Hizb ut-Tahrir has been made, at the highest levels, by the Leader of the Federal Opposition, Tony Abbot²², and more recently, by the Deputy Leader of the Federal Opposition, Julie Bishop²³. They went as far as to allege that Hizb ut-Tahrir has called for the 'killing' and 'slaughter' of Jewish people, which is no more than a slanderous lie.

This charge of 'anti-Semitism' is an old and tired way of deflecting criticism of 'Israel'. The truth is that anti-Semitism is of European birth and breed. Europe's treatment of Jews is represented in the history books by the ovens of deaths they were greeted with in the Spanish Inquisition and in Nazi Germany. In sharp contrast, Jews were welcomed and treated justly in Muslim Spain and under the Ottoman Caliphate.

In sharp contrast, history is testament to the fact that many Jews used to live with Muslims under the banner of Islam for almost thirteen centuries. Throughout those periods Jews used to have the same high standard of living as the Muslims did. They enjoyed rights as equal citizens, prosperity, happiness, tranquillity and security. Indeed the golden age of the Jews was realised only under Islamic auspices in Muslim Spain, and it was the Ottoman Caliphate that open its doors to Jews fleeing from the Spanish Inquisition.

²¹ See also Taji Mustafa's (Media Representative, Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain) article on this subject, attached in the appendix.

²² Abbott T, *Address to the United Israel Appeal Victoria 2011 Campaign Gala Dinner*, Melbourne; <http://bit.ly/lGpX6o>.

²³ Bishop J, Labor supports Marrickville Council's campaign against Israel, 02 June 2011; <http://bit.ly/lWVWTR>.

Hizb ut-Tahrir's view on Democracy

Hizb ut-Tahrir is working for accountable governance in the Muslim world, where authority to those who lead them lies with the people, but not for a democracy. Democracy in Western states is undoubtedly a ruling system that is distinct from the Islamic ruling system. This is because Islam and Secular Liberalism are built on entirely different fundamental philosophies. While the Western system advocates sovereignty in legislation for humankind, the Islamic system advocates sovereignty in legislation for the Creator. For this reason, Democracy is not consistent with the Islamic system.

Islam caters for accountability, representation, and consultation in governance and it has had these hallmarks centuries before modern-day democracy. However it does not recognise sovereignty for people instead of God. The human mind is limited and open to discrepancy and contradiction, whilst the wisdom of the Creator is a perfect source of knowledge.

Democracy is increasingly seen to be deeply flawed, controlled by large corporations and largely indifferent to the needs of ordinary citizens. Voter turnouts in the West are at an all time low and people are obliged to go out to the streets in their hundreds of thousands to express their frustrations. Though individuals currently have some 'freedom' to criticise and change their politicians in the West, the reality is that whichever politicians are elected, they are of the economic elite and they rule on behalf of the economic elite.

Why does Hizb ut-Tahrir not participate in the mainstream electoral process?

The regimes ruling in the Muslim world nowadays are all un-Islamic. They are regimes which are not ruling by Islam because their systems are not derived from Islam (except for some portions of them). It is forbidden for a Muslim, who believes in Islam, to help, participate in or be a part of these regimes. Rather, Hizb ut-Tahrir urges Muslims to work with utmost diligence and speed to dismantle them and establish the system of Islam in their place.

We do not intend to prolong the life of corrupt and tyrannical systems of government by our participation in them.

'If you don't like the Western way of life, why don't you go back to an Islamic country?'

The advocacy of the 'like it or leave' approach in this context is irrational and superficial. Ideological difference does not need to be translated into geographical difference. In a global world, geographical boundaries increasingly mean very little.

Further this question is based on a number of misconceptions.

First, there is no 'Islamic country' in the sense of a state based on Islam. Had there been such a state there would be no need for us to work to re-establish the Islamic State or Caliphate. The various states that exist in the Muslim World are either monarchies, dictatorships or democracies – over and above being under heavy influence of Western powers like the US and UK. Invariably they are secular states or republics. The ones that claim to be Islamic states, like Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, only selectively implement some parts of Islam whilst fundamentally being states based on other ideologies such as secularism and nationalism.

Second, the reason behind the existence of large Muslim populations in the West is because the conditions in the Muslim World are dire, forcing migration. Importantly, the major hand behind this lamentable reality has been, and continues to be, exploitative policies of Western Governments. Thus it is disingenuous to ignore this fact and to work off the rather romantic conception of philanthropic Western Governments opening their lands to take in troubled peoples out of sense of higher morality. The reality rather is that Western Governments have both created the problem and pursued expedient solutions as a means of furthering their own economic and political interests.

Third, the approach of any person of integrity is not to leave from a place he deems problematic but to constructively contribute to positive change. Islam encourages personal sacrifice for the betterment of others, not that one have an outlook revolving around their own interests.

Hizb ut-Tahrir and non-Muslims living under Islam

It is a known matter in Islam that non-Muslims are treated well under Islam. It is the responsibility of the state and the Muslims at large to protect the rights and fulfil the needs of non-Muslim citizens. As Imam al-Qarifi, a well known classical Islamic authority, mentioned,

“It is the responsibility of the Muslims to the non-Muslim citizens to take care of their weak, fulfil the needs of the poor, feed the hungry, provide clothes, address them politely and even tolerate their harm even if it was from a neighbour, even though the Muslim would have an upper hand. The Muslims must also advise them sincerely on their affairs and protect them against anyone who tries to hurt them or their family, steal their wealth or anyone who violates their rights.”

Many non-Muslims used to live with Muslims under the banner of Islam for almost thirteen centuries. Throughout those periods non-Muslims used to have the same high standard of living as the Muslims did. They enjoyed equal rights, prosperity, happiness, tranquillity and security.

It is well-known too that when the Jews of Spain were expelled during the Spanish Inquisition under brutal Christian rule, they were given refuge in the Caliphate and allowed to live there as equal citizens. This was after the golden period of Islam in Spain when Jews and Christians were not only treated well, but made some of the best academic advancements in their own respective traditions.

Hizb ut-Tahrir's Position on the targeting of innocent people

Hizb ut-Tahrir has been on the public record on several occasions stating its position that the killing of innocent non-combatants is forbidden and definitively prohibited. This is the Islamic position on the matter.

We do not condone acts such as the London bombings of 7th July 2005 and the attacks of September 11th 2001. However we seek to go further in discussing the causes behind such incidents in order to deal with the root causes behind them.

In contrast, Western Governments seek condemnation alone in order to use the attacks as a pretext to commit further evils of their own, such as the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, thus perpetuating the causes that lead to such incidents.

Appendix

Comprising of four documents:

1. An open letter to the people of Australia, issued by Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia in June 2011, regarding Australian involvement in the war in Afghanistan.
2. “The Struggle for Islam in the West”; article authored by Uthman Badar, Media Representative of Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia, 03/07/2010. It clarifies what we mean by the struggle for Islam in the West, which was the theme of Hizb ut-Tahrir’s second major conference in Australia in July 2010.
3. “Cameron Got it Wrong”; authored by Taji Mustafa, Media Representative of Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain, published in the *Guardian*, 09/07/2007. It refutes the allegation that Hizb ut-Tahrir is anti-Semitic.
4. The reply by Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain to Zeyno Baran from the Nixon Centre (US) on her allegation of Hizb ut-Tahrir being a ‘conveyor belt’ to terrorism; authored by Dr. Abdullah Robin, member of Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain in 2004.

Open Letter to the People of Australia²⁴

Writing is on the wall in Afghanistan; Account the policymakers to withdraw the troops and end the war

As news of two more Australian troops being killed in Afghanistan this week hits home around the nation, the imperative to withdraw the troops and end Australian involvement in the invasion of Afghanistan is ever clearer.

It is time to face the reality.

The war in Afghanistan has been a resounding failure. It is war that has dragged on for ten long and arduous years and still there is no clear end in sight. It is war in which two and half thousand Coalition troops have died. Australia's tally now stands at twenty six. Twenty six human beings killed. Twenty six grieving families separated, forever, from their loved ones. For what end?

As for the effect of the war on the people of Afghanistan, the story is far more horrendous. It is a tale of human tragedy that words cannot express. Countless innocent people have been killed. They are human beings too, despite their being treated as mere numbers and reduced to the rubric of 'collateral' by those running this war. They have families too. They have loved ones too. And there numbers don't run in the twenties or even the hundreds; they number in the thousands.

Where twenty-six seats at Australian dinner tables are now empty, thousands of seats at Afghan dinner tables are empty. This is a sobering reality that deserves deep consideration.

If this war continues, the result is predictable: more soldiers will die and more Afghan civilians will die. More deaths breed more hatred and motivation for revenge, and the vicious cycle continues. This is a losing war for the invading Coalition forces. It is unwinnable. It is evident that the Coalition forces do not have control over the vast majority of Afghanistan. If this is the case after ten years, what do we expect to occur in another two or three? Or indeed another ten, as alluded to by the Prime Minister last year?

The passing years do not make the politicians wary. They have plenty of spin to regurgitate. From the first Australian soldier killed in 2002 to the last soldier killed last week, the response of the politicians is the same: jingoistic platitudes and playing on emotions to justify the unjustifiable.

It is obvious to all impartial observers that Australian officials are merely playing to the tune of the American agenda – using Australian resources and lives to fulfil American political and economic interests. They first ran to aid the folly of George Bush, and now they blindly follow the Obama administration. This is an American War, plain and simple, and the crumbs the American master affords Australia is not worth the blood being sacrificed.

The Australian Government and Opposition alike have lost all sense of reason on the issue of Afghanistan. Their justifications for the invasion have long become mutually contradictory. In 2001 they said they were going to Afghanistan to avenge 9/11. Come the turn of the decade and behold: they are there to allegedly save its oppressed women, and to enhance the national security of Australia! Perhaps the politicians need to be reminded that Afghanistan is over ten thousand kilometres away from Australia, and that the hundreds of millions of dollars of tax-payers funds being used in Afghanistan would be better spent in Australia to help the thousands of Australian families struggling to make ends meet on a daily basis under tough economic conditions.

²⁴ <http://www.hizb-australia.org/media-centre/press-releases/3701-open-letter-to-the-people-of-australia>

Whatever the objectives, and however they expediently morph, none have been achieved. The world, Australia included, is now, palpably, not more but less safe than before the 'War on Terror' was launched.

The war in Afghanistan has always been seen by the people of Afghanistan as an unjust occupation of their land. It has produced systematic abuses at the hand of Coalition forces such as those witnessed at Bagram airbase, and it has seen to the wholesale destruction of Afghanistan, village by village, province by province. In turn, Australia's name is being soiled along with the already sullied name of America.

No good can be expected from the politicians any more. It is up to you, the people of Australia, to hold them to account and to force them to come to their senses. The writing is on the wall: the invasion must end and the troops must be withdrawn.

Media Office

Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia

2nd June 2011

The Struggle for Islam in the West

Uthman Badar
03 July 2010²⁵

If it's not the face veil that becomes a security issue overnight in Australia, it's the minarets that frighten Switzerland. If it's not freedom of expression making Danish 'artists' itch to insult the Prophet of Islam, it's the Muslim Woman's dress code threatening three hundred years of French secularism. One thing is for sure: the hostility to all things Islamic is on the rise in the West.

One would do well to keep the greater political context in mind here. When the Berlin Wall fell, Western policymakers raised their heads to peer beyond the Cold-War paradigm whose chapter had closed. What they saw was a new 'threat', beyond the Mediterranean as Thatcher referred to it, in a form of Islamic revivalism.

In the following two decades, the struggle crystallised. In 2010, it is as clear as ever, taking place first and foremost in the Muslim World, but also having a clear frontier here in the West.

In the Muslim World the battle is being fought between Muslims on the one hand and Western Governments on the other. Muslims seek to shape their political destiny on the basis of Islam through the establishment of the Caliphate. Western Governments, through their political agents, seek to maintain the status quo of repressive secular rule, whether of monarchical, dictatorial or democratic flavour.

It must be emphasised here that the rulers in the Muslim lands – Mubarak, Abdullah, Zardari et al. – are no more than agents of Western powers, deriving zero legitimacy from Islam or its peoples. Their despotic rule over their respective lands is in essence the pursuance of foreign agendas and opulent self-interests.

In this way they are able to maintain an otherwise untenable grip on power, whilst Western Governments are able to preserve their spheres of influence, albeit by proxy instead of the old approach of direct colonialism.

As for the local front, two factors brought the struggle home to Western Governments. One was their own intimate role in the politics of the Muslim World. The other was the increasing numbers of Muslims residing in the West, who, instead of integrating into Western culture, were maintaining a strong connection to their own values and ideals.

Policymakers in the West thus adopted the same agenda here, of attempting to force integration by ruing Muslims away from Islam as it is – a creed political as much as it is spiritual.

Hence, whether it be the US, the UK, or Australia, we see constant attacks on Islam: its values, practices, and symbols. We see the promotion of a 'moderate' Islam - a secular apolitical version of Islam that sits comfortably within Western designs for the Muslim World. And we see, inter alia, draconian and ill-conceived 'counter-terrorism' policies that criminalise entire communities and seek to repress legitimate political expression.

This is the struggle for Islam in the West. It is *not* an effort on the part of Muslims to change the political landscape of Western secular democracies. It is, in origin, a struggle by Muslims to change the lamentable landscape of the Muslim world, on the basis of Islam.

²⁵ <http://www.hizb-australia.org/conference-2010/media/2690-the-struggle-for-islam-in-the-west>

Indeed on the broader horizon, this is not at all a struggle between Muslims and non-Muslims, but one between all well-intentioned people who seek justice and progress for all, and those who seek to live decadent lives off the sweat and blood of the vast majority of humanity.

Unmistakeably however, and inevitably, the struggle has an ideological colour. No one should be in denial about the vast difference between a god-centred worldview and a man-centred one. This difference does not mean however that harmonious co-existence on the ground is out of the question. It only means that the attaining of such harmony must be based, on the political level, in the dominance of one over the other.

The way forward then is robust discussion and debate about which ideology is grounded in reality as opposed to political expediency, and thus provides for the needs of humanity in the 21st century.

All those with their heads in the sand should expose themselves to the Sun. Painting Islam as some irrational regressive force won't cut it, not with the testament of history that Islam produced the most advanced civilisation for centuries.

The 'like it or leave it' approach is also untenable. In a globalised world, using geographical boundaries as some sort of defence is futile. Muslims now live in the West in large numbers. They are not going anywhere, nor will they abandon Islam and adopt secular liberalism en masse.

There is no other responsible way than that everyone accept reality and engage in rigorous but mature discussion on its basis.

Uthman Badar is the Media Representative of Hizb ut-Tahrir Australia

Cameron Got it Wrong²⁶

Taji Mustafa
Monday 9 July 2007

At PMQs this week David Cameron accused Hizb ut-Tahrir of being anti-semitic. He is not the first, nor will he be the last, but he is, on this as well as many other matters, utterly wrong. Hizb ut-Tahrir, while utterly and unashamedly opposed to Israel, is similarly utterly and unashamedly opposed to racism, tribalism, nationalism and any other form of race-based discrimination or hatred.

Mr Cameron said: "This organisation [Hizb ut-Tahrir] says, 'Jews should be killed wherever they are found'." Utter nonsense! Mr Cameron has either not done his research properly, or deliberately misled the House of Commons. He has selectively misquoted a Qur'anic verse which defines rules of engagement. The verse addresses the repelling of invasion or occupation of land, and explicitly addresses that and nothing else: "Kill them [meaning invading forces - NOT Jews] wherever you find them, and drive them out from whence they drive you out; for persecution (oppression or sedition) is worse than killing." The same verse then clearly goes on to say: "But if they desist, then, verily, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful." Read in its entirety it addresses those resisting occupation to not only fight, but to cease fighting when the invader ceases fighting - ie not to transgress limits and take wanton revenge: the motivation in war that led Salahuddin to liberate Jerusalem, but not to be vindictive to his enemy.

It is rich of Mr Cameron, who supported the war that has killed more than 650,000 civilians in Iraq, as well as backing the Israeli bombardment of Lebanon last summer, to lecture others on the sanctity of life.

Cameron has selectively misquoted a phrase from a leaflet that was written in Palestine, for Palestine and in the context of the massacre in Jenin. However, there are other problems - outside of culture, language and religion - in the context of the on-going occupation of Palestine, that confuse the matter further, which allow people such as David Cameron to make false accusations of anti-semitism to silence criticisms of Israel.

One problem is that Israel calls itself the Jewish state. It has inextricably linked race with statehood. Hence, to attack or criticise the regime invites criticism that you are attacking or criticising the race. I have heard this concern from anti-Zionist Rabbis, who understandably resent the continued association between Zionism and Judaism. Also see Seth Freedman's blog.

Islam's history in the region - and what Hizb ut-Tahrir argues for as a model of governance in the Muslim world - has an excellent and proud track record of unifying diverse people as citizens. Jews, Muslims and Christians lived largely in peace and security for much of the last 14 centuries in Palestine, in Islamic Spain and under the Ottoman Caliphate.

In the 1950s Hizb ut-Tahrir issued a draft constitution for an Islamic state in which it clearly says: "All citizens of the state shall be treated equally regardless of religion, race, colour or any other matter. The State is forbidden to discriminate among its citizens in all matters, be it ruling or judicial, or caring of affairs."

Our vision for tolerance in the Islamic world, under the Caliphate, has ample historical precedent. The Caliph of the Abbasids famously said that Europe's loss was the gain for the Caliphate when welcoming Jewish refugees from Europe in 1492. Islam's system of governance is built upon a

²⁶ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2007/jul/09/whatcamerongotwrong>

concept of citizenship regardless of ethnicity, gender or creed. The Qur'an makes this clear when it states "O mankind! Indeed we have created you from a single male and female and We have made you into peoples and tribes so that you know each other, Verily the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is the one who is most deeply conscious of Him."

Many have acknowledged this history. Carly Fiorina, ex-CEO of Hewlett-Packard, commented on the Islamic Caliphate saying: "And perhaps we can learn a lesson from his example: it was leadership based on meritocracy, not inheritance. It was leadership that harnessed the full capabilities of a very diverse population-that included Christianity, Islamic, and Jewish traditions. This kind of enlightened leadership - leadership that nurtured culture, sustainability, diversity and courage - led to 800 years of invention and prosperity." Cecil Roth, in his book, *The House of Nasi: Dona Gracia*, mentions that the treatment of the Jews at the hands of the Ottoman Caliphate attracted Jews from all over Western Europe. The land of Islam became the land of opportunity. Jewish physicians from the school of Salanca were employed in the service of the Sultan and the Viziers (ministers). In many places glass making and metalworking were Jewish monopolies, and with their knowledge of foreign languages, they were the greatest competitors of the Venetian traders."

Dr William Draper said, in *History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*: "During the period of the Caliphs the learned men of the Christians and the Jews were not only held in great esteem but were appointed to posts of great responsibility, and were promoted to the high-ranking job in the government ... He (Caliph Haroon Rasheed) never considered to which country a learned person belonged nor his faith and belief, but only his excellence in the field of learning."

In his book, *The Call to Islam*, Sir Thomas Arnold wrote: "We have never heard about any attempt to compel non-Muslim parties to adopt Islam or about any organised persecution aiming at exterminating Christianity. If the Caliphs had chosen one of these plans, they would have wiped out Christianity as easily as what happened to Islam during the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella in Spain; by the same method which Louis XIV followed to make Protestantism a creed whose followers were to be sentenced to death; or with the same ease of keeping the Jews away from Britain for a period of 350 years."

All this proves that the period of hostility between different communities in the Muslim world is an aberration of the past 50 to 80 years. The rights of Jews and other non-Muslims are enshrined within statutory Islamic law (sharia). These were laid down by the Prophet Muhammad when he established the first Islamic state in Medina in the 7th century, when he said, "Whoever harms a dhimmi (non-Muslim citizen) has harmed me."

Despite this, accusations of anti-semitism will probably continue for many people, not only Muslims. However, although Muslims today find themselves in the McCarthyist environment of the war on terror, anyone who cares for the future of the Muslim world should be willing to discuss any model of governance that can bring peace, security and stability for all people in the region.

Taji Mustafa is the Media Representative of Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain

Reply to Zeyno Baran's *The Road from Tashkent to the Taliban*.²⁷

Dear Ms Baran,

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

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

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

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

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

²⁷ Baran, Zeyno, "The Road from Tashkent to the Taliban", National Review Online, April 2, 2004, <http://www.nationalreview.com/comment/baran200404020933.asp>

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

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

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

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

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

British readers will understand the distinction between government and society from the writings of John Locke. Americans will have found this concept expressed a century later by Tom Paine; "Some writers have so confounded society with government, as to leave little or no distinction

between them; whereas they are not only different, but have different origins.” Americans should not be blamed, however, for not knowing Hizb ut-Tahrir's view of the distinction between society and government, and perhaps if they believe their president they would not expect Muslims even to hold a view about such things. They ought, however, to expect the experts from the Nixon Center to know Hizb ut-Tahrir's political philosophy before they seek to guide American foreign policy further into the abyss.

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

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

Your article called for naming the war correctly as, “a war of ideologies” and at last I do agree with you.

Our only weapon in this war is thought, and there is no better weapon than this for those possessed of confidence in the intellectual strength of their ideology. You, on the other hand, wrote, “the ideology of democracy and capitalism has failed in most of the Muslim world.” You noted the need for U.S. allies to “pay attention to socio-economic equality and injustice in their societies so that people do not turn to radical ideologies in the first place.” By addressing this point it is implied that poverty and bad conditions, rather than intellectual disagreement, are the main factors promoting opposition to US allies, but please consider this - there is no moral equivalence between the food that buys submission and the lack of food that prompts resentment. The one is a measure of cowardice the other of intelligence. Tom Paine has expressed

it better than I could, "Hath your house been burnt? Hath your property been destroyed before your face? Are your wife and children destitute of a bed to lie on, or bread to live on? Have you lost a parent or a child by their hands, and yourself the ruined and wretched survivor?...The more men have to lose, the less willing are they to venture. The rich are in general slaves to fear, and submit to courtly power with the trembling duplicity of a Spaniel." Is it possible that the truths that Americans have held for three centuries to be self-evident are in some way flawed, or are they forgotten relics like the quaint language of Tom Paine? The Nixon Center could better advise American policy makers that a nation that rose from humbler beginnings to later sell its products all over the world ought not now to presume that the whole world can be bought over to accept its ideology by the filling of stomachs.

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

Yours sincerely,

Dr Abdullah Robin

Member of Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain

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