

Preventing What?

How the Prevent anti-terrorism programme will affect Scottish society

by Richard Haley

A SACC Briefing

Scotland Against Criminalising Communities
www.sacc.org.uk

3 November 2009

More copies of this briefing can be downloaded from:
<http://www.sacc.org.uk/sacc/docs/preventingwhat.pdf>

or from one of the following alternative download locations:

1. <http://bit.ly/69A98v>
2. <http://www.mediafire.com/?jdmjnmv1o0j>

Contents

1. Key Points	1
2. Stand up for your rights	1
3. Introduction	2
4. Prevent and the War on Terror	3
5. Prevent in Scotland	6
6. Prevent, Intelligence-Gathering and Surveillance	9
7. Conclusion	11
8. References	12

1. Key points

- *Prevent* is a counter-terrorism programme aimed, according to the Government, at "stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism."
- *Prevent* involves extensive surveillance and intelligence-gathering.
- *Prevent* is racist; it almost exclusively targets the Muslim community.
- *Prevent* treats Muslim opposition to the war in Afghanistan as if it were linked to "violent extremism" – even though most people in Britain oppose the war.
- *Prevent* exposes professionals involved in implementing it to indoctrination with Islamophobic and pro-war attitudes.
- *Prevent* makes it more likely that some Muslims may turn to terrorism, because of the way it manipulates and censors Muslim participation in civil society.
- *Prevent* undermines efforts by Muslims and non-Muslims to work together on shared values, such as opposition to the war in Afghanistan.
- *Prevent* initiatives in Scotland include *SPVEU* (Scottish Preventing Violent Extremism Unit), *SCAVEN* (Scottish Communities Against Violent Extremism Network), the *Voices Scotland* website and the *ACT* (All Communities Together) Network.

2. Stand up for your rights

- Refuse police requests for information about normal political activity.
- Maintain Professional ethics about confidentiality of information on political activities.
- Don't accept Prevent funding.
- If you do accept Prevent funding (not recommended), don't let the money gag you.
- Engage with people of all communities, in a spirit of solidarity, to resist war, racism and terrorism.

3. Introduction

"With hundreds of millions of pounds of funding, the Prevent programme has come to redefine the relationship between government and around two million British citizens who are Muslim."

Arun Kundnani in "Spooked! How not to prevent violent extremism"

The Prevent counter-terrorism programme is often described as the "hearts and minds" element of Britain's counter-terrorism strategy. It has been operating in England since 2007, but is still at an embryonic stage in Scotland.

In October 2009, the Institute for Race Relations (IRR) published a damning report on the operation of Prevent in England. The report, entitled *"Spooked! How not to prevent violent extremism"*¹, was written by the IRR's Arun Kundnani and funded by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust. It says that "there is strong evidence that Prevent-funded services are being used by counter-terrorist police for information gathering."²

Prevent is huge. Organisations involved in Prevent in England include police forces, local authorities, universities, voluntary sector organisations, the Department for Children, Schools and Families, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport³.

Prevent is just one part of an over-arching counter-terrorism strategy called Contest. Contest isn't simply a crime-prevention strategy. It's an instrument for fighting the so-called global war on terror – a war for power and control of resources.

Prevent treats opposition by British Muslims to the war in Afghanistan as problematic, even though that

opposition is shared by a majority of people in Britain.

Prevent is a UK-wide programme run by the UK Government, but the mechanisms through which it is administered in Scotland are different from those that have been put in place in England. However, the Police have a central role in Prevent, and counter-terrorism policing is tightly co-ordinated throughout the UK. So it is highly likely that Prevent in Scotland will eventually follow the same pattern as in England.

Prevent has undergone a lengthy but very narrowly focussed consultation process in Scotland. SACC is fundamentally opposed to the legislation that underpins Prevent and has therefore abstained from this process.

With the roll-out of Prevent in Scotland apparently now under way, it's time for people in Scotland to ask what Prevent is actually trying to prevent, and what effects it is likely to have on our society.

This SACC Briefing is intended to provide factual background and advice to everyone on the receiving end of Prevent in Scotland – to the general public, to workers tasked with implementing Prevent, to voluntary and charitable organisations, to campaigning groups and to the media.

Prevent is still at an embryonic stage in Scotland. So is SACC's understanding of it. Factual corrections to this briefing are welcome, as are personal experiences with Prevent.

4. Prevent and the War on Terror

"The Prevent strategy takes the Islamic faith as problematic. How can you accept money that tarnishes your religion?"

Anon, quoted by Arun Kundnani in "Spooked! How not to prevent violent extremism"

"Essentially, in its efforts to "stop people becoming terrorists", the Government has effectively criminalised all forms of political opinion, expression and involvement by Muslims."

Preventing Violent Extremism; Response by the Islamic Human Rights Commission To UK Government Consultation

The purpose of Prevent, according to the Government, is "stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism."⁴ Violent Extremism is a catch-all term with no meaning in law. The Government uses it to describe terrorism and a variety of other activities and attitudes that it claims are linked to terrorism.

The Government's 178-page document on "The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering International Terrorism" contains no definition of "extremism" or "violent extremism." But the terms "violent extremism" or "violent extremist" appear 151 times in the document and the terms "extremism" or "extremist" (without the "violent" tag) appear a further 48 times.

The "extremism" tag gives police a pretext for monitoring activity that is perfectly legal but is uncomfortable for the Government. The device has been exported from anti-terrorism policing into other areas of police work. The Guardian has recently (26 October 2009) revealed that police are engaged in widespread monitoring of political activists in the name of tackling "domestic extremism."⁵

The Government says:

*"...much Prevent activity takes place in and with Muslim communities. But the principles of our Prevent work apply equally to other communities who may be the focus of attention from violent extremist groups."*⁶

The IRR's research has found no evidence of Prevent activity in England that targets any communities other than Muslim ones⁷. The focus of Prevent on minority communities, and especially on Muslim communities, makes it inherently racist.

Prevent operates on a formidable scale. The cost of Prevent's "key deliverables" for 2008/09 amounts to over £140 million⁸. Taking into account the value added to Prevent by public and voluntary sector professionals who bring to it knowledge gained from other aspects of their work, it is clear that the reach and economic weight of the programme is truly enormous.

Prevent is one of four main strands within the government's overall anti-terrorism strategy, Contest. The other strands of Contest are Pursue (stopping terrorist attacks), Protect (strengthening

our protection against attack) and Prepare (mitigating the impact of attacks)⁹.

Although Prevent is sometimes described, in contrast to Pursue, as the "soft" end of Contest, the Government says that *"the role of law enforcement agencies is as important to Prevent as it is to Pursue."*¹⁰

According to the Government, Contest is intended to reduce the risk of terrorism to both the UK and UK interests overseas¹¹. Contest is joined at the hip to the escalating war in Afghanistan. It is overseen at Ministerial level by the Cabinet Committee on National Security, International Relations and Development (NSID). The heads of the security and intelligence agencies, the police, and the Armed Forces have seats on the Committee.

Overseas interests

According to the Government:

*"Contest co-ordinates closely with our counter-insurgency work overseas, notably in Iraq and Afghanistan, the purpose of which is to stop movements which aim to overthrow recognised governments by armed conflict and subversion."*¹²

Contest is quite unlike a normal crime-prevention programme. In style, method and language it has more in common with counter-insurgency operations carried out overseas during Britain's long retreat from empire. Where Contest breaks new ground is in its complex interweaving of domestic and overseas activities. For example, the Prevent strand, although usually discussed in terms of domestic activity, includes an international component. In the Government's words, Prevent "aims to link local and international delivery."¹³

International Prevent work is headed by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and is said by the Government to particularly involve work with Pakistan, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, Egypt¹⁴ and the US. It is wide-ranging and includes a strong propaganda element. For example, Prevent funding has been provided for an English Language Centre at Al Azhar University in Cairo¹⁵.

Muslims in Britain are treated as a hostile or potentially hostile population, very much like the indigenous population of a colonial territory.

Additionally, Prevent seeks to use British Muslims as a vehicle to influence opinion in Muslim-majority countries.

One of the aims of Prevent is "addressing the grievances which ideologues are exploiting."¹⁶

Muslim grievances identified by the Government include "a perception that UK foreign policy in the Muslim world (notably military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan) is hostile to Islam."¹⁷ Obviously the Government doesn't intend to address the grievance by ending the war. It hopes instead to persuade Muslims that the war isn't hostile to Islam.

Many opponents of the war – including many Muslims – would agree that the war isn't specifically and uniquely hostile to Islam. It's hostile to the people of the war zone and to justice, whether justice is viewed through a secular prism or a religious one.

But anyone inclined to wonder whether the Government might be using hostility to Islam as a weapon in its war need only read through Government's document on Contest to see that indeed it is.

Islamophobia

The Government document on "The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering International Terrorism" isn't aimed at the tabloids. It's aimed at the legion of professionals who must mill practical programmes from it, paragraph by paragraph. They are educated people, trained to swallow nonsense only if it is sweetened with complexity. So here and there, the document touches gingerly on truth and commonsense. For example, a section on "strategic factors" notes that:

*"In recent polling across four Islamic states a significant majority judged that it was the aim of the US to 'weaken and divide the Islamic world'; a significant minority thought the purpose of the 'war on terror' was to achieve US political and military domination 'to control Middle East resources.'"*¹⁸

But the overwhelming emphasis in Prevent is on Islam as a problem.

The methodology of Prevent is to take the political concerns of people who happen to be Muslim and present them as intrinsically sectarian and Islamic. This makes it less likely that the majority community will notice that many Muslim concerns are its concerns too. It makes it possible for the Government to disguise its attacks on Muslim manifestations of oppositional views as attacks on supposedly backward aspects of Islamic faith and culture – attacks which should in any case be rejected, but which can be given a populist appeal. And it allows the Government to justify wholesale intervention in the community and religious life of Muslim citizens of Britain.

The intervention may not change individual views, but if it goes unchallenged it will certainly weaken the capacity of the Muslim community to mobilise politically in ways unsupportive of the Government.

It should go without saying that this is both racist and deeply anti-democratic. The Government has an Orwellian term for the process - it calls it "community empowerment."¹⁹

In order to "address grievances," the Government has parcelled up political issues of national and global importance and deposited them inside the Prevent programme. Muslims are expected to engage with these issues inside a police playpen. It is feared that out in the real world, "vulnerable" Muslims might encounter "violent extremists." What is not said is that they might also encounter people building democratic movements for real political change. They certainly won't meet such people in forums led and sponsored by the police.

The Muslim community is not the only target of the propaganda element of Prevent. A whole army of workers involved in "delivering" the programme is being exposed to its Islamophobic and pro-war assumptions, and will carry these assumptions into areas of society that the formal Prevent programme can't reach.

Prevent's focus on Muslims is complained of both by Muslims who resent being stigmatised in this way and by other groups who are envious of Prevent funding. Extending Prevent to other communities – as is sometimes suggested – won't improve the situation. It will only expand the political catastrophe that surrounds Prevent.

Far-right extremism

Prevent's failure to address far-right extremism is a frequent complaint. Policy-makers at the UK level appear to be deeply resistant to linking Prevent with work on far-right extremism.²⁰ There is no mention of far-right extremism in the Government document on "The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering International Terrorism," although racism is mentioned in a generic way as a Muslim "grievance."

It would certainly be a healthy development if the British Government were to treat the growth of fascism in Britain and Europe as seriously as it treats terrorism of the kind it calls "Islamic." But Prevent – a deeply anti-democratic programme – is not the way to do it.

The net effect of Prevent will not be to stop Muslims becoming terrorists. It may stop some Muslims doing so. But many others will be driven to political despair by the state censorship and manipulation that surrounds Muslim participation in civil society. Some of them may see terrorism as offering liberation from this web of deceit. They will be making a serious political mistake as well as an ethical one. Terrorism is more divisive than attempting to engage with the

democratic process, however disfigured by state assaults on democracy. It is also more vulnerable to state manipulation.

A genuine counter-terrorism strategy can't be expected to emerge in Britain until the British

Government ends its own involvement in the US-led war *of* terror in the Middle East. In the words of Noam Chomsky:

"Everyone's worried about stopping terrorism. Well, there's a really easy way. Stop participating in it."

5. Prevent in Scotland

"I think the nature of communities in Scotland is discernibly different from the nature of communities south of the border. You have an ability to reach in and develop a strategy of this kind."

Charles Farr, director-general of the UK's Office for Security and Counter Terrorism (OSCT), interviewed by Mandy Rhodes for Holyrood Magazine, Issue 193, 16 June 2008

Arun Kundnani says in *Spooked* that "Prevent has become, in effect, the government's 'Islam policy'."²¹ He is referring to England; the situation in Scotland is rather more complicated.

The Scottish National Party (SNP) has built strong links with sections of the Muslim community that have been outspoken in their opposition to UK Government policy on the Middle East and on many other matters. Public statements by the SNP are largely free of the racism that frequently taints statements by the UK Government. The Scottish Government can loosely be said to have its own "Islam Policy" created through dialogue involving Muslim SNP members and sections of the wider Muslim community. The Scottish Islamic Foundation (SIF) is a key actor in this process. Policies and attitudes in Scotland have evolved under conditions far removed from the overheated and security-driven atmosphere that prevails in London.

This process of engagement survived the Glasgow airport arson attack of July 2007 with hardly a hiccup. The aftermath of the attack brought a number of worrying developments, including widespread police stop and search operations. Because the police investigation of the airport attack didn't involve a roundup of local Muslims, and because of well-founded fears of racist attacks on Muslims, many Muslims – including young people – were inclined to respond positively to attempts by police officers to engage with them over this period²². It would be naïve to see this in a wholly positive light, given the habitual police interest in intelligence-gathering. But the sequence of events that unfolded after the airport attack leaves no room for doubt as to the substance and seriousness of the relationship between the SNP and Scottish Muslims, or of the commitment of Scottish Muslims to engagement with the whole of Scottish society.

Fog of suspicion

The Prevent programme won't sit comfortably with this relationship. The SNP will not wish to alienate its Muslim members, but it is unlikely to openly challenge the UK Government's counter-terrorism policies. Prevent will be facilitated by the Scottish Government and will receive funding from it. This situation creates the conditions for a uniquely Scottish version of the fog of multi-faceted suspicion that surrounds Prevent in England.

Counter-terrorism is a reserved matter, meaning that powers relating to counter-terrorism rest with the Westminster Parliament. Contest, of which Prevent is a part, is an UK-wide strategy overseen by

the Cabinet Committee on National Security, International Relations and Development and governed by the UK Contest Board, on which the Scottish Government is represented²³. Prevent, like each of the other three strands of Contest, has its own sub-board at UK level.

Implementation of Prevent in Scotland is led by the Scottish Preventing Violent Extremism Unit (SPVEU). SPVEU was set up, apparently in 2008, as a joint initiative between the Scottish Government and the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS)²⁴.

The SPVEU has been placed within the Scottish Government's Equality Unit. The structural racism built into Prevent is therefore in a position to contaminate the whole of the Scottish Government's work on equalities, but the arrangement brings significant advantages to Prevent.

People in Scotland have previously been suspicious of terrorism-related police. For example, the creation of a Special Branch Community Contact Unit (SBCCU) within Tayside Police provoked widespread worries that grew into outright resistance, in which SACC played a part²⁵. Embedding Prevent within the equalities profession dresses it in clothing from which people are less likely to recoil. It gives Prevent almost effortless access to key contacts from minority communities. And it potentially puts the structures of the equalities profession at Prevent's disposal. Managers will find it hard to refuse requests from a body operating within the Equalities Unit, and will in turn be able to impose co-operation with Prevent on their subordinates.

Political Policing

It is deeply worrying that the Scottish Government's anti-racism work is being undermined by association with political policing at time when the threat from racism in Scotland is higher than it has been for many years.

The central role of ACPOS within the SPVEU more or less guarantees that Prevent activities in Scotland will be aligned with Prevent activities in England. Scottish Police never diverge from the policies of police forces south of the border on matters relating to terrorism. These policies are developed by the Terrorism and Allied Matters (TAM) Business Area of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). ACPOS participates in this collaboration and Scottish Police are represented on the ACPO TAM Committee. To all intents and purposes counter-terrorism policing in Scotland is subordinate to

ACPO, although senior officers on both sides of the border are reluctant to describe the situation in those terms²⁶.

SPVEU has been engaged since 2008 in a low-key consultation process apparently aimed at identifying organisations and individuals who could help facilitate Prevent in Scotland. It gave its first "public" presentation on 14 April 2009, with attendance encouraged only from representatives of "faith and belief communities."²⁷

The Scottish Communities Against Violent Extremism Network (SCAVEN) has been set up by the SPVEU as a forum for police engagement with the minority ethnic community in Scotland on matters relating to terrorism legislation.

SCAVEN is linked to the Voices Scotland website. According to the website²⁸:

"Voices Scotland is an all new network for Scottish organisations, groups religious and social, institutions and individuals to go beyond the media message, challenge extremist views and connect on their own terms for a safer more respectful and equal Scotland."

The website, which bears the logo "Voices Scotland SCAVEN" also says:

"Voices Scotland is an autonomous third sector project designed to help people connect with moderate attitudes towards challenge and confrontation. Voices does not have a policing or legal role. Anyone contributing to voices can be confident that the portal is free and open, driven by your concerns and ideas for resolution, peace and genuine connectedness."

Local authorities will also have a role in Prevent. South of the border, the Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder Fund, administered by the Department of Communities and Local Government, is a major source of Prevent funding.

Edinburgh and Lothians

At the local level in Scotland, Edinburgh and Lothians appears so far to be leading the way in generating Prevent activity. The vehicle for this is the Edinburgh and Lothians Racial Equality Council (ELREC), a voluntary body and charitable company founded in 1971. ELREC, with sponsorship from SCAVEN, has created a forum called the ACT Network (All Communities Together). ACT was launched in Edinburgh on 30 March 2009.

According to a report published in the March 2009 ELREC newsletter:²⁹

"ACT is a local open forum which will provides a vehicle for communities to debate, discuss, scrutinise, engage, involve and be consulted on in respect of the UK CONTEST – National Counter Terrorism Strategy. The ACT will be facilitated by ELREC and sponsored by SCAVEN (Scottish

Communities Against Violent Extremism Network). SCAVEN is a national project sponsored by the SPEVU, Equality Unit, of the Scottish Government to invest in community engagement in the CONTEST agenda. It links together local networks, like ACT, across Scotland. About 60 people attended the launch; member of different BME community & faith groups, young adults and representatives of voluntary organization and statutory agencies. Guest speaker Muhammed Idrees Ahmed, media researcher of Stathclyde University highlighted facts and figures in relation to the media and Terrorism. Geroge Kerevan, Associate Editor, the Scotsman spoke about role and policy of the Scotsman newspaper. Most of the people felt that ACT will enable communities' voice heard. Participants were provided useful feedback to be added onto ACT and important suggestion such as, More ethnic minority and MSP's engagement to ACT, younger generations more involvement, awareness of good education among community people etc."

Much of ACT activity to date relates to the "address grievances" objective of Prevent and closely matches guidelines set out in police strategy documents.

For example, Lothian and Borders police reported in the June 2009 issue of the ELREC newsletter that:

"The first ACT Now (all communities together) has taken place in Edinburgh with a member of ELREC in attendance. This is an interactive event whereby members from the community take the part of the Police during a fast moving table top exercise."³⁰

Table top exercises of this sort are dealt with under the "address grievances" objective of Prevent and of UK police strategy and are called "Operation Nicole."

According to an ACPO briefing:

"Operation Nicole, is a locally based police-led exercise designed to explore community concerns and give police a greater understanding of communities and to provide communities with a greater understanding of CT policing and operations."³¹

Stop and Search

Policing issues identified within Prevent as Muslim "grievances" include "Stop and Search" under Section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000 and "Stop and Question" powers at ports under Schedule 7 of the Act.

"Stop and Question" at Glasgow airport has been a particular bugbear for Scottish Muslims and has for several years been the subject of very active grassroots-led campaigning in Glasgow (including a well-supported protest outside Strathclyde Police Headquarters³²). Police-led discussions of similar issues were held in Edinburgh, prior to the launch of ACT, through a focus group targeting young people that was arranged in 2008 by the Edinburgh and

Lothians Racial Equality Council (ELREC) in association with Allan Burnett, the National Co-ordinator of the Counter Terrorism Intelligence Unit (CITU) in Scotland.

A revised UK-wide code of conduct for Schedule 7 "Stop and Question" came into force in June 2009 through a statutory instrument approved by the Westminster Parliament. A joint response from ACPO Scotland and the CTIU Scotland on the same issue was published in ELREC's September newsletter³³. It remains to be seen whether any of this will result in an improvement in the experiences of people questioned under Schedule 7.

ACT appears to be seeking to engage with a fairly wide range of Edinburgh and Lothians minority groups rather than replicating the usual Prevent focus on Muslim communities. This is a pattern that has been followed in areas of England where Prevent has encountered resistance.

Kris Hopkins, Chief Executive of Bradford Council, told Channel 4 in September 2008 that he had raised objections to Prevent. In response "a whole procession of people, both officers and politicians, had come to Bradford to tell them that they were soft on terrorism."³⁴

When Kundnani interviewed people in Bradford in April 2009, he found that the city council was presenting its Prevent programme "as adopting a whole community approach that focuses not only on the Muslim community but also on right-wing extremism in white communities and even on animal rights extremists in rural areas."³⁵ But he also found that the bulk of projects funded were directed at Muslims.

It will be interesting to see where the Prevent spotlight shines as the Prevent programme matures in Scotland.

In June 2009, Nick Croft of the SPVEU told a conference on "Community Cohesion And Contingency Planning" hosted in Edinburgh by Holyrood Magazine that a controversial element of Prevent dubbed the "Channel Programme" would be introduced in Scotland within 6 months.

Child or potential terrorist?

According to the Government, Channel is:

*"a community-based initiative which uses existing partnerships between the police, local authority and the local community to identify those at risk from violent extremism and to support them, primarily through community-based interventions."*³⁶

Channel was introduced in England in April 2007. Sir Norman Bettison, ACPO lead spokesperson on terrorism, told the Independent in March 2009 that 200 schoolchildren in England and Wales, some as young as 13, had been subject to Channel intervention³⁷. Information on Channel is scant. An interviewee who works with young people referred though Channel told Kundnani that "one hundred per cent of the time so far, there has just been the usual issues with young people."³⁸ Reporting on the proposed introduction of Channel to Scotland, the Scotsman said "228 individuals have apparently been deradicalised: nobody referred to the Channel Project has gone on to offend."³⁹

Prevent is still at an embryonic stage in Scotland. So is SACC's understanding of it. Factual corrections to this briefing are welcome, as are personal experiences with Prevent.

6. Prevent, Intelligence-Gathering and Surveillance

"The police, security and intelligence agencies all have new Prevent-related intelligence requirements, building on their existing programmes."

The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering International Terrorism

"To build the Government's analytical capability a cross-Whitehall central Prevent unit has been created. This team will collate information from a wide variety of sources to develop a clearer understanding of radicalisation in the UK and to share that information with local partners."

The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering International Terrorism

"There is evidence that the Prevent programme has been used to establish one of the most elaborate systems of surveillance ever seen in Britain."

Arun Kundnani in "Spooked! How not to prevent violent extremism"

It should go without saying that everyone has a right to engage in normal political activity free from police monitoring. It should go without saying that this is not an abstract right, but an essential pre-condition for democracy. It should go without saying that knowledge is power, that the police are not neutral, and that the police are more likely to exercise their power for benefit of established state interests than for the benefit of those seeking political change.

A culture of surveillance and intelligence-gathering pervades all aspects of Contest, including Prevent. It is referred to in the Government's own, freely-available document on The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering International Terrorism, and also in a leaked briefing on Prevent given issued by ACPO in 2008.

The An-Nisa Society – a London-based organisation led by Muslim women – said in April 2009:

"Muslims will be subject to surveillance mainstreamed through the core services of local councils and other agencies."⁴⁰

In *Spooked*, Arun Kundnani has documented some of the ways that the surveillance culture has worked out in practice in England.

Information Sharing Agreements

These include requirements to report people's movement to the local Prevent Board, requirements to provide names and phone numbers of individuals, to provide information about the street corners that young people from different backgrounds frequent, about which mosques they attend, about their political and religious views and much else of a similar nature. This kind of surveillance appears to be systemic. Kundnani reports that Prevent-funded services such as youth services in England are obliged to sign Information Sharing Agreements (ISAs) to facilitate the information flow⁴¹.

Kundnani writes:

"Our research suggests that a major objective of the Prevent programme is, in fact, the fostering of much closer relationships between the counter-terrorist policing system and providers of non-

policing local services precisely to facilitate these kinds of flows of information on individuals whose opinions are considered extreme and on the local Muslim population in general."⁴²

One way in which this information is being used by police forces in England is in the construction of "neighbourhood maps." Neighbourhood mapping is a method already used by neighbourhood policing teams. But the mapping of political views and religious affiliations should ring very loud alarm bells.

Another use for Prevent intelligence is in the identification of people – particularly young people and children – for "intervention" under the Channel programme discussed in Part 5 of this briefing.

Other forms of police action may also be triggered by Prevent intelligence. According to the Government, police will within the Prevent programme "identify and take action against individuals who are promoting violence."⁴³

Many people interviewed by Kundnani were unclear as to who had access to the data they collected in their Prevent work. One interviewee said:

'Depending on who you ask, there are different answers to the question of information sharing. I think there is a serious issue around data gathering on participants. Young people won't be aware of what is being collected on them – there isn't any accountability. Even organisations don't know how data will be used.'⁴⁴

Overseas intelligence agencies

The gathering and use of intelligence by police forces usually escapes public scrutiny, but a degree of scrutiny is nevertheless possible. However, overall responsibility for counter-terrorism intelligence lies with the Security Service (MI5). Senior MI5 and police officers always refuse requests to explain the ways that they work together on intelligence, but are insistent that they *do* work together. MI5 works closely with overseas intelligence agencies. This should be a serious concern to anyone likely to travel to jurisdictions where respect for human rights is even weaker than in Britain.

Police need to understand the communities they serve, and need to make a particular effort to understand minority communities. Accumulating intelligence in the context of a highly-politicised global operation by the UK Government is not the way to do that.

Data protection

Prevent facilitators in Scotland appear to be sensitive to fears that Prevent is connected with intelligence-gathering. A leaflet promoting the ACT Network in Edinburgh states:

"No personal information will be shared or disclosed to any third parties, partners, police or Scottish Government. The information will be held securely and can only be accessed by Community Development Officer & Director of ELREC."

The immediate impact of this promise will be limited. It won't stop police attempting to cultivate relationships with people they come into contact with through ACT activities. And some of these

people will have key roles within community groups. Nor will it stop the disclosure of information of a generic and non-personal nature – for example, information about issues of current concern to the Muslim community, or about the activities of particular campaigns or groups. Prevent seeks to harvest this kind of information massively and systematically - a process that is qualitatively different from the acquisition by individual police officers of snippets of common knowledge.

In spite of these problems, the ACT data protection statement is an encouraging development. It reverses the English trend towards agreements that enforce data abuse instead of data protection. If similar data protection statements were to be incorporated into substantive Prevent projects – youth projects for example – they could, if properly audited, give real protection against some (but not all) of the kinds of intelligence-gathering complained of in England. It remains to be seen whether this will happen, and whether it will be sustained if Prevent takes root in Scotland.

7. Conclusion

I do disagree with them [the Quakers] about their slogan of speaking truth to power. First of all, power already knows the truth. They don't need to hear it from us. Secondly, it's a waste of time. Furthermore, it's the wrong audience. You have to speak truth to the people who will dismantle and overthrow and constrain power."

Noam Chomsky in "Power and Terror", ed John Junkerman and Takei Masakazu, 2003

Prevent is an attempt to recruit civil society into a kind of open conspiracy against Muslims. Muslims are to be treated as children. Non-Muslims are to tell licensed lies - fairy-tales that they do not themselves believe - to Muslims. Muslims are to be discouraged from discussing matters thought to be too emotive and disturbing for them. Muslims are not to mention the war. Non-Muslims are to watch out at all times for any attempt by people with inappropriate views to exploit vulnerable Muslims.

A society willing to collude in the deception and manipulation of some of its number will soon find that deception and manipulation corrupts everything that it does. This is not a question of

balancing safety for the majority against freedom for the Muslim minority. Freedom is not divisible.

Prevent is often – and rightly – criticised for its discriminatory nature. No one should imagine that a non-discriminatory Prevent would be an improvement. "Police state for all" is not an attractive slogan.

This briefing began by asking what Prevent is trying to prevent. The answer is honesty and democracy. Prevent will not prevent terrorism, and may encourage it. If that happens, everyone who colludes with Prevent will have blood on their hands.

Prevent can't work without out co-operation. It doesn't deserve to get it .

8. References

- 1 Arun Kundnani, 'Spooked! How not to prevent violent extremism', Institute for Race Relations, 2009, <http://www.irr.org.uk/pdf2/spooked.pdf>
- 2 *ibid.*, p28
- 3 *ibid.*, p12
- 4 'The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering International Terrorism ', March 2009 (incorporating the changes of the correction slip provided on 8 May 2009), ISBN: 9780101754729, p82
<http://security.homeoffice.gov.uk/news-publications/publication-search/general/Contest-Strategy>
- 5 Paul Lewis, Rob Evans & Matthew Taylor, 'Police in £9m schme to log domestic extremists', *The Guardian*, 26 October 2009
- 6 'The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering International Terrorism ', March 2009, ISBN: 9780101754729, p81
- 7 Arun Kundnani, 'Spooked! How not to prevent violent extremism', Institute for Race Relations, 2009, p 24
- 8 'The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering International Terrorism ', March 2009 (incorporating the changes of the correction slip provided on 8 May 2009), ISBN: 9780101754729, p83
- 9 *ibid.*, p13
- 10 *ibid.*, p85
- 11 *ibid.*, p62
- 12 *ibid.*, p13
- 13 *ibid.*, p83
- 14 *ibid.*, p85
- 15 *ibid.*, p96
- 16 *ibid.*, p11
- 17 *ibid.*, p83
- 18 *ibid.*, p43
- 19 *ibid.*, p84
- 20 Arun Kundnani, 'Spooked! How not to prevent violent extremism', Institute for Race Relations, 2009, p24
- 21 *ibid.*, p8
- 22 Superintendent Alex MacDonald of the Strathclyde Police Diversity Unit, in an address to the "Weaving the Tartan" Conference, Glasgow, August 2007
- 23 'The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering International Terrorism ', March 2009 (incorporating the changes of the correction slip provided on 8 May 2009), ISBN: 9780101754729, p138
- 24 Counter Terrorism - Roles and Responsibilities <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Justice/crimes/counterterrorism/ctresponsibilities> (accessed 2 November 2009)
- 25 Dundee SBCCU - SACC Briefing, 22 February 2007, <http://www.sacc.org.uk/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=370&catid=44>
- 26 Exchanges between Assistant Commissioner Robert Quick, David Davies MP and Patrick Mercer MP (chair) in the uncorrected transcript of oral evidence on Project Contest given to the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, 12 February 2009
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmhaff/uc212-ii/uc21202.htm> (neither witnesses nor Members have had the opportunity to correct the record)
- 27 Invitations to the event said:
- "Who should attend:
 - All representatives of faith and belief communities in Scotland.
 - Those who directly represent a faith and/or belief community.
 - Those who work for faith and/or belief based organisations.
 - Those who represent specific groups within a faith and/or belief community - for example women or children."
- 28 <http://voicesscotland.org/> (accessed 2 November 2009)
- 29 "ELREC-ACT network launched". ELREC Newsletter Issue 19, March 2009-11-02
<http://www.elrec.org.uk/documents/Issue19.pdf>
- 30 Lothian and Borders Police Safer Communities update, ELREC Newsletter Issue 20, June 2009
<http://www.elrec.org.uk/documents/Issue20.pdf>
- 31 UK Police Chiefs counter-terrorism PREVENT strategy briefing 2008, http://wikileaks.org/wiki/UK_Police_Chiefs_counter-terrorism_PREVENT_strategy_briefing_2008
- 32 Protest against police Harassment at Glasgow Airport, 14 October 2008
<http://www.sacc.org.uk/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=631&catid=45>
- 33 Responses on STOP & SEARCH Community Consultations ELREC Newsletter Issue 21, September 2009
<http://www.elrec.org.uk/documents/Issue21.pdf>
- 34 Preventing Violent Extremism; Response by the Islamic Human Rights Commission To UK Government Consultation, 19 October 2009-11-02

<http://www.ihr.org.uk/publications/briefings/9108-preventing-violent-extremism-response-by-the-islamic-human-rights-commission-to-uk-government-consultation-september-2009>

35 Arun Kundnani, 'Spooked! How not to prevent violent extremism', Institute for Race Relations, 2009, p24

36 'The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering International Terrorism ', March 2009 (incorporating the changes of the correction slip provided on 8 May 2009), ISBN: 9780101754729, p15

37 Mark Hughes, "Police identify 200 children as potential terrorists," *The Independent*, 28 March 2009

38 Arun Kundnani, 'Spooked! How not to prevent violent extremism', Institute for Race Relations, 2009, p30

39 David Leask, Anti-terror bid to deradicalise Muslim Scots, Scotland on Sunday, 14 June 2009

40 Khalida Khan, "An-Nisa Society's initial Response to Contest 2's Prevent Strategy", April 2009

http://www.an-nisa.org/downloads/An-Nisa_Response_Contest_2.pdf

41 Arun Kundnani, 'Spooked! How not to prevent violent extremism', Institute for Race Relations, 2009, p30

42 *ibid.*, p28

43 'The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering International Terrorism ', March 2009 (incorporating the changes of the correction slip provided on 8 May 2009), ISBN: 9780101754729, p85

44 *ibid.*, p29