

PRESS RELEASE: 6th January 2015

New Report Highlights Flaws in the Government's Counter Terrorism Strategy

Claystone, a London based think tank, will today be releasing its report 'A Decade Lost: Rethinking Radicalisation & Extremism', an in-depth study of the origins and fallout of the government's counter-terrorism strategy.

Speaking earlier about the report, British author and counter terrorism expert professor Arun Kundnani said: "Over the last decade, there has been a concerted effort by certain government ministers, advisors, right-wing think tanks and large sections of the media to push the 'conveyor belt' theory, a flawed counter-terrorism narrative seeking to conflate issues of social conservatism with acts of violence and terrorism. This theory, however, does not stand up to scholarly scrutiny. A growing body of recent academic work demonstrates an increasing majority of experts believe this position is fundamentally flawed and is, in fact, counterproductive."

He further added, "The newly proposed counter terrorism laws, founded on the 'conveyor belt' theory, do not make the nation safer and serve only to hamper meaningful counter-terrorism efforts. The report published today highlights numerous recommendations, which if enacted, would help in tackling some of the root causes of terrorism."

Some Recommendations of the report:

- End the Prevent policy in light of a more authoritative understanding of radicalisation. Clarify that information about risks of radicalisation should be shared with authorities only once it crosses the line to incitement to violence, financing of terrorism or an intention to commit acts of violence.
- Focus the government resources available to counter-terrorism on investigating individuals who can reasonably be suspected of intent to commit acts of terrorism, incite it or finance it. The significant government resources that have been made available to bring about a broader ideological transformation among British Muslims are more productively redirected to this purpose.
- Publicly defend freedom of religion, even for individuals who choose to adopt religious beliefs deemed extremist.
- Publicly acknowledge that British identity is continually reshaped by those who reside in the UK and that all sections of society have an equal right to contribute to that process.
- Publicly acknowledge that foreign policy decisions are a significant factor in creating political contexts within which terrorism becomes more or less likely.

- Enable spaces for wide-ranging discussions of religious ideology, identity and foreign policy, particularly among young people who feel excluded from mainstream politics. Those spaces should not be undercut by the fear that expressions of radical views will attract the attention of intelligence agencies and police counter-terrorism units.
- Fund independent research to present an objective picture of the experiences of foreign fighters in conflict zones such as Somalia, Syria and Iraq. This is likely to be a far more effective way of discouraging young people from engaging in such activities.

Notes to Editors

1. A full copy of the report is attached to this email and is also available to download on the Claystone website <http://www.claystone.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Claystone-rethinking-radicalisation.pdf>
2. For more information, please contact the Claystone Press Office on **020 3417 4464**, email press@claystone.org.uk or alternatively visit our website www.claystone.org.uk/press/
3. Claystone is an independent think tank formed to offer research, analysis and reasoned solutions to foster social cohesion in relation to Muslims in Britain.