



Piggybacking on Terror in Britain

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[Daniel Pipes](#)

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Two days after British authorities broke up an alleged plot to blow up multiple aircraft over the Atlantic Ocean, the "moderate" Muslim establishment in Britain published an aggressive [open letter to Prime Minister Tony Blair](#).

It suggested that Mr. Blair could better fight terrorism if he recognized that the current British government policy, especially on "the debacle of Iraq," provides "ammunition to extremists." The letter writers demanded that the prime minister change his foreign policy to "make us all safer." One prominent signatory, the Labour member of Parliament [Sadiq Khan](#), added that Mr. Blair's reluctance to criticize Israel increased the pool of people whom terrorists can recruit.

In other words, Islamists working within the system exploited the thwarted Islamist terror plot to pressure the British government to implement their joint wishes and reverse British policy in the Middle East. Lawful Islamists shamelessly leveraged the near death of thousands to forward their agenda.

Despite its reported [fears of Muslim street unrest](#), the Blair government heatedly rejected the letter. Foreign Secretary [Margaret Beckett](#) called it "the gravest possible error." The Foreign Office minister [Kim Howells](#) dismissed it as "facile." Home Secretary [John Reid](#) deemed it a "dreadful misjudgment" to think that the "foreign policy of this country should be shaped in part, or in whole, under the threat of terrorism activity." Transport Secretary [Douglas Alex-](#)

[ander](#) rejected the letter as "dangerous and foolish."

Undaunted, the "moderate" Muslim establishment pushed even harder on the domestic front. In an August 14 [meeting with high government representatives](#), including the deputy prime minister, it made two further demands: that a pair of Islamic religious festivals become official holidays and that Islamic laws pertaining to marriage and family life be applied in Britain. A Muslim present at the meeting later warned the government against any plans to [profile airport passengers](#), lest this step radicalize Muslim youths further.

Why these ultimata and why at this time? According to the *Daily Mail*, the leader of the August 14 Muslim delegation, [Syed Aziz Pasha](#), explained his group's logic: "if you give us religious rights, we will be in a better position to convince young people that they are being treated equally along with other citizens." More ominously, Mr. Pasha threatened the government leaders. "We are willing to cooperate, but there should be a partnership. They should understand our problems. Then we will understand their problems."

The press reacted furiously to these demands. The *Guardian's* Polly Toynbee condemned the open letter as "perilously close to suggesting the government had it coming." The *Daily Mirror's* Sue Carroll portrayed Mr. Pasha's position as "perilously close to blackmail."

This was not the first such attempt by "moderate" British Muslim leaders at political jujitsu, to translate Islamist violence into political clout. The same happened, if less aggressively, in the [aftermath of the July 2005 London bombings](#), when they piggybacked on the death of 52 innocents to demand that British forces leave Iraq.

That pressure did succeed, and in two major ways. First, the Home Office subsequently issued a report produced by "moderate" Muslims, "[Preventing Extremism Together](#)," that formally accepted this appealing approach. As [Dean Godson](#) of Policy Exchange summarizes the document, Islamist terror "provided a wonderful, unexpected opportunity for these moderates to demand more power and money from the State."

Second, 72% of British subjects now [accept the Islamist view](#) that Mr. Blair's "backing for action in Iraq and Afghanistan" has made Britain more of a target for terrorists, while a negligible 1% say the policies have improved the country's safety, according to a recent poll. The public solidly backs the Islamists, not the prime minister.

I have argued that [terrorism generally obstructs](#) the progress of radical Islam in the West by stimulating hostility to Muslims and bringing Islamic organizations under unwanted scrutiny. I must admit, however, that the evidence from Britain – where the July 7 terrorism inspired more self-recrimination than it did fury against jihad – sug-

gests that violence can also strengthen lawful Islamism.

And here's another reconsideration: While I maintain that the [future of Europe](#) - whether continuing in its historic Christian identity or becom-

ing an adjunct of Muslim North Africa - is still an open question, the behavior of the British public, that [weakest link](#) in the Western chain, suggests that it, at least, may be too confused to resist its Londonistan destiny.