

THE MUSLIM COUNCIL OF BRITAIN

A step towards greater consultation, cooperation and coordination on Muslim Affairs in the UK.

Muslim Council of Britain Weekly E-Newsletter

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MCB holds fringe meetings at Party Conferences

The Muslim Council of Britain held fringe meeting at the three main political Party conferences to discuss 'The Impact of International Conflicts on UK Muslims.'

Iqbal Sacranie, the Secretary-General of the MCB, said: "The war against Iraq has driven a wedge between a party that has historically been able to rely upon the votes of minority communities and Britain's largest minority faith community - the Muslim community."

Mr Sacranie outlined three key domestic policy concerns of British Muslims: the need to outlaw religious discrimination; measures to tackle high levels of poverty and social exclusion and concern about the curtailment of civil liberties and the targeting by the authorities of Muslim organisations. He also emphasised the positive contribution Muslims are making to British society and acknowledged the progress made in responding to the needs of faith communities.

The Liberal Democrat fringe meeting was held on Wednesday 24 September 2003 in Brighton. Taking part in panel discussions alongside the MCB Secretary General were Baroness Shirley Williams, Jenny Tonge MP and Chris Huhne MEP

Panellists at the Labour Fringe meeting held in Bournemouth on 1 October 2003 included: Mike O'Brien MP (Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister), Fiona MacTaggart MP (Home Office Minister) and Cllr. Sadiq Khan (Chairman, MCB Legal Affairs Committee).

Panellists at the Conservative Fringe meeting, organised in Blackpool on Wednesday 8 October included David Lidington MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Dominic Grieve MP, Shadow Home Office Minister. The MCB presentation was made by Dr Daud Abdullah, Assistant Secretary General of MCB.

Seminar for London Muslims

The Muslim Council of Britain in conjunction with Mayor of London's Office organised a joint seminar entitled 'Seminar on the Mayor's Strategies and Policies' at City Hall on 28 September 2003 for the benefit of London's large and growing Muslim community.

The seminar was addressed by senior representatives of the GLA, the London Fire and Emergency Planning Association, Transport for London, London Development Agency and the Metropolitan Police Service including Atma Singh, Ken Livingston's Policy Adviser, Mr Iqbal Sacranie, Secretary General of MCB, Steve Watts the GLA's Head of Governance, Assistant Commissioner David Veness and Superintendent David Tucker of the Metropolitan Police Service with concluding remarks by Mr Wast, Chairman of the MCB London Affairs Committee.

"This seminar provided a valuable forum for the Greater London Authority to gain a better understanding of some of the key service needs of London's 700,000-strong Muslim population and for the Muslim community to become better acquainted with the various functional bodies of the GLA " said Iqbal Sacranie, Secretary-General of the MCB.

In sending a welcoming message Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, said: "I welcome this opportunity for a dialogue with Muslim organisations to improve the delivery of services to their communities in London. I am determined that London government should be representative of all communities in the city. That means listening to communities, improving services to meet their concerns and ensuring that the management of London's public services reflects the diversity of London. I would like to thank the Muslim Council of Britain for their contribution to this work."

The wide range of issues discussed by the participants during the day included Race and Faith hate crimes (Islamophobia), community consultation and collaboration, tackling poverty, car parking near mosques, terrorism, and under-representation in employment.

Youth conference at City Hall

The Greater London Authority in association with the Muslim Council of Britain and the Muslim Association of Britain organised a conference on 2 October 2003 to discuss issues affecting London's Muslim youth including Islamophobia, raising education standards, Muslim students on campus, unemployment, crime, policing and Muslim Youth and political awareness. In his welcome address, Mayor Ken Livingstone noted that "London is home to a substantial Muslim community, with around 5.0 per cent under the age of 25. It is vital that young Muslims have an opportunity to raise and discuss their issues and concerns with policy makers and those who deliver public services in London. This conference will inform the work that is undertaken by the Greater London Authority and I look forward to hearing the views of the young people taking part."

Speaking at the conference, Iqbal Sacranie, Secretary General of the MCB said 'This conference presents the youth from London's 700,000 strong Muslim community with an opportunity to engage with the Greater London Authority with a view to seeking the common good. The UK's 2001 Census found that our community has a very young demographic profile. The MCB is delighted to be able to co-operate with the GLA in ensuring that their service needs are met and that the challenges of Islamophobia, under-achievement in education, unemployment, and crime are responded to vigorously.'

Further speakers included Ahmed Sheikh Mohammed and Anas Takriti, Muslim Association of Britain ; Chris Piper, President, University of London Union; Professor Rees Rawlings, pro-rector, Imperial College; Chris Weavers, Vice Principal of Education, National Union of Students; Inayat Bunglawala, MCB and Mudassar Ahmed of The Young Muslims UK. Habiba Hamid, President of the Students Union, Birkbeck College, observed from the floor that four student unions in London currently had Muslim presidents. Tanzeem Wasti, of the MCB's London Task Group, was closely involved in the

organisation of this landmark event. Session chairs included Nawazish Bokhari and Shiban Akbar of the MCB. Zahoor Qurashi of the ISB also chaired a session.

MCB Affiliates present at the conference, including the Federation of Students Islamic Societies (FOSIS) and Young Muslims (YM) UK, conveyed the need for the Muslim Youth and wider community to become more proactive and to participate fully in the development not only of the Muslim community but also of the wider society. Iqbal Sacranie, Secretary-General of the MCB, summed up the mood by quoting from Malcolm X 'It is time to become part of the solution, not the problem'. The conference was attended by some one hundred and fifty delegates.

Leadership Development Programme

On 11 October 2003 the MCB's first Leadership Development programme hosted a dinner at Sundridge Park that was attended by the programme's 18 participants and invited guests. The event was chaired by Khurshid Drabu, the MCB's Constitutional Advisor and addressed by Iqbal Sacranie and Lord Amir Bhatia. In his welcoming note, Khurshid Drabu remarked that the course was for a hire "a dream come true" - the community taking steps to nurture and develop its future leadership. He was particularly impressed by the gender balance that had been achieved - 7 women and 11 men.

Lord Bhatia told the audience that he would do some "straight talking" and proceeded with an hour-long address that was visionary and inspiring. Referring to his own experiences, he said that many Muslim families today had three and sometimes four generations in their midst: those adults that had migrated for economic reasons or to seek a better education for their children; the second generation who came at a young age; the third generation who were born here and were now young adults, in some cases with their own off-spring. Each possessed a different approach to what constitutes their Islamic identity. He described the scenario where in a few decades, the younger generations would most likely no longer have strong connections with their original cultures and languages and be more in tune with British society in terms of participation in civic society and politics. He hoped that while these cultural affiliations could be lost, what was of fundamental importance was the preservation of the Islamic value system. These values, together with factors such as the community's demographic profile, meant there was a window of opportunity in the next 10-15 years.

Iqbal Sacranie in his address also reflected on his own experiences in serving the community and the personalities that had influenced his life, foremost amongst them his father. He observed that the ethos of the MCB was to nurture collective leadership, with transparency and accountability. The evening concluded with observations and comments from many of the course participants.

The Leadership Development Programme comprises two three-day residential modules, four single days of training, and a six-month follow-up. The participants of this first course are professionals with a commitment to community work. The course organiser is the MCB Treasurer, Dr Akber Mohamedali, who can be contacted at admin@mcb.org.uk

Meeting with Deputy Chief of Defence Staff

The Secretary General of the MCB, Iqbal Sacranie and the MCB MOD advisor on Islamic Affairs, Mr Khurshid Drabu were invited to meet with Lt. General Anthony Palmer, the Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff and his colleagues on 7 October 2002 at the MOD headquarters in London. Mr Martin Fuller, the Director of the MOD Personnel Policy Division was also present at the meeting. The meeting lasted well over an hour and a number of issues were raised with the Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff by the Secretary General and the MOD Advisor.

General Palmer recognised the reasons for the difficulties facing the Armed Forces in its recruitment from the Muslim community. He said that there are 280 Muslims in the Armed Forces at present and the MOD is keen to improve its intake of Muslims. Mr Drabu said that we should look at the figure in a positive light in that it represents the second largest number from the faith communities with the Hindus, the Sikhs and the Jews lagging far behind. He said that it is a tribute to the magnanimous spirit of the Muslim community that despite the strong perception that our country is targeting Muslim countries, so many Muslims are still part of the Armed Forces.

The General explained that the Armed Forces had put in place policies which ensure that Muslims joining the Armed Forces have the facilities to meet their religious requirements. Halal food is available as are facilities for prayers. Men are now allowed to keep beards which are trimmed and neat and women can wear hijab as well as trousers and full sleeve shirts if they so wish. Iqbal Sacranie and Khurshid Drabu expressed satisfaction with these measures but pointed out that the Armed Forces still have some way to go before Muslims feel truly welcome. The MOD undertook to work more closely with the MCB to explain its policies and work to the Muslim community.

In response to the requests for appointment of a full time Imam as part of the MOD Chaplaincy Team, the General promised that the MOD would consider the matter as a matter of urgency and with sympathy. The MOD also assured the MCB Secretary General that it would review its policy on engagement with ethnic media so as to ensure that the Muslim Media is not treated less favourably. Commenting on the outcome of the meeting, the Secretary General said, "It is a good beginning and I am satisfied that there is a will on the part of the MOD to listen to and act on the concerns that we have. We hope to continue this constructive process. Muslims are responsible citizens of the United Kingdom and we have a stake in all its institutions."

Foreign and Commonwealth Office seminar

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office ran a series of workshops, seminars, open days and receptions to help engage with the faith communities on foreign policy and to build a better relationship between the communities and the FCO as part of FCO's Multi Faith Week. On Wednesday 8 October 2003, a seminar titled 'Faith and Foreign Policy' was held at the FCO office in London with the aim of starting a process of engagement that will benefit the formulation and delivery of foreign policy. The seminar was opened by the Foreign Secretary who said: "Our objective today is to examine the relationship between Britain's faith communities and the Government's foreign policy. In the past, this has been an issue which has not received the attention it deserves...We are committed to the pursuit

of a foreign policy which turns ... noble sentiments into deeds in the Middle East and beyond. It is an aspiration which should attract the backing of all Britons - agnostic, atheist and religious."

The Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality, Mr Trevor Phillips, also was one of the key note speakers and emphasised the important role faith communities play in both domestic and international issues. The MCB Secretary General, Iqbal Sacranie; along with the President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, Henry Grunwald QC and Bishop Colin Fletcher, Bishop of Dorchester were members of the panel that summarised the proceedings of the day. They welcomed this initiative where, for the first time, senior members of Faith Communities across the country were invited to participate in the seminar.

FCO Islamic Awareness Course

Iqbal Sacranie, Secretary General of the MCB was the guest speaker at the "Islam Awareness Course" organised by the FCO on Thursday 9 October 2003. He spoke on the subject of "British Muslims: A question of identity" in which he stated "At its core British Muslim identity recognises the primacy of Islam in making us who we are. In doing so it recognises no ethnic or cultural boundaries or differences. It guides our behaviour, shapes our outlook and gives us purpose. Britain gives us our focus our belonging and the context in which we live our lives. British Muslim implies a fusion of the two. It helps Muslims add value to British society as active and responsible citizens." For the full text please refer to Media/Speeches section on the MCB website www.mcb.org.uk

CWC meeting

The seventh meeting of the MCB Central Working Committee (CWC) took place on 11 October 2003 at Birmingham Central Mosque. The Secretary General presented a verbal report of the main MCB activities since the last meeting. There was a discussion on the MCB funding strategy and key issues raised by various sub-committee chairs.

Meeting with Arab Ambassadors

On 7 October 2003, representatives from the MCB including Iqbal Sacranie, Secretary General and Khurshid Drabu, Constitutional Advisor, met with a gathering of over 20 Arab Ambassadors at the United Arab Emirates Embassy, London. The Secretary General briefed the ambassadors on the work and structure of the MCB.

Letter to Fiona Mactaggart MP

The Secretary General of the MCB, Iqbal Sacranie, has written to Fiona Mactaggart MP, Home Office Minister to express the appreciation of the British Muslim community for her remarks made at the CAABU fringe meeting during the Labour party conference in Bournemouth drawing attention to the dreadful subjugation of the Palestinian people and how the lessons learned from the Holocaust must never be forgotten. As Ms Mactaggart is shortly due to visit the Auschwitz-Birkenau site, the Secretary

General urged her that "We must do more than remember and reflect on the past - we must also be able to see when similar abuses occur in our own time. A fitting living memorial for the victims of the Nazi Holocaust is ensuring we make the cry 'Never Again' real for all people who suffer, everywhere."

Qadiyani Centre not Mosque

On 2 October 2003, the MCB issued a statement in the light of much press interest, making it clear that the Qadiyani Centre which has been constructed in Morden is not a Mosque. The Qadiyani community are regarded as non-Muslims by all Muslim scholars and groups world-wide because of their central belief that Mirza Ghulam Ahmed (born in 19th century India) was a prophet and the promised Messiah. Ever since the days of British colonial rule in India, Muslim scholars have been united in rejecting Ghulam Ahmed's claim to prophethood and regard him as an imposter.

Mainstream Islamic teaching holds that the blessed Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was the last in a long line of prophets sent to mankind. Sunni and Shi'a Muslims are both agreed on this basic tenet of the Islamic faith. Furthermore, we believe that there are no more than 1 million Ahmadis in the entire world as opposed to the 1.5 billion strong worldwide Muslim community.

So, whilst we fully accept the right of Ahmadis to their own religion, it is clearly misleading to describe them as Muslims. They are not.

MCB welcomes appointment of first British Muslim envoy

On 19 September 2003 the MCB issued a press release welcoming the appointment of Mr Anwar Chaudhury as the first British Muslim High Commissioner to Bangladesh. The MCB wishes him every success in promoting a more cordial and constructive relationship with what is the third largest Muslim republic in the world.

MCB Secretary General, Iqbal Sacranie has said: "We had indeed been expecting such an appointment and are pleased that the process of involving British Muslim in the foreign policy mechanism has begun. We expect the process to go forward from here and that we are soon able to overcome present difficulties in our relations with the Muslim world."

Triologue of Cultures

Between 29 - 30 September 2003, the 8th Conference Triologue of Cultures, Herbert-Quandt-Stiftung took place in Hamburg, Germany. Imam Abdul Jalil Sajid, representing the MCB, attended and addressed the conference on the subject of the identity of Muslims in Europe and the role of religion in the Triologue and within the draft EU constitution. Conference members agreed to petition inter governmental conferences on the EU draft constitution to include the word God and make reference of Judeo, Christian and Islamic values in Europe. The conference also adopted the recommendation that all European members states include comprehensive educational plans to combat hate and prejudice in their national education programmes.

For the full text of Imam Sajid's speech please refer to Library/Essays/Papers by Imam Jalil Sajid at www.mcb.org.uk

Faith in communities

Imam Jalil Sajid delivered the key note speech on the importance of interfaith work at the London Borough of Barnet's first Interfaith Conference entitled "Faith in Communities". The conference took place on 16 September and was attended by representatives from all major faiths and political parties. For the full text of Imam Sajid's speech please refer to Library/Essays/Papers by Imam Abdul Jalil Sajid at www.mcb.org.uk

Interfaith meeting

Dr Abdul Raheem Khan attended an Interfaith leaders meeting at St Martins Church celebrating the end of slavery on 24 August 2003. While joining the celebrations Dr Khan warned the meeting that slavery in a different form appears to be raising its ugly head - only this time tragically young children are involved. He emphasised that Islam does not condone slavery and paved the way for its abolition. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) campaigned against slavery from the very outset.

Muslim Safety Forum meeting

On 10 September 2003, the Muslim Safety Forum held a meeting at New Scotland Yard. This was followed by another meeting held on 8 October 2003. Items discussed included pressing the police for some radical changes in their policies towards the Mosques to counterbalance the feeling of high handedness felt amongst the community. The meeting was attended by a senior official from the Crime Prevention Squad and views were exchanged on the level of service provided.

Burials and Cremations Committee meeting

On 1 October 2003, Dr Abdul Raheem Khan presented a paper on current practices for Muslim Burials which was presented at the Directors of Burials and Cremations Conference held in Southport. His paper, based on the guidance of the Qur'an and traditions of the Prophet outlined Muslim practices from the onset of death to the levelling of the grave which generated much interest and many questions. This paper will shortly be available online at www.mcb.org.uk

"Honour Killings"

On the invitation of Andre Baker, Metropolitan Police Commander of Serious Crime, a meeting was held on 15 October 2003 to discuss the issue of "Honour Killings". The meeting was attended by seven Muslims including Imam Abdul Jalil Sajid, Dr Abdul Raheem Khan, MCB CWC member, Salah E-Hassan, Iqra Trust, Iftikhar Ahmed, London School of Islamics, Reza Kazim, Islamic Human Rights Commission, Mohammed Ali, JCWI, London Borough of Tower Hamlets. Representatives from other faith communities were also present at the meeting.

This was the third meeting on the issue of "Honour Killing", the first of which was held in January 2003 with journalists and the second a seminar on 23 May 2003 with voluntary and advice agencies in attendance.

Dr Sajid spoke making it clear from the outset that "There is no honour in killing. The practice of Honour Killing has nothing to do with Islamic teaching. Like other faiths Islam considers all forms of life sacred. Murder is a serious crime as sanctity of life is paramount in Islam. Islam categorically denounces vigilantism and believes in rule of law. In Islamic teachings there is no place for extra-judicial killing or any killing without due process of law."

A copy of Imam Abdul Jalil Sajid's report can be found at Library/Articles/Papers by Imam Sajid. Further background information on this topic can be found on the MCBDirect site. www.mcb.org.uk/mcbdirect.

Book Launch

A book launch, held at the House of Commons on 15 October 2003, was jointly organised by the MCB and Experience Corps for the new publication "Khidmah : Selfless Service for the Elderly". The booklet was officially launched by Rt Hon John Battle MP, Faith Adviser to Prime Minister. MCB Treasurer Dr Akber Mohamedali also spoke at the launch which was attended by over 90 people.

Affiliate News

Islamic Awareness Day

On Sunday 28 September 2003, MCB Affiliates The Tooting Islamic Centre organised an 'Islamic Awareness Day'. The aim of the day was to present a clearer picture of Islam and highlight the unity between the Muslim and non-Muslim communities in order to promote better understanding and co-operation. The evening programme included a lecture by Justice Mufti Mohammad Taqi Uthmani, a leading contemporary Islamic scholar.

ExpIslamia Convention

Islamic Forum Europe, a national affiliate of the MCB, launched its 3rd 'ExpIslamia Convention' on 12 October at the Wembley Conference Centre. The theme of the conference was 'Islam for Europe'. **The conference was attended by many of today's most well known scholars and speakers including: Shaykh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, (Qatar), Shaykh Abdullah Hakim Quick (South Africa), Shaykh Tariq Ramadan, (Switzerland), Shaykh Zia Ullah Khan (Canada) and Imam Anwar Awlaqi (USA).** For further see www.islamicforumeurope.com.

Islamia School "Night of Remembrance"

On 20 October 2003, MCB affiliate, Islamia School, founded by Yusuf Islam, is celebrating its 20th anniversary. To mark the occasion a special "Night of Remembrance" charity event will be held at London's Royal Albert Hall. Performances will be held by Yusuf Islam, other artists, and special guests including Imam Hamza Yusuf and Prince Naseem Hamed.

To view full event details at www.nightofremembrance.org and at www.islamia.org.uk.

MAB Demonstration

MCB Affiliates, the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB) in association with the Stop the War Coalition, CND and Friends of Al Aqsa held a massive demonstration which took place on 27 September 2003. More than 100,000 people marched in Central London and a packed square heard speeches from Tony Benn, George Galloway, Ken Livingstone, Dima Tahboub, the widow of Al Jazeera journalist Tareq Ayyoub, and Dr Azzam Tamimi, plus many more. The "Freedom for Palestine" and "End the occupation of Iraq" March renewed the commitment to creating a just and peaceful world. The Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain also addressed the gathering emphasising that the UN should play a central role in bringing about a peaceful transition so that the Iraqi people can govern the country.

Palestinian Children's Week

The opening ceremony of the Palestinian Children's Week organised by MCB Affiliates the Palestinian Return Centre (PRC) launched in the House of Commons on 17 September was a great success, attended by an audience of diplomats, members of parliament, journalists and members of the public.

Speakers included Ms. Gretta Duisenberg who helped set up the activist group, "Stop the Occupation", which aims to educate the Dutch public about the nature of Israeli occupation of Palestinian land and to change Dutch policy in the region; Mr Sirat Siraj - Senior Lecturer at University of East London and expert in international human rights law; Mr Ahmad Jadallah – Reuters' correspondent to Gaza and Ms Maria Holt – prominent writer and expert on Palestinian affairs. Further events in the programme included exhibitions of posters exclusively on the condition of Palestinian children under Israeli occupation and the showing of the film "Message from Sara" at venues in Leeds, Manchester and Nottingham throughout that week.

National Mosque Open Day

MCB Affiliate UK Islamic Mission hosted Britain's first National Mosque Open Day on Sunday 5 October 2003. Mosques and centres administered by the organisation across the country were open to the general public from 10 am to 6 pm. The family event, supported by the organisation's 40 plus branches, was aimed at providing a unique opportunity to experience Islam from the people who believe and practice it, namely the Muslims. The event gave an opportunity for visitors to see what key

components form a Mosque, understand how Muslims pray and learn what activities for the young, old, male, and female are conducted on a daily basis in a Mosque.

Mohammed Afzal, President of UK Islamic Mission, highlighted the importance of the Open Day saying: "Our country is great because we are able to understand and respect each other's beliefs and practices. The National Mosque Open Day is simply an extension of the excellent relations British Muslims enjoy with other faith and ethnic communities. What we seek to achieve is mutual respect through working with our fellow citizens, and in doing so, develop a God loving and people caring society."

The event received widespread approval by Interfaith groups and is seen as a positive step forward in building bridges of understanding between Britain's largest ethnic minority and other communities.

Discover Islam

MCB Affiliate, the East London Mosque launched the 'Discover Islam' project on 5th October. This month-long programme will consist of open days, seminars, exhibitions, activities.

For further information please refer to www.islamawareness.org.uk.

Islamic Awareness Week

MCB Affiliate, the Indian Muslim Welfare Society are to hold their Second Islamic Awareness Week. The week and its associated activities will run from Monday 20 October to Thursday 23 October at the Al-Hikmah Centre in Batley. For further information please refer to www.imws.org.uk

Committees Update

Media Committee (MC)

Letter to the Jewish Chronicle

On 19 September 2003, Inayat Bunglawala, Secretary of the MCB Media Committee wrote to the editor of the Jewish Chronicle regarding a column by Prof Geoffrey Alderman in which Mr Alderman alleges that the blessed Prophet Muhammad deliberately 'broke the treaty' of Hudaibiyya with the pagan Arabs of Makkah. Mr Bunglawala writes that "This is a deeply offensive and demonstrably false allegation." pointing out that "the Prophet chose a peaceful settlement by signing the Treaty of Hudaibiyya in 628 CE with the pagan Arabs. Two years later, the pagan Arabs broke the treaty by attacking and killing 20 allies of the Muslims as they slept. It is internationally recognized that when one party breaks a treaty, the other party is released from its obligations." For the full text please refer to Media/Letters to the Editor at www.mcb.org.uk

Letter to the Daily Express and Press Complaints Commission

On 9 October 2003 the Secretary of the MCB Media Committee wrote to the Daily Express Editor, Chris Williams and the Press Complaints Commission (PCC) regarding a story that appeared in the Daily Express about a Turkish student who pulled a gun on two schoolboys when they asked for their football back. The story refers to the student as a 'Muslim immigrant'. Mr Bunglawala has asked the Daily Express to avoid such descriptions in the future and has called for an investigation by the PCC,

pointing out that this reportage appears to be in contravention of the PCC's code of practice section 13(ii) which states that newspapers: "must avoid publishing details of a person's race, colour, religion, sexual orientation, physical or mental illness or disability unless these are directly relevant to the story."

For the full text please refer to Media/Letters to the Editor at www.mcb.org.uk

Letter to BBC

On 9 October 2003, Inayat Bunglawala, the Secretary of the Media Committee wrote to Stephen Whittle, Editor at the BBC, regarding an interview with the former head of the Israeli intelligence service, Mossad, aired on the the Today Programme at just after 7.30 am. Mr Bunglawala pointed out that the gentleman's suggestion to have Iran's alleged nuclear weapons 'dealt with' were not counterbalanced by any suggestion by the interviewer John Humphreys that Israel's known possession of weapons be regarded as a threat to regional stability.

Letter to the BBC

Writing to the Director of Editorial Policy at the BBC, Stephen Whittle on 8 October, the MCB Media Secretary referred to a story by the BBC Correspondent concerning the sentence "The roadmap has gone the way of the Oslo agreement, which also withered under the impact of suicide bombs." The Media Committee Secretary pointed out that this does not provide a balanced account and ignores the Israeli policy of systematically assassinating Palestinian activists and their family homes.

In his response of 10 October, Paul Reynolds said: "I do feel that the major destabiliser of both Oslo and the road map has been the suicide bomb. That clearly was the intention of Hamas and it seems to have succeeded" to which Mr Bunglawala replied that "This is only a selective reading of the situation in Palestine", quoting Inigo Gilmore of the Daily Telegraph who stated that the road map was: "fundamentally flawed as it did not get Israel's commitment to stopping its targeted killing of [Palestinian] militant leaders."

For the full text please refer to Media/Letters to the Editor at www.mcb.org.uk

Interview for Newsweek Magazine

Mohibur Rahman, Media Committee member, was interviewed by Newsweek Magazine on Wednesday 24 September regarding British and European Muslims.

Research & Documentation Committee (ReDoc)

British Muslim Community

Jamil Sherif made a presentation on the 'British Muslim Community' at the launch of Discovering Islam Month, 1st October and on 'Tackling Community' at the Muslim Youth conference, 2nd October.

Lecture

ReDoc and MCB Affiliates the Association of Muslim Researchers (AMR) organised a lecture on "Making Science Work for Muslims" by Professor M Ilyas on Thursday 25 September. The meeting was chaired by Dr AbdulKarim Khalil, Director of the Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre.

BBC Asian Network Interview

Azhar Sheikh was interviewed on BBC Asian Radio Network on the issues relating to water fluoridation on the nation's dental health. The interview focused on the forthcoming legislation which would allow health authorities to direct targeted fluoridation in areas where it was needed; in areas where there was a high incidence of dental disease as there is an inequality in the nation's dental health.

Ethnicity and Genetics Conference

Prof Aziz Sheikh spoke on consanguineous marriages at the Ethnicity and Genetics conference.

GLA Seminar

Imrana Khan represented ReDoc at the GLA meeting to discuss the Mayor's policies and strategies on Sunday 28 September.

Lancet Article

Aziz Sheikh and Professor Gatrad published an article on Multifaith Chaplaincy in the August issue of the Lancet.

Masjid (Mosque) & Community Affairs Committee

Peace & Reconciliation talks

Three lunchtime talks centred on peace and reconciliation from a religious perspective have been organised as part of Coventry Peace Month. Shaykh Ibrahim Mogra, Chair of the MCB's Masjid (Mosque) and Community Affairs committee gave a talk on 8 October discussing attitudes towards peace and conflict within the Muslim faith. "I believe it is important that people come to listen to what the different faiths teach about peace," said Shaykh Ibrahim Mogra. "The general public learn about the actions of certain Muslims from the media when those actions are not actually condoned by the faith; in fact they are condemned by the faith...I also want to show Muslims do believe in peace, love, respect and living in harmony with people that are different from them." Amra Bone, previously a lecturer at Birmingham University and Gurnam Singh, senior lecturer on social work at Coventry University also gave talks as part of the Peace Month.

Health & Medical Committee (HMC)

Health & Wellbeing Clinic

On 5 September 2003, the Islamic Cultural Centre organised a Health Wellbeing Clinic offering routine check-ups for blood pressure and diabetes along with screening for fats and cholesterol levels. Hundreds of Friday worshipers including both men and women benefited from this clinic. The MCB was represented by Dr Shuja Shafi, Chair of HMC along with Dr Abdul Raheem Khan and Dr A Majid Katme. Dr Shuja's speech can be found in the Media/Speeches section at www.mcb.org.uk

London Affairs Committee

Cultural Strategy

Mr Tanzeem Wasti, Chair of the London Affairs Committee, attended a meeting on Cultural Strategy organised by the GLA and submitted a report titled 'London Cultural Capital, Realizing the Potential of a World Class City' compiled by committee member Ms Nahid.

Social Affairs Committee (SAC)

Ramadan Inside

Shiban Akbar, Chair of SAC, has written an article for "The Journal of the Association of Members of Boards of Visitors" entitled 'Ramadan Inside - What Prison should provide during Ramadan'. The article appears in the October 2003 edition, issue 81 and can be found online in the Library/Articles section at www.mcb.org.uk

Hijab

Shiban Akbar was interviewed by Austrian Radio and French Wire ASP on the subject of women wearing hijab. The interviews took place in the light of a German ruling that women cannot wear hijab to the workplace which was recently overturned as illegal.

New on the MCB Website

- **Media/Press Releases** - 9 Sep 2003, MCB Meets Attorney-General To Express Concerns Over
Guantanamo Bay Detainees
 - 5 Sep 2003, UK Muslims To Meet Straw Over Interpal
 - 2 Oct 2003, Qadiyani Centre not Mosque
 - 1 Oct 2003, MCB Organises Special Muslim Youth Conference the GLA
 - 1 Oct 2003, MCB Holds Fringe Meeting At Labour Party Conference
 - 29 Sep 2003, MCB Organises Joint Seminar with GLA For London Muslims
 - 24 Sep 2003, MCB Welcomes Charity Commission Decision To Clear Interpal
 - 19 Sep 2003, MCB Welcomes Appointment of First British Muslim Envoy
- **Media/Letters to the Editor** - 9 October 2003, letter to the Daily Express, regarding "Muslim immigrant"
 - 9 October 2003, letter to BBC Today Programme, challenging ex-Mossad head on Israel's WMD
 - 19 September 2003, letter to the Jewish Chronicle, regarding Treaty of Hudaibiyya
 - 12 September 2003, Letter to Daily Mail regarding coverage of "Magnificent 19"
- **Media/Speeches** - 9 October 2003, 'British Muslims: A question of identity', Secretary General's speech at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office seminar
 - 5 September 2003, 'Health and Well-being Clinic' organised by the Islamic Cultural Centre, London - speech by Dr Shuja Shafi
- **Library/Articles & Essays** - 10 October 2003, The Journal of the Association of Members of Boards of Visitors 'What Prison should provide during Ramadan' article by Shiban Akbar

New on the MCBDirect Website

- **MCBDirect Helpline**

MCBDirect's helpline has been set up after successful associate membership application to the Telephone Helpline Association. The helpline number is **0845 1 23 23 63**.

- MCBDirect has already posted many exciting features on the website. These include reviews of books, events, individuals etc. Forthcoming on the website: interview with Shaam, interview with Sami Yusuf, review of "Destiny of Man" (Gai Eaton) and "The Cube" and preview of Islamia school's "Night of Remembrance"
- Feature and position paper on "Honour Killings"
- Feature interview with Claire Ali
- To advertise community news and events please contact Shargil Ahmed:

mcbdirect@mcb.org.uk

Events

Event: Discover Islam

Date: Launched on 5 October 2003

Held By: East London Mosque

Contact: www.islamawareness.org.uk

Information: This month-long programme will consist of open days, seminars, exhibitions and activities.

Event: Islamic Awareness Week

Date: 20 - 23 October 2003

Held By: Indian Muslim Welfare Society

Contact: www.imws.org.uk

Information: The second Islamic Awareness week and its associated activities will take place at the Al-Hikmah Centre in Batley.

Event: Islamia School "Night of Remembrance"

Date: 20 October 2003

Held By: Islamia School

Venue: Royal Albert Hall

Contact: To view full event details at www.nightofremembrance.org and at www.islamia.org.uk.

Information: To celebrate the 20th anniversary of Islamia Schools, an evening has been organised bringing together artists from around the world for a night of remembrance and entertainment including Yusuf Islam, the founder of Islamia. Other performers on the night will include Zain Bhikha (South Africa), Qatrunada (Indonesia), Khalid Belrhousi (Morocco), and Native Deen (USA).

Event: House of Commons Question Time: "The Future Of Iraq & Palestine And Religious Discrimination"

Date: Wednesday 22 October 2003
Time: 6 - 8pm
Held By: Islamic Society of Britain
Venue: Committee Room 15, House of Commons
Contact: Tel: 07789 768 803, email: mohsin_qa@yahoo.co.uk
Information: Invited panellists include Henry Bellingham MP (Conservative Party), Clare Short MP (Labour Party), Baroness Williams MP (Liberal Democrats), Dr Abdul Wahab El-Affendi (Academic), Ahmad Thomson (Barrister)

Event: Islamic Awareness Week

Date: 3- 9 November 2003
Held By: Islamic Society of Britain
Venue: House of Lords
Contact: IAW Co-ordinator Sher Khan Tel: 0777 33 22 937
Information: ISB's annual Islam Awareness Week will be launched in the House of Lords by the Education Secretary, Charles Clarke. Go to www.iaw.org.uk for full details of how you can get involved in the myriad of activities that will be organised all over the country

The Muslim Council of Britain

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