

Police claim Manchester suicide bomber was a “lone wolf” after all

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The latest claim by Greater Manchester Police that suicide bomber Salman Abedi acted alone is part of a cover-up launched by the Conservative government and the intelligence agencies to conceal their responsibility for the May 22 atrocity that claimed 22 lives.

On Tuesday evening, Detective Chief Superintendent Russ Jackson of the north-west counter-terrorism unit issued a statement claiming, “Our enquiries show Abedi himself made most of the purchases of the core components [of the bomb] and what is becoming apparent is that many of his movements and actions have been carried out alone during the four days from him landing in the country and committing this awful attack.”

The portrayal of Abedi as a “lone wolf” flatly contradicts numerous previous statements by Prime Minister Theresa May, Home Secretary Amber Rudd, the police and media that he was part of a sophisticated terror cell that required mobilising the army onto Britain’s streets to prevent a second attack.

So far, police have made 16 arrests—with 11 still in custody—under the Terrorism Act. In Libya, Abedi’s father and brother were also arrested, with allegations that his brother was planning his own attack on behalf of ISIS. But according to Britain’s anti-terror police, Abedi simply acted alone.

Jackson’s statement followed one by Ian Hopkins, chief constable of Greater Manchester Police. He told BBC Radio Manchester, “There’s been a lot of reporting and people commenting that he was reported to us on a number of occasions.”

Hopkins dismissed such reports, stating that Abedi was known to police only over “relatively minor matters,” including receiving stolen goods, theft and a minor assault.

He made no attempt to refute numerous reports that

two people who knew Abedi at college had called the government’s anti-terror hotline five years ago reporting their concerns. They told the hotline of Abedi’s statements that “being a suicide bomber was okay,” and two community leaders also reported Abedi for his extremist views. According to the *Daily Telegraph*, Mohammed Shafiq, chief executive of the Ramadhan Foundation, reported Abedi two years ago “because he thought he was involved in extremism and terrorism.”

Even if Hopkins’s ludicrous statement was true, it would mean only that information in the possession of MI5 was not passed to the police. According to the *Mail on Sunday*, “[T]he FBI told MI5 that Abedi was part of a North African Islamic State cell plotting to strike a political target in the UK.”

The FBI reportedly passed these warnings to MI5 in January, after placing Abedi on a terrorist watch list in 2016. An unnamed security source told the *Mail*, “Following this US tip-off, Abedi and other members of the gang were scrutinised by MI5. It was thought at the time that Abedi was planning to assassinate a political figure.”

The *Mail* claimed then, without a shred of credibility, “[N]othing came of this investigation and, tragically, he slipped down the pecking order of targets.” Now the official story is that no alarm was even raised with the police authorities in Manchester!

Regardless of whether Abedi was alone in the days leading up to his attack, it is beyond dispute that he operated as part of a larger terrorist network and was able, with the assistance of the British government and intelligence agency, to move freely in and out of two of the world’s war zones, Libya and Syria.

The only explanation for why he was allowed to “slip through the net” is that, like other Islamists that are

useful tools of Britain's foreign policy intrigues and regime change operations, he was a protected asset.

Rather than a "lone wolf", he was one among many such political creatures of the British state apparatus. For years, members of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), including Abedi's father, were active in Manchester. They were allowed to recruit in return for their role in opposing the Gaddafi regime in Libya. Many were then allowed to travel to Libya in 2011—and had control orders lifted and their confiscated passports handed back to them—so they could fight in the US/UK regime-change operation.

The local leader of the LIFG in Manchester, Abd al-Baset Azzouz—a bomb making expert—lived on the same street as Abedi. The *Daily Mail* reported in September 2014 that Azzouz, with a reported 200 to 300 militants under his control in eastern Libya, was named as an "al Qaeda operative and trainer skilled in bomb-making" by the US State Department.

Salman Abedi emerged from this milieu and ended up, like others of his generation, supporting ISIS in Syria. His deadly attack is most likely blowback from the temporary shift by Britain towards targeting ISIS forces in Iraq and Syria.

UK intelligence have stated that Abedi was not on a list of 3,000 suspected jihadi supporters they claim to be monitoring closely, but only among 20,000 that are generally "known to them." Again, this is not credible.

None of the covert operations of the secret services involving Islamist terrorists can have proceeded without the direct knowledge and involvement of the government.

In 2014, then-Home Secretary Theresa May said that new laws would be enacted to deny citizenship to Britons fighting in Syria and Iraq. She told the *Daily Telegraph*, "New banning orders for extremist groups" would be introduced "that fall short of the legal threshold for terrorist proscription, as well as for new civil powers to target extremists who seek to radicalise others. People who insist on travelling to fight in Syria and Iraq will be investigated by the police and security services. For those who have dual nationality, I have the power to strip them of their citizenship and exclude them from the country."

May warned, "[A]ny British national who returns from Syria and Iraq faces prosecution here for participating in terrorist activities abroad."

Just three years later, after travelling freely to Libya and Syria, Abedi was allowed back into the country, no questions asked, to carry out his bombing.

The newspaper and broadcast media have joined in this cover-up by faithfully repeating the GMP's claims. Yet a *Guardian* article published Tuesday morning stated, "On the day after the Manchester attack, investigators had concluded that Abedi was no lone actor. They believed he required considerable support in carrying out the attack. ..."

It continued, "The first clue was the device itself. Forensic scientific analysts told how it had been crafted with cunning. The shrapnel was evenly spaced to inflict maximum damage and it had a back-up detonation system. ... The second clue emerged less than 24 hours after the attack. Intelligence from the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre at MI5 headquarters confirmed there was a risk of a follow-up attack."

The article included a statement from the brother of Zuhair Nassrat, one of those arrested in the police investigation. Speaking about Abedi, whose university tutor has confirmed had severe learning difficulties, Nassrat said, "The Libyan community in Manchester don't believe in any way that he was by himself—he had not got the capability. He [Abedi] does not have it in him, he is not smart enough."



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