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NOTE FOR FILE

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Date: 31 October 2002

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**SUBJECT:** Meeting with Abu ANAS

**Summary**

Unannounced visit to ANAS at home by [REDACTED] and MPSB D/Sgt [REDACTED] ANAS welcoming and apparently friendly; denies any involvement in extremist activity; concerned about being arrested or turned back when leaving for Gambia, or being excluded once outside the country; asks about progress of application for British nationality and possibility of a return of personal items seized during police raid last year; shows no interest in resettlement package in return for co-operation.

**Detail**

2. On 31 October at 0845hrs, I and [REDACTED] of MPSB called at ANAS's home at 15 Tintern Ave, NW9. This is a reasonably well maintained 1930's semi, probably worth around £300,000 if the local estate agents window is anything to go by. Parked on the drive at the front was a small silver coloured car, VRN ?M439 ELB displaying a green L plate.

3. ANAS opened the door himself; in Arabic, I introduced us as Michael from the British Government and Andy from Scotland Yard and asked if we could have a brief chat with him. He immediately invited us in and took us into the living room at the back of the house; his wife, dressed in traditional full length hijab but with the face uncovered, and three young children were already in there so we waited in the corridor in case either ANAS or his wife were sensitive about us being in the same room as her, but they beckoned us in and then said that they were in the middle of checking ANAS's blood sugar level - for the last five days he had been suffering health problems and had just been diagnosed by the doctor as having diabetes. Eventually the wife shooed the children out but hovered around the door to listen to the conversation. The meeting was conducted in Arabic throughout.

4. ANAS asked me to repeat who we were and I said that I was from the Security Service - Scotland Yard ? he queried; so I explained that Andy was from Scotland Yard and that I was from 'the mukhaberaaf', although it was important for him to understand that we were not like the mukhaberaaf in most Arab countries. He immediately agreed with this comment and said that he had previously been interviewed by Alan Macdonald [REDACTED]

5. I then said that, with the arrest of Abu QATADA, we would be able to focus more

[REDACTED]



attention on other members and groups in the extremist community. ANAS immediately said that he was not a member of such a group, although he conceded in response to my naming their names that he was a friend of Abu QATADA and Abu RASMEE. He explained that as a youth he had led a dissolute life but had then rediscovered Islam and had been to Afghanistan. It was there that he had met QATADA whom he considered to be a friend; there was no way that he would allow QATADA's family to go without food or assistance during QATADA's detention.

5. I told him that in addition to increased focus on UK based extremists, we were investigating reports of terrorists based abroad who were keen to mount attacks in the UK, possibly using biological or chemical weapons. He agreed that such people were correctly labelled terrorist. I told him that the use of such techniques would pose a threat to all residents of the UK, as biological weapons would not differentiate between Muslims and Christians, and that as the father of young children he should be concerned by such a possibility. Both ANAS and his wife who was standing by the door agreed with this. She then left to look after the children.

6. I continued saying that in the event of a successful attack in the UK, it was not possible to predict the government's reaction. It was quite possible that he could find himself swept up in a further round of detentions. He did however have a choice - he could continue with his current life or ...; at this point he interrupted to ask what I meant by his current life. I told him that I meant his association with members of the extremist community and also his involvement in criminal activity, like his recent arrest and caution for petty shoplifting in an Asda supermarket. He laughed and shook my hand saying that I knew everything. He went on to say that he was not involved in any extremist activity; he did not believe that people like RASMEE could be considered a threat to the UK and, indeed, there was a fatwa saying that Muslims should respect UK laws. I pointed out that there was also a fatwa which declared that Muslims in the UK could consider themselves to be in a state of jihad and could therefore take 'ghaneema' (spoils of war) from non Muslims. He again laughed but did not deny this.

7. He then went on to say that he was not a well man; in addition to diabetes he had trouble with his back due to beatings at the hands of the Jordanian authorities. He was only interested in providing for his children the opportunities that he himself had not had as a child. He assumed we knew about his business venture in Gambia with WAHAAB, which he hoped would prove profitable. He said he would be travelling the next day and asked whether he would be arrested or turned back at the airport. I said that if he had a valid travel document he should be able to travel without a problem. He then asked whether he would be able to get back into the country. I repeated the travel document point.

8. I returned to the choice which he could make; he could either continue as at present, with the risks that entailed, or he could start a new life with a new identity, new nationality, money to set himself up in business and to provide for his family, and an opportunity to move to a Muslim country where his children could be brought up away from the bad influences in Western society. He asked if I wanted him to leave the UK. I told him that that would be for him to decide but that I could help him if that was what he wanted. He said that his children were being brought up as British nationals, going to normal English schools; his life was now in UK. He then asked about progress on his application for UK nationality as he had completed the required years of residency. I told him that this was a decision for the Home Secretary; he queried whether the Home Secretary decided all cases or only his; I told him that the Home Secretary decided all



[REDACTED]

cases. I added that I was in a position to make recommendations to the Home Secretary but that the final decision rested with the Home Secretary. ANAS asked if the Home Secretary intended to grant his application; I said I did not know but that, if we were asked for a view, we would be obliged to report ANAS' previous involvement in Afghanistan and his association with persons currently detained for extremist activities.

9. I again returned to the choice he had; if he chose to help us by providing details of all his activities and contacts, we would assist him to create a new life for himself and his family. I told him that I did not expect him to give me an immediate answer, it was an important decision and he needed to think carefully about it.

10. ANAS then asked when he could expect the return of the items seized during a police raid on his house some time ago; he explained that his computer, videos, address books had all been taken and not returned. He was particularly keen to get family photographs back. I told him that I would try to find out what was happening and would let him know.

11. ANAS' wife had come back in by this time and asked whether we wanted some tea; we declined saying that we were ready to leave. Abu ANAS saw us to the door and waved us off cheerfully.

#### Comment

12. ANAS appeared cheerful and relaxed throughout, although always ready to learn what we knew about him. He maintained that he was not involved in any extremist activity and was focused on his family's welfare. He did not give any hint of willingness to co-operate with us. His desire for British nationality and the security that this would provide may be worth exploring further with him, should he return to the UK. [REDACTED] will make enquiries of SO 13 to establish the status of ANAS' possessions. It may be possible to arrange for the return of some of these items, even in ANAS's absence, to generate some goodwill.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]