



# Blackburn with Darwen Stop the War

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**DATED 29 MARCH 2006, 2330 hrs**

An historic decision has been made today. The committee at Masjid Al Hidayah Mosque on Millham Street, Blackburn and the surrounding community, in conjunction with Muslim scholars from Blackburn and Preston, have taken the decision to withdraw their invitation to Condoleezza Rice to visit their mosque as part of her forthcoming tour of the region on Saturday 1st April.

It has been presented that local people would be in support of Jack Straw's invitation to the US Secretary of State. This decision is evidence that the bulk of the community, Muslim and otherwise, are strongly against the visit. Blackburn with Darwen Stop the War salute the committee of the mosque and extend our thanks to the community and scholars involved for their united efforts in arriving at this decision.

Equally, we salute the parents whose children attend Pleckgate High School, Blackburn, who have been meeting with the school authorities during the course of this week to try and convince them to follow Millham Street mosque's lead, and withdraw the invitation to Condoleezza Rice, due to visit Friday morning. In solidarity with these actions, Blackburn with Darwen Stop the War have worked with the community to arrange a demonstration outside Pleckgate High School to coincide with Rice's visit on Friday morning.

Subsequently, we will be organising a march in Blackburn, with the support of the community, from Bangor Street Community Centre (assembling 9am), which will make its way to the National Rally outside Blackburn Town Hall at 10.30am. This rally, and the support that it is now attracting, rising by the hour, will demonstrate to Condoleezza Rice and Jack Straw that there is no acceptance for the policies of the British and US governments in relation to the war against Iraq, and support of torture and other human rights abuses at Guantanamo Bay and throughout the world.

We are calling on all those who oppose the kind of politics associated with Rice and Straw to join the rally on Saturday morning.

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