I. Summary of the submission:

- The most effective way to combat extremist Islamic ideology is to show that such thinking and actions are **entirely contrary** to the clear teachings of Islam.

- Islam must be shown **positively** to teach Muslims tolerance of other faiths, to live in peace and harmony with non-Muslims, and to observe the law of the land of a country such as the UK where they have freedom to express their religion.

- This view of Islam must be shown to be **well-founded in the sources of Islam**, and resilient to the criticism of being unorthodox or opportunistic. At the same time, misinterpretations of Islam to justify violence and extremism must be **challenged and corrected**.

- The entire body of the teachings of Islam must be shown to be consistent with its principles of religious freedom and living in harmony with non-Muslims.

- **Our interest in this Inquiry:** Our Islamic organization preaches Islam along the above lines, and has been in existence in UK for more than a hundred years.

II. Submission:

Our organization, the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement,\(^1\) has done the most valuable, extensive and unstinting work in spreading a tolerant interpretation of Islam, as detailed below.

1. Our members founded and operated the Woking Muslim Mission at the Mosque in Woking, Surrey, from 1913 to the mid-1960s.\(^2\) During that period, this Mission was the central Islamic organization of the UK, representing all sections of Muslims in this country, and the Mosque was the chief prayer venue and place of worship for Muslims in this country. The first Imam of this Mission was Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, whose life and work have been the subject of academic study by history researchers in the UK.

2. It was a centre of propagation of Islam which sought to correct the false image of Islam as a religion of intolerance, barbarity and violence. In those days Islam was generally considered in the West as being rather like its portrayal today by IS (Daesh).

3. Islam as preached from the Woking Mission during that period was the very opposite of the religious extremism, isolation and separatism from general society, and wholesale rejection of all modern ideas, which are the attitudes rightly or wrongly associated with Muslims living in the U.K. today.

4. Since 1913 we have been distributing literature and giving lectures, speeches and presentations in the UK, emphasizing that Islam is a religion of peaceful, tolerant and civilized values, which can be followed without conflict with the best of British values.

5. Our work has always involved guiding converts to Islam, as well as Muslims resident here, on how to be British and Muslim at the same time — how to reconcile their practice of Islam with being members of British society and citizens of UK.

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\(^1\) Note: Our Movement, the Lahore Ahmadiyya, is distinct and different from what is known as the “Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam” which is led by a khalifa. We believe that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, was a Reformer (Mujaddid) and not what is called a “prophet” in Islam. We do not consider any person to be a prophet after the Prophet Muhammad.

\(^2\) For full details and history of the Woking Muslim Mission, please visit its website: www.wokingmuslim.org
6. In 2007 we published a comprehensive book entitled *Islam, Peace and Tolerance*[^3] which thoroughly argues the case that:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Islam teaches that:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Islam does NOT teach:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muslims must live in peace with all others in the world, tolerating religious differences.</td>
<td>That Muslims should fight a jihad by weapons and arms to subdue all others on earth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyone has the freedom to believe in and practise whatever religion they wish.</td>
<td>That freedom of religion should be denied to non-Muslims or to Muslims.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims must show self-restraint and patience in the face of verbal abuse of their religion from anyone.</td>
<td>That Muslims must attack or kill anyone who, in their view, has insulted their religion and abused the Prophet Muhammad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims must actively do good to their neighbours, whatever may be their religion, creed or race.</td>
<td>That Muslims should make violent attacks against the general public innocently going about their daily business.</td>
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</table>

My MP at the time, Dr Nick Palmer, former MP for Broxtowe, encouraged me as I sought his comments me while drafting this book. Dr Palmer mentioned our views at Prime Minister’s Questions on 11 July 2007 to Mr Gordon Brown.

**Dr. Nick Palmer (Broxtowe) (Lab):** My constituent, Dr. Aziz, who is a leading Muslim scholar, has asked me to congratulate the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary on their moderate tone in response to the terrorist attacks. He asks me to ask the Prime Minister to confirm this: does he see this as a struggle not between different civilisations, but between ordinary people of all religions and none, and the people who seek to kill us?

**The Prime Minister:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend. The number of organisations of different faiths in our country that have come out to condemn the attempted attacks in Britain over the past few days has been encouraging. All mainstream opinion will want to stand up against extremism. In the next few months, I hope that we can set up inter-faith councils in every constituency and community of our country so that we can bring together the faiths and all moderate opinion against those extremists who are trying to disrupt our civilisation and who, at the same time, of course offend every decent value of human dignity.[^4]

Dr Palmer wrote to me about this as follows: “Mr Brown thanked me later privately for the question (which I’d not primed him to expect as I didn't expect to be called) and a number of other MPs also asked me to pass on their appreciation to you. Julian Lewis, a Conservative MP, says he has been privately grappling with how to describe terrorism in a way that doesn’t ignore the claims to Islamic belief by the terrorists but makes it clear they are untypical: he uses the phrase “Un-Islamic terrorists”. He asked me to ask your opinion on whether this was helpful, or whether you feel that the spurious claims to religious justification should simply be ignored.” (E-mail, dated 13 July 2007)

7. In May 2013 we held a function at the H.G. Wells Conference Centre, Woking, Surrey, to mark the centenary of the creation of our Woking Muslim Mission. This was supported by Woking Borough Council. Speakers included: Mr Jonathan Lord, MP for Woking, Councillor


[^4]: See Hansard: [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmhansrd/cm070711/debtext/70711-0003.htm#07071161000144](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmhansrd/cm070711/debtext/70711-0003.htm#07071161000144)
Anne Roberts, Mayor of Woking, and Mr Ray Morgan, Chief Executive, Woking Borough Council.[5]

8. During the two World Wars, the Woking Muslim Mission extended its support to Britain, in the same way as the general British public supported the war effort:

   a. During the First World War the Mission was much involved in securing proper arrangements for the burial, near Woking, of Muslim soldiers of the British Indian army who died in army hospitals in England. In recognition of this involvement, our organization was invited to the opening of the Peace Garden at the Woking Muslim Burial Ground, Horsell Common, on 12 November 2015, organized by Woking Borough Council and the British Army. The opening was conducted by HRH Prince Edward, and the Defence Minister Lord Howe was also present.[6]

   b. When the Second World War began, the Imam of the Woking Mosque declared in his Eid sermon in November 1939:

   “Muslims are ordered [in the Quran] to sacrifice their lives not only to save their own mosques but the religious houses of other peoples as well. ...the very fact that synagogues have been pulled down in Germany upon the slightest pretext makes it obligatory upon us Muslims to throw our weight into the cause of the Allies.”

9. In November 2014 our group held a meeting in a Committee Room of the House of Commons, led by our international Head from Pakistan, Dr A.K. Saeed. Talks and presentations were given on the peaceful and tolerant nature of the teachings of Islam. I gave a presentation based on my book Islam, Peace and Tolerance. To view this presentation, please visit: www.ahmadiyya.org/islam/islam-p-t.pdf

10. It is not sufficient to deal only in isolation with subjects connected with extremism (such as the concept of Jihad, martyrdom, freedom of religion). Translations of the Quran, accounts of the life of the Prophet Muhammad, and collections of his sayings and actions, must also reflect a tolerant spirit. These are the basic sources and writings which build a Muslim’s image of Islam and create the framework in which they view their religion. Literature of this kind has been produced and distributed by our Movement for more than a century, particularly in this country.

11. The first translation of the Quran by a Muslim to become available to the West was printed and published in England in 1917 by our Movement. It contains an extensive commentary which answers the charges against Islam of being a violent, intolerant, backward religion that appeals to man’s base desires by promising a sensual paradise. This translation, with revisions over the years, remains in print and is available free online. Thus the very first translation of the Quran by a Muslim that the British people saw is one which is the most effective tool in combating extremism. This translation and commentary were the work of Maulana Muhammad Ali, world-famous author of several books on Islam.

III. Recommendations

[5] For details of this function and its proceedings, please visit: www.wokingmuslim.org/history/centenary.htm
[6] For news of this event, see: www.woking.gov.uk/woking/heritage/muslimburialground
1. The Government should encourage and support the provision of the kind of material mentioned above, in print and through talks, speeches and sermons, using traditional and electronic media. Grants should be made available for clearly-defined projects to produce and distribute such material. The use of such funds must be closely monitored to ensure that they do not merely go to various bodies, but are used for specific projects.

2. Muslim groups combating extremism, and promoting tolerance towards and harmony with other faiths, must receive some form of recognition such as a “quality mark” to indicate that they provide an interpretation of Islam beneficial to society as a whole which encourages community cohesion.

3. We advise the Government to be cautious of groups and bodies whose commitment to combating extremism is opportunistic, superficial and half-hearted, and whose aim is merely to boost their prominence and improve their former, adverse image. These are groups who, within their own organizations, and in their relationship with the general Muslim community, do not practise a tolerant, harmonious form of Islam. Many have their central organizations based in Muslim countries such as Pakistan, where their sister and allied groups openly practise and promote hatred against, and oppression of, non-Muslims as well as Muslims who disagree with them.

Sincerely yours,

Zahid Aziz, Dr.

On behalf of:

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha’at Islam Lahore (UK)
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