

A GLOBAL RESPONSE TO GLOBAL TERRORISM

- Jack Straw's Speech

and expertise in return. And we are continuing to strengthen this co-operation. Before September 11th we had 12 bilateral counter-terrorism programmes. Now we have over 80.

Among these, our counter-terrorist relationship with Saudi Arabia has gone from strength to strength, to both sides' benefit. One symptom of this is the pace and level of visits in both directions. I am revealing no secret if I tell you that the Director general of the Security Service – who never seeks publicity for her overseas visits – has – to her horror – twice this year been lead item on the Saudi evening television news, being received by King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia. She wasn't there to discuss the price of camels, even though she was spotted riding one! As I said, the existence of these visits shows the depth of our partnership.

This bilateral work has been complemented by multilateral action. In the United Nations we are working to ensure the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1373 which creates legal obligations on all states to crack down on terrorists, their supporters and their sources of finance. The swift extradition from Italy to the United Kingdom of a suspect in the attempted bombings on 21 July demonstrated the effectiveness of the new European Arrest Warrant. And we are very grateful to the Italian government and authorities for implementing both the spirit as well as the letter of that warrant.

In the coming year we want to see further progress: for example, agreement in the United Nations on a Comprehensive Convention on Terrorism and agreement to a European Evidence Warrant. In my speech at the UN General Assembly last September, I called for an international Arms Trade Treaty which, among other things, would help to keep weapons out of the hands of terrorists. And, the international community needs to continue to strengthen and uphold the international consensus against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

This is why the international community's stand against Iran's continued non-compliance with its Non Proliferation Treaty obligations and successive IAEA Board resolutions is so important. The onus is on Iran to act to give the international community confidence that its nuclear programme has exclusively peaceful purposes – confidence that has been sorely undermined by its history of concealment and deception. Iran's failure to do so is the reason why last September the Board of Governors of the IAEA declared Iran to be non-compliant with those obligations. And it is the

reason why we are now considering a referral of Iran to the United Nations Security Council through an emergency meeting of the IAEA Board.

The work to disrupt terrorist activities and minimise their consequences is vital. But alongside it we have also to tackle the factors which encourage radicalisation and recruitment. We need to do this both domestically and internationally.

So we are supporting the debate within Muslim communities in the UK and abroad and encouraging those who challenge the fallacies of the extremist message. Terrorists use a simplistic and perverse interpretation of history and Islamic theology to try to justify their actions; just as terrorists in the past have used a perverse interpretation of history and of Christian theology to justify their violence. We are not fooled that their interpretation represents the great religion of Islam. Their arguments have been clearly denounced by those who speak for the majority of Muslims. How can the killing of so many innocent civilians around the world have any such religious justification – indeed we have seen from Amman and Baghdad to Sharm El Sheikh and Riyadh that the majority of victims of these terrorists are men, women and children of the Islamic faith? And on what basis can they paint Britain, which is so vigorous in protecting and celebrating the religious freedom of the 1.6 million Muslims who live here, as a country hostile to Islam?

When the Organisation of the Islamic Conference held its historic summit in Makkah last month, on the initiative of King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, the leaders of the Islamic world gathered there recognised that more needs to be done to protect Islam from infiltration by extremism. They agreed a work plan to support mainstream Islamic thought and to work with local and international communities to promote a positive path for Islam in the modern world. We salute this courageous initiative, the benefits of which will be felt for decades to come.

The terrorist propaganda has particular resonance among disaffected young Muslims suspicious of Western foreign policy. They are the most vulnerable to the conspiracy theories, distortions and lies told by the terrorists.

It would, of course, be fatuous to suggest that distrust of 'the West' is entirely inexplicable or irrational. Balfour, Sykes-Picot and Suez – and much else – have left their sometimes indelible legacy. As Tony Blair