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## Radicalism Among Muslim Professionals Worries Many

By **HASSAN M. FATTAH**

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates, July 13 — They were some of the best and brightest in the Muslim world who toiled for years to master their knowledge. Now they stand accused of seeking mass murder.

For weeks, commentators and analysts in the Muslim world have been grappling with the implications that a Muslim doctor and engineer, at the pinnacle of their society, may have been behind the failed car bombings in London and Glasgow last month.

The question being asked in many educated and official circles is this: How could such acts be committed by people who have supposedly dedicated their lives to scientific rationalism and to helping others?

The answer, some scientists and analysts say, may lie in the way that a growing movement of fervent Muslims use science as reinforcement of religious belief, rather than as a means for questioning and exploring the foundations of the natural world.

"It's not that surprising for doctors and engineers to be involved in political Islamist movements — both of the violent and the more moderate sort," said Taner Edis, associate professor of physics at Truman State University in Missouri and author of "An Illusion of Harmony: Science and Religion in Islam."

He and other researchers who study Islamist movements say that the involvement of doctors and engineers in terrorism is not shocking. Muslim scientists are among the most politicized groups in the region, and the Muslim approach to the scientific method, in the most extreme cases, can squelch the freewheeling curiosity at the heart of scientific discovery.

"Fundamentalist-type attitudes are relatively common among people in applied science in the Muslim world," Mr. Edis said. "The conception has been that modern science is developed outside, and we need to bring it into our societies without it corrupting our culture."

In other words, science is a tool for furthering an ideology rather than a means of examining core beliefs.

For Islamists like Zaghloul el-Naggar in Cairo, the host of a popular television show about the Koran's scientific teachings, all science can be discovered within the Muslim holy text, from the cause of earthquakes to genetics. Such direct links between science and religion ultimately hamper the scientific method by making some questions taboo, analysts say.

"You have the emergence of a new kind of religious figure who is not a cleric, and all of his authority is as a scientist," said Todd Pitock, who profiles Mr. Naggar in an article about Islam and science in the July issue of the magazine Discover. "The whole purpose of science for some Islamists is using it to reinforce faith; it really has nothing to do with science itself."

Medicine and engineering have long been the most prestigious professions in the Arab world, and many of its most illustrious writers, thinkers and politicians have risen through engineering and medical schools.

Many notable militant leaders, too, have graduated from those schools. They include George Habash, a doctor and founder of the leftist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine; the late Fathi Shikaki, a doctor and founder of Palestinian Islamic Jihad; Mahmoud Zahar and several other leaders of Hamas who trained as doctors; and Osama bin Laden, an engineer, and Ayman al-Zawahri, his No. 2 in Al Qaeda, once a practicing doctor.

Nor are such militants limited to the Arab world. Che Guevara is among the radical doctors and scientists who rose in leftist and extremist movements around the world in recent decades.

Extremists are of course a tiny minority of the thousands of graduates that come out of the region's science programs every year. But increasingly, analysts and researchers say, Middle Eastern engineering and medical schools have become hotbeds of Islamist activity. Many Arab doctors, in turn, have led the charge against Israeli and Western actions in the region, building on their time-honored roles as community leaders.

"The doctor at one time or another presented a figure who could really decide life and death," said Sari Nasser, professor of sociology at the University of Jordan. "Now doctors have this tradition that they have to lead people and not to let them down. This is one reason why doctors as such are leading the fight against the West."

At the University of Jordan medical school, for example, where Mohammed Asha, a suspect in the Glasgow bombing, was a star student, politics features prominently in student life. Medical students lead demonstrations, fund-raising drives, boycotts against Israel and the United States, and other causes. For some professors at the school, the surprise was that Mr. Asha, who seemed largely apolitical during his time at school, could be connected to Islamic militancy. "I might have accepted this from some of the other students," said one of his professors, speaking on condition of anonymity. "But he was not an activist like the others."

Hassan Abu Hanieh, a Jordanian researcher with contacts with militant Islamist movements in the region, says they have their own scientific perspective in which there are simple questions and clear answers. "They have an equation which is one plus one equals two — Israel is the enemy and its allies are apostates, for example," he says.

"If these are the symptoms then this is the disease," he adds. "They diagnose the West and regard it as their enemy. Their mind-set is hard and their knowledge is based on facts, with one opinion and no room for exchanging views."

It was perhaps inevitable, he and others say, that Al Qaeda would seek to recruit Muslim doctors and scientists for tactical reasons as well. Mr. Zawahri is reported to have sought recruits who could blend in the West.

"Wherever you go in the Muslim world, those who are most violent and most extremist are the ones who have the most scientific tendencies," Mr. Abu Hanieh said. "One could even argue that sciences might contribute to increasing one's radical thinking if the radical finds justifications to his philosophy through science."

For many Muslim doctors in the West, the implications add yet another challenge.

"Ninety-nine percent of us don't go beyond political activism; what is the difference between the 99 percent and the 1 percent who go to violent extremism?" said Hasan Shanawani, a senior member of the Association of Muslim Health Professionals, in Downers Grove, Ill., who said that doctors are normally on the lookout for foul play in medicine and will now have to be just as vigilant about spotting extremism. "How do we find that needle in a haystack? That's what's really bothering us."

#### Bin Laden Bounty Is Increased

WASHINGTON, July 13 (Reuters) — The Senate voted Friday to double the bounty on Osama bin Laden, to \$50 million, and to require President Bush to refocus on capturing him.

By a vote of 87 to 1, the Senate set the higher reward for Mr. bin Laden's killing or capture, or information leading to his capture.

*Suha Maayeh contributed reporting from Amman, Jordan, and Nada Bakri from Beirut, Lebanon.*

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