

THE SINISTER AMERICAN GULEN MOVEMENT

Written by Administrator

Saturday, 24 December 2016 12:25 -

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By: H. L. Smith, Istanbul

A British MP accepted tens of thousands of pounds to write a report for an arm of the group accused of orchestrating the failed Turkish military coup, before promoting its agenda during a Commons debate.

Sir Edward Garnier, the Conservative MP for Harborough, was paid £115,994 in February last year to co-research and author a document titled *A Report on the Rule of Law and Respect for Human Rights in Turkey*.

The research was commissioned by the Journalists and Writers Foundation (JWF), an Istanbul-based group set up in 1994 after a meeting between Fethullah Gulen, an Islamist cleric who lives in self-imposed exile in the US, and a group of journalists. Mr Gulen remains its honorary president.

Since the 1970s Mr Gulen has established a web of influence in Turkey through schools, media outlets and businesses, urging his followers to pursue high-flying careers in the police, judiciary, military and other facets of the Turkish state. It is a Gulen-linked caucus within the Turkish armed forces that is accused of organising the failed coup on July 15.

“The JWF is the primary public face of the Gulen movement,” said Joshua Hendrick, of Loyola University Maryland and author of a book on Mr Gulen. “They have a very strategic and long history, in Turkey and the world, of peddling favour from influential people, including elected officials, journalists and other leaders.”

Sir Edward’s report, which focused almost exclusively on actions by the Turkish government against Gulen-linked organisations, was released in late September and promoted by the London-based public relations company Hawthorn, which offers “reputation management”.

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Copies were sent to Philip Hammond, who was foreign secretary at the time, and David Cameron.

In March Sir Edward joined in a Commons debate on the EU-Turkey migrant deal, raising “the serial and appalling human rights and rule of law abuses by the Turkish government” and urging a reversal of the UK’s support for Turkey’s accession to the EU. “While these abuses continue, there should be no question of opening any chapters at all, even though we need Turkey as a member of Nato and its agreement to help with the migration problem,” Sir Edward concluded.

Although he mentioned his contribution to the report in his Commons statement, he did not reveal that it had been commissioned by a group linked to the Gulen movement, which by that time had been listed as a banned terrorist organisation in Turkey.

Lord Woolf was also contracted to research and write the report. He does not specify in his declaration of interests how much he was paid, nor that he was contracted by the Gulenists, only that he was hired to “consider possible contraventions of human rights by or on behalf of the Turkish government, which contravene the rights of a Turkish institution and citizens and in the event of there being a contravention, advising on the possible remedies available to those adversely affected”.

Lord Woolf, who signed an early day motion pledging support for Turkey’s accession to the EU in 2005, does not appear to have raised the report or its contents in the Lords.

Mr Gulen was once an ally of President Erdogan and helped his AK party to electoral success in the early years of its rule. Their relationship began to crumble, however, when Mr Erdogan opened a dialogue with the banned Kurdish militia the PKK in 2007, which Mr Gulen fiercely opposed.

In December the Gulen movement was designated a terrorist organisation by the Turkish government. Hours before the coup attempt, the Turkish government announced that more than 2,000 military personnel were to be removed from their positions because of suspected Gulenist links.

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Sir Edward insists that he and the other authors of the report “are not supporters or adherents of Hizmet [the Gulen movement] but wrote the report as independent English lawyers based on the evidence we had reviewed.”

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