A DEGREE OF INFLUENCE

The funding of strategically important subjects in UK universities

The Centre for Social Cohesion

Robin Simcox

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2009

THE CENTRE FOR SOCIAL COHESION

The Centre for Social Cohesion
Clutha House
10 Storey's Gate
London SW1P 3AY
Tel: +44 (0)20 7222 8909
Fax: +44 (0)5 601527476
Email: mail@socialcohesion.co.uk
www.socialcohesion.co.uk

The Centre for Social Cohesion
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Registered in England and Wales: No. 06609071

ISBN 978-0-9560013-3-7

Printed in Great Britain through
SS Media Limited
Wallington, Surrey

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PART TWO

EAST ASIA & EASTERN EUROPEAN STUDIES

The image on the front cover of this report is titled 'Al-Siraat', by the Saudi artist Abdulnasser Gharem. It was removed from an exhibition that took place at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) after they decided it was offensive to Islam and Muslims.

Preface

Donors and foreign governments from around the world have in recent years taken a huge interest in funding UK university studies. *A Degree of Influence: The funding of strategically important subjects in UK universities* highlights the foreign money that is being injected into those subjects that are designated of 'strategic importance' by the UK government, and the ways in which the cash is being converted into influence at universities on a range of levels.

The largest donations are those funding Islamic and Arabic studies in the UK. At a time when Islam is receiving an unprecedented amount of public attention, it is more vital than ever before for universities to engage in free and open research, all the while retaining their reputation as impartial, objective centres of academic excellence. Yet the evidence uncovered by this report suggests that universities are placing their objectivity at risk by accepting huge financial donations without putting in place safeguards to ensure that they retain their neutrality.

In addition, the apparent inability of universities to implement any quality control over the bodies and individuals from whom they are receiving cash means that some of the finest higher education institutes in the UK are taking money from unelected, despotic governments. Many of these regimes commit gross human rights violations; yet the universities appear to have few qualms about accepting donations from such sources.

British universities have a reputation for being among the best in the world, yet they are now effectively up for sale to the highest bidder. *A Degree of Influence* calls on government, universities and students to unite in reversing this trend.

Douglas Murray
Director
The Centre for Social Cohesion

Methodology

The categories of studies included in this report are as follows:

- Islamic Studies and area studies as they relate to the Islamic world[1]
- East Asia (with special reference to China and Japan)
- Eastern Europe (including Russia)

This report catalogues the sources of foreign funding that British universities have announced receiving to help them run courses that teach strategically important subjects. Also included are instances of foreign money being given to fund events or courses that, while largely apolitical, could affect the universities' presentation of these strategically important subjects. Such examples include the donation by foreign governments of language books to universities. Cases are also considered in which funding was ostensibly given to apolitical projects, such as art galleries, but where it was later revealed to have had consequences for teaching and admissions policies.

This report excludes donations to business studies, medical research, science, and other subjects not primarily dedicated to strategic issues. Money given towards auditoriums and lecture theatres is also excluded, unless the university's agreement with funders could also risk affecting teaching, admissions policy or other relevant areas. This has sometimes been the case when money given towards the construction of buildings is tied in with donations that affect areas relevant to this report, such as admissions policy. When this is the case, the whole donation is included.

One of the aims of the report is to investigate how many of the donations from foreign funders to strategically important UK subjects are actually declared. Therefore all figures that are included here are openly available on public record; in reality, they are likely to be a tiny fraction of the total that has been donated over the years. Therefore, the author makes no claim that the financial figures included in this report are in any way an exhaustive total of every donation received. For example, since 2004, the London School of Economics (LSE) has received 128 foreign donations in subjects that are designated 'strategically important' by the government.[2] Of these donations, only five appear to be available on the public record.

1 Although the London School of Economics (LSE) has included Turkish Studies as part of its European Institute, given that Turkey is a nation with a majority Muslim population and strong ties to Islam, and is currently governed by a party with roots in political Islam, Turkish donations have also been included for consideration

2 When looking at *The LSE Annual Fund: Report to Donors* from 2004-05 through to 2007-08. http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/LSEAnnualFund/pdf/Donor%20Report%20FINAL.pdf

Executive Summary

A Degree of Influence examines the level of foreign funding in British higher education. The report catalogues the financial donations from foreign governments to university subjects that are currently designated by the British government as 'strategically important'. Focusing on financial contributions that are available on the public record to strategically important area and language studies that pertain to the study of the Middle East (including Islamic Studies), East Asia (including China and Japan), and the former Soviet Union, the report examines whether these donations have had a significant effect on higher education in the UK.

The report finds that, in all the strategic subjects studied, the bulk of the cash that is on public record as being injected into UK higher education comes from Arabic and Islamic sources. In addition, donations from the Chinese government, while not significant financially, have ensured a level of influence that is disproportionate to the money injected. Donations from Japanese and Russian governments and businesses are largely inconsequential, in terms of both money donated and influence acquired.

A Degree of Influence has found evidence of the following:

- **Censorship of discussion of certain aspects of Islam in UK universities** – UK university staff members have sometimes appeared reluctant to criticise primary donors publicly. For example, an academic chairing a public event on terrorist networks in Europe at St Antony's College, Oxford, stifled discussion on the sources of funding for these networks after a fellow academic raised the subject. The Brunei Gallery at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) was also forced to take down a photograph taken by a Saudi artist at their gallery after it was deemed to be insulting to Muslims and Islam (the offending image is the front cover of this report).

- **The running of universities has been altered** – The way in which universities are being run has been altered to match the wishes of donors. For example, the management committee at Islamic Studies centres at the universities of Cambridge and Edinburgh contain appointees picked by Prince Alwaleed, their principal donors. Furthermore, a variety of universities have altered their fields of study in line with the interests and wishes of donors.

- **A lack of academic objectivity** – Specialist teaching and research centres have been set up with a specific political agenda. For example, the Al-Maktoum Institute, an independent institution which has its degrees validated by the University of Aberdeen, was established in order to disseminate the 'vision' of its primary donor and namesake. Furthermore,

when British universities establish Confucius Institutes, an arm of the Chinese government, the curriculum and teaching standard is decided by the regime, with the university required to accept 'operational guidance' from this regime.

- **Universities are being used as diplomatic arms of governments abroad** – Confucius Institutes are openly political organisations which serve as diplomatic arms of the Chinese government abroad. Donations to the LSE from the Turkish government were also openly admitted to be in part political – in order to help their accession to the EU.

- **Financial reliance on donors from undemocratic governments** – The way funding has been structured means that often universities cannot run courses or even departments unless they continue to receive donations from abroad. This is especially true of the Confucius Institutes, and means that some universities are almost entirely reliant on the Chinese government to sustain funding for these institutes.

- **A subjective platform for donors** – Undemocratic governments with poor human rights records are given a platform at UK universities to highlight the advantages of their system of government. This often coincides with substantial donations. For example, following a donation from Saudi Arabia, the King Abdul Aziz ibn Saud Lectures, 'named in honour of the founder of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia', were established at Oxford. Members of the Saudi government regularly speak at and attend these lectures.

- **A lack of transparency in the donations** – Foreign donors are allowed to give large amounts of money anonymously, and universities are not obliged to publish their agreements. This practice is prevalent throughout UK universities.

- **A lack of accountability** – Academics have consistently raised concerns about the impact that donations from abroad could have on the running of universities. They have often cited the undemocratic nature of some of the donor regimes, as well as the impact that the scale of the donations could have on the independence of the university. However these protests appear to have had minimal impact.

- **The UK's finest universities are taking money from some of the world's worst dictatorships** – Iran, Saudi Arabia and China, all nations with appalling human rights records, are significant contributors to venerable UK institutions.

The report discovers that universities have insufficient safeguards in place to prevent donations affecting the way universities are run. There is clear evidence that, at some universities, the choice of teaching materials, the subject areas, the degrees offered, the recruitment of staff, the composition of advisory boards

and even the selection of students are now subject to influence from donors. These problems are heightened by the undemocratic nature of certain donor governments.

It is of great significance that the figures cited in this report are only those that have been made publicly available. These figures, large though they may be, are only indicative of a wider phenomenon.

Introduction

There are substantial concerns over the way in which UK universities are currently funded. This report investigates these concerns with specific regard to subjects designated by the government as 'strategically important'. It examines the significant amount of money that is donated to these subjects by undemocratic countries with poor human rights records. The report questions whether those universities that accept donations from these sources bestow unwarranted legitimacy on despotic governments, and it examines the extent to which these donations might have an effect on university teaching and research.

It should be stressed that foreign funding of UK universities is not in itself a negative thing. Funding occurs in a wide variety of departments, from an equally wide variety of nations across the world and from a range of sources, including large businesses, anonymous benefactors, and foreign governments. Such investments provide opportunities for UK students that may not otherwise have been available to them. The report also identifies cases in which universities have received money from foreign sources to fund strategically important subjects but have taken steps to ensure that this does not have an adverse effect on the university's teaching, research and activities.

The report's findings raise serious doubts about the desirability of British universities accepting large amounts of funding from dictatorial governments, as well as about the possible influence these donations allow those governments to have on UK academia.

There are several main areas of concern that have been identified:

- **Censorship of issues pertaining to Islam** – There are examples of some aspects of issues dealing with Islam that universities have chosen not to discuss. Members of university staff have publicly stifled discussion on how terrorist networks are funded, and there has been an occasion where a university has been forced to censor a Saudi artist's work for fear of offending Muslims.

- **Attempts to influence the teaching of strategically important subjects** – Several undemocratic foreign states seek to influence the teaching of subjects designated as 'strategically important' by giving money to universities. This has serious consequences for academia and for the UK as a whole. The most alarming cases examined in this report show university management committees having their personnel selected and appointed by the donors.

- **Human rights** – Universities are accepting money from un-democratic states with poor human rights records. This lends respectability to these regimes, and at the same time raises moral and ethical questions for universities that accept such money.

- **Propaganda/PR** – Through donations, foreign states and individuals are using British universities as vehicles for international diplomacy and are attempting to cast their nation in a favourable light. The Confucius Institutes- present at a number of UK universities- have a curriculum set by the Chinese government and were established by that government explicitly to promote Chinese soft power.

- **Lack of transparency** – These problems are exacerbated by a lack of transparency. Foreign donors are legally allowed to give large amounts of money anonymously, and universities are not obliged to publish their agreements with foreign states.

There are clearly areas here in which the government, universities and students themselves can act to improve the current situation. This report identifies those areas in which they can do so; and aims to open the debate about the extent to which foreign funding of subjects from undemocratic sources is desirable for UK academia.

Context

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) was set up in 1992 by the UK government to serve 'within a policy framework set by the Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills, but… not [as] part of the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills – DIUS', meaning that it is free from direct political control.[3] In 2004, the government requested that HEFCE investigate whether there were any higher education subjects that could be deemed 'strategically important'. Following its investigation, in 2005 HEFCE announced that it would be investing £350 million of government money in supporting subjects taught in UK universities that it had designated 'strategically important and vulnerable'. HEFCE's definition of what constitutes strategic importance refers to 'the need for some kind of assistive intervention to facilitate the subject's provision. Where such intervention is necessary in order to address a mismatch between supply and demand, the subject is designated as both strategically important and vulnerable.'[4]

Subjects deemed to be strategically important include science, mathematics, modern languages and certain area studies.[5] This report studies the foreign donations made to fund the teaching and research of several of these studies: specifically, area and language studies that involve the Middle East (including Islamic Studies, surprisingly not designated as strategically important by the government until 2007), East Asia and the former Soviet Union.

The government has attempted to better fund some of these areas. For example, the Centre for the Advanced Study of the Arab World, a consortium of the Universities of Edinburgh, Manchester and Durham, was established by HEFCE in 2006 to 'build crucial expertise on the Arab World based on a knowledge of the Arabic language coupled with advanced research methods skills in the social and political sciences, arts and humanities'.[6] Significantly, however, many universities that offer courses in studies that the government has designated strategically important now receive substantial donations from foreign governments and individuals that originate from the areas in question.

3 'What HEFCE does', Higher Education Funding Council for England, available at www.hefce.ac.uk/AboutUs/history/

4 'Strategically Important Subjects', Higher Education Funding Council for England, available at www.hefce.ac.uk/AboutUs/sis/

5 *ibid*.

6 'About us', Centre for the Advanced Study of the Arab World, available at www.casaw.ed.ac.uk/index.php/about/open

Private funding of UK universities

The private funding of UK universities is on the increase, in terms of both the amount of money being donated and the number of institutions receiving funds. For example, a Ross Group survey discovered that 'levels of giving are now over £200 million a year with more than 50 HEIs (Higher Education Institutes) active in fundraising', compared to just £100 million in 2001–2002, and 20 HEIs.[7] Furthermore, government policy is acting to encourage universities to seek out further donations. On 3 April 2008, HEFCE announced its £200 million 'matched funding scheme for voluntary giving' initiative, in which the government matches any donations raised by private fundraising. Depending on how experienced a university is at fundraising, they are eligible to enter the scheme in one of three tiers.[8] Those HEIs in tier one see any private donations they attract matched pound for pound by the government; those in tier two see the government donate a pound for every two pounds they raise privately; and the third tier sees the government give a pound for every three pounds they raise privately. HEIs are able to nominate the tier in which they would like to be included, although Oxford and Cambridge are automatically designated as 'tier three' universities.

It is a condition of entering this scheme that all donations must be declared and submitted to the Ross-Case Survey group of the National Centre for Social Research. However, universities are not required to declare either the names of the individuals, trusts or foundations that provide funding, or the countries in which they are based. Therefore, individuals making large financial donations to UK universities are able to remain entirely anonymous.

Private funding comes from a range of sources: the business world, private donations or from foreign governments. One of the primary issues raised in this report is that nations with a reputation for human rights abuse are making huge contributions to UK universities and, amongst the variety of benefits they receive in return, have on occasion been allowed representatives on university management committees. However, this is not unique to foreign governments. For example, the British Petroleum Institute Fund at Cambridge is 'under the control of a Board of Managers'[9] who consist of a variety of academics but also 'three persons appointed by the General Board, two of whom shall be appointed on the nomination of British Petroleum plc'.[10] At the same university, a donation from the BBV Foundation to establish a visiting fellowship or professorship was conditional upon three persons being appointed to the Board of Managers

7 'Boost for university fundraising as Denham announces details of £200million match funding scheme', Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (National), 3 April 2008, available at http://nds.coi.gov.uk/environment/fullDetail.asp?ReleaseID=370547&NewsAreaID=2&NavigatedFromDepartment=False

8 'Matched funding scheme for voluntary giving 2008–2011', Higher Education Funding Council for England, 12 May 2008, available at www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/circlets/2008/cl11_08/

9 'Chapter XII: Trust Emoluments', *University of Cambridge Statutes and Ordinances 2008*, p.725, available at www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/so/pdfs/cso_4_ordinance12.715_940.pdf

10 *ibid*.

'on the recommendation of the BBV Foundation'.[11] These examples show that private donations can cause potential conflict of interest– and also prove that donors acquiring influence for cash is not exclusively the preserve of foreign nationals or governments.

The impact of the HEFCE initiatives

This report therefore considers the impact the two recent HEFCE initiatives are having on higher education in the UK. On the one hand, universities are being encouraged to improve teaching on subjects studying specific geographical regions and, on the other, to seek funding from private donors. The result is an increase in private donations from individuals, foundations and governments based, or with an interest, in the specified strategically important areas. Although universities are not always especially forthcoming as to the sources of their funding – an area of concern examined throughout this report – it is known that when comparing the 2004/2005 academic year (HEFCE having declared Middle Eastern and East Asian area to be 'strategically important' in 2004) to that of 2006/2007, the number of donations to the LSE from Middle Eastern countries has almost trebled, while the number of donations from Japan has increased by 51 per cent.[12] Now that universities are actively being encouraged to ask for more donations from private funders via the 'matched-funding', the amount of money being donated by individuals, foundations and trusts based in foreign countries is likely to increase even more significantly.

11 *ibid.*, p. 724

12 *The LSE Annual Fund: Report to Donors 2004-2005*, p.11, the London School of Economics and Political Science Office of Development and Alumni Relations, available at www.lse.ac.uk/collections/LSEAnnualFund/pdf/Donor%20Report%20FINAL.pdf; *The LSE Annual Fund: Report to Donors 2006-2007*, p.16, The London School of Economics and Political Science Office of Development and Alumni Relations, available at www.lse.edu/collections/LSEAnnualFund/pdf/LSE%20Donor%20Report.pdf

PART ONE

ARABIC & ISLAMIC STUDIES

Sources of Arabic and Islamic funding available on public record

	Size of donation	*Donor*	*Stated purpose*	*Year*
Middle East Centre, University of Oxford	Unknown	Iranian government	Creating a Visiting Iranian Fellowship	1970s
Middle East Centre, University of Oxford	Unknown	UAE government	Creation of an Arabic language instructorship	1970s
Middle East Centre, University of Oxford	'small benefaction'	Royal family of Jordan	Promote exchange between Oxford and Jordanian Universities	1980s
Middle East Centre, University of Oxford	£1 million	King Abdul Aziz Foundation	Running of the Middle East Centre archive	2001

Middle East Centre, University of Oxford	£1.5 million	Moroccan British Society	To establish a fellowship in Moroccan and Mediterranean Studies	2004
Middle East Centre, University of Oxford	'major benefaction'	Anonymous	Meet the cost of commissioning architect to design a new building	2006
Middle East Centre, University of Oxford	£250,000	Anonymous	Establish a scholarship on doctoral study in the Middle East	2007
Middle East Centre, University of Oxford	£280,000	Alumni contributions	General endowment and to create new studentship	2007
Middle East Centre, University of Oxford	£35,000	Centre for Lebanese Studies	Establish a Visiting Fellowship in Lebanese Studies	2007

Oriental Institute, University of Oxford	£1.5 million	The Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahayan Charitable and Humanitarian Foundation of the United Arab Emirates	To establish a new lectureship in Islamic Studies	2005
Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford	£2m	Saudi Prince Sultan Salman bin Abdul Aziz al-Saud	Construction of the museum	2005
University of Oxford	£800,000	Fereidoun Soudavar	To establish a Persian Studies professorship	1986
University of Oxford	Unknown	Qatar Foundation	Establish the Emir Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa al-Thani Chair in Contemporary Islamic Studies	2008
Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies	£150,000	The Bin Laden family	Bin Laden Visiting Fellowship	1989

Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies	Unknown	Prince Bandar bin Sultan bin Abdul Aziz	Construction of the Centre	1990
Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies	Unknown	Sultan of Brunei	To fund an international programme for the study of Islamic civilisation	1992
Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies	£20 million	King Fahd of Saudi Arabia	Construction of new buildings	1997
Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies	£2.5 million	Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences	Kuwait International Programme for the Study of the Islamic World	1997
Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies	£1.25 million* * Currency conversion as of 15 October 2008 via xe.com	Yayasan Albukhary, a Malaysian organisation	To 'promote inter-faith understanding'	Prior to 2000

Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies	£1.75 million	Yayasan Albukhary, via the Malaysian government	To help fund the OCIS auditorium	2003
Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies	£2 million	The Malaysian government	Towards carvings for the OCIS auditorium	2006
Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies	'estimated £75 million'	Twelve Islamic countries, including Malaysia, Turkey, Yemen, UAE and Brunei	Materials for construction of buildings	Ongoing
University of Cambridge	£1.2m	The Zayed bin Sultan Nahayan Charitable and Humanitarian Foundation of the United Arab Emirates	Appointment of a full-time lecturer specialising in Islam	1996
University of Cambridge	'approximately' £1 million	The trustees of the estate of Fereidoun Soudavar and his wife	Establishing the Ali Reza And Mohamed Soudavar Fund For Persian Studies and the Ali Reza And Mohamed Soudavar Lectureship Fund	2001

Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Cambridge	£2.8 million	Sultan Qaboos bin Said, the Sultan of Oman	To establish a Professorship of Modern Arabic, known as the 'His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said Professorship of Modern Arabic'	2005
Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Cambridge	£300,000	Sultan Qaboos bin Said, the Sultan of Oman	To support a Fellowship	2005
University of Cambridge	Unknown	The Iranian government	Funding the E.G. Browne Memorial Research Studentship	Ongoing
University of Cambridge	£8 million	Prince Alwaleed bin Talal of Saudi Arabia	To fully finance the Centre	2008
University of Edinburgh	Unknown	Baghdad University	To finance 'The Iraq Chair of Arabic and Islamic Studies', Permanent Professorial Post	1982

University of Edinburgh	£8 million	Prince Alwaleed bin Talal of Saudi Arabia	To fully finance the Centre	2008
School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)	£1 million	King Fahd of Saudi Arabia	To establish a Chair in Islamic Studies	1995
SOAS	£35,000 or £180,000 (disputed)	The Iranian government and the Islamic Centre of England	Iranian fellowships	1999
London Middle East Institute, SOAS	£1.25 million	Sheikh Mohamed bin Issa Al Jaber	To help finance the establishment of the institute	2001
SOAS	Unknown	Mehraban Zartoshty	Zoroastrian Studies	2000

SOAS	£200,000	Mehraban Zartoshty	Zoroastrian Studies	2003/2004
Centre for Middle Eastern Studies, the London School of Economics (LSE)	£9m	Emirates Foundation	To establish and construct the Centre	2006
LSE	£5.7m	Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences	To establish the 'Kuwait Programme on Development, Governance and Globalisation in the Gulf States'	2007
LSE	£2.5m	The Turkish government and several Turkish companies	To establish a chair in Contemporary Turkish Studies	2008
St Andrews	'more than £100,000'	Sadegh Kharazi, former Iranian ambassador to France	Over 12,000 books to establish the Institute of Iranian Studies	2006

University of Durham	£2.25 million	Sultan bin Mohammed al-Qasimi, ruler of Sharjah	To construct a new building for the Institute of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies (IMEIS)	1999
University of Durham	Unspecified amount	Sultan bin Mohammed al-Qasimi, ruler of Sharjah	To establish the 'Sharjah Chair'	2008
University of Exeter	£750,000	Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed al-Maktoum, ruler of Dubai	The university library	1984
University of Exeter	Unknown	Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed al-Qasimi, ruler of Sharjah	Funded a Graduate Centre	1990
University of Exeter	Unknown	Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed al-Qasimi, ruler of Sharjah	Funded the creation of the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies	1998

University of Exeter	£2.4m	Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed al-Qasimi, ruler of Sharjah	Funded the construction of the Institute of Arabic & Islamic Studies	2001
University of Exeter	£700,000	Prince Alwaleed bin Talal of Saudi Arabia	Part of a campaign to 'bridge the gap between the Islamic and western worlds' following 9/11	2003
University of Exeter	£650,000	Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed al-Qasimi, ruler of Sharjah	To pay for an extension to the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies building	2006
University of Exeter	£1 million	Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed al-Qasimi, ruler of Sharjah	Towards a project to redevelop the centre of the Streatham campus.	2007
University of Exeter	At least £500,000	The Kurdish government and the Ibrahim Ahmed Foundation	To establish a chair in Kurdish Studies	2006/2007

University of Wales Lampeter	Unspecified Amount	Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, then ruler of Abu Dhabi	To help the construction of the Sheikh Khalifa building	1998
University of Wales Lampeter	£1.8m	Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, along with Sheikh Hamad ibn Isa al-Khalifa, ruler of Bahrain and Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, the ruler of Qatar	To fund Islamic Studies	2000
City University London	£1m	The MBI Al Jaber Foundation and an anonymous donor	To fund a scholarship intended to 'bring together Israeli and Palestinian students in a course of study'	2003
Al-Maktoum Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies, affiliated to the University of Aberdeen	'almost' £250,000	Al-Maktoum Foundation	To help establish the Al-Maktoum Foundation and to refurbish the premises	2002
Al-Maktoum Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies, affiliated to the University of Aberdeen	£100,000	Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid al-Maktoum	To fund five postgraduate scholarships per year for Dundee-based students	Ongoing

University of Oxford

Oxford is one of the world's most important and influential universities, in terms both of the breadth of its academic interests and of the prestige and power that its graduates acquire. Because of the impressive array of research, teaching programmes and courses that Oxford University supports, the university is searching for financial donations. On 28 May 2008, Oxford announced the start of a new drive to obtain 'a minimum of £1.25 billion' funding.[13] Announcing the new initiative, Dr John Hood, Oxford's vice-chancellor, said in a press release:

> We have launched the Campaign for the University of Oxford: the most sustained, co-ordinated fundraising effort ever undertaken by a European university. It is a Campaign driven by the University and by its Colleges. It must significantly increase the University's endowment if it is to establish a strong philanthropic foundation for the future.[14]

The same press release revealed that Oxford had raised £575 million from donors since August 2004, and it listed several prominent graduates who had pledged support to the fund-raising campaign. These included David Cameron, leader of the Conservative Party, Lord Waldegrave and Lord Patten (the latter is chancellor of Oxford university), Lord Sainsbury (a former science minister), two Law lords, John Turner (former prime minister of Canada), US senator Richard Lugar, Wafic Said, who funded Oxford's Said Business School, and Dame Eliza Manningham-Buller, the former director general of MI5.[15]

OXFORD UNIVERSITY'S MIDDLE EAST CENTRE AT ST ANTONY'S COLLEGE

The Middle East Centre (MEC) at St Antony's College is the centre for much of the study of the Middle East and the Islamic world at Oxford.

Founded in 1957, the MEC describes itself as 'the centre for the interdisciplinary study of the modern Middle East in Oxford University'.[16] The MEC's website adds that its 'fellows teach and conduct research in the humanities and social sciences with direct reference to the Arab world, Iran, Israel and Turkey'.[17] The Centre is managed by St Antony's College, which was itself established in 1950 to be a centre of advanced study and research in the fields of modern interna-

13 'Oxford Thinking: The Campaign for the University of Oxford', University of Oxford, 13 August 2008, available at www.campaign.ox.ac.uk/campaign/the_campaign/index.html

14 '£1.25 billion campaign launched with major donations', University of Oxford, 28 May 2008, available at www.ox.ac.uk/media/news_stories/2008/080528.html

15 'Campaign Patrons', University of Oxford, available at www.ox.ac.uk/media/news_releases_for_journalists/080528_1.html

16 'About the Middle East Centre', St Antony's College Middle East Centre, available at www.sant.ox.ac.uk/mec/about.html

17 *ibid*.

tional history, philosophy, economics and politics and to provide an international centre within the University where graduate students from all over the world can live and work together in close contact with senior members of the University who are specialists in their fields.[18]

The MEC lists six 'Governing Body Fellows' with interests ranging from cultural anthropology, foreign policy analysis, the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire, the Arab states in the 20th century and the Arab–Israeli conflict, to the politics, modern history and international relations of the Maghreb. There are currently two visiting or research fellows: Dr Raffaella A. Del Sorto, the Pears–Rich Research Fellow in Israel Studies, and Tariq Ramadan, a Research Fellow affiliated with to both the European Studies Centre and the Middle East Centre.[19]

According to Eugene Rogan, the director of the MEC, since 1995 the Centre has raised a total of £3,180,000 in endowment funds and another £565,000 in non-endowed funds.[20] Funding has come from both home and abroad and, largely, from benign sources. In the vast majority of cases there is adequate transparency about where the money comes from and what it is being used for. However, there are certain instances in which the university should consider making more information publicly available.

Donations

- **1970s – the MEC receives unknown amount from the Iranian government**

The late Shah of Iran donated funds to allow the creation of the Visiting Iranian Fellowship for Iranian scholars, a fellowship that continues at the MEC.[21]

- **1970s – the MEC receives unknown amount from the United Arab Emirates**

The UAE government donated funds to allow an Arabic-language instructorship, to assist Masters students in modern Middle Eastern studies. This fund is still used to support a permanent Instructorship in Arabic, which is attached to the Faculty of Oriental Studies.[22]

18 'About the College – A Brief History of the College', St Antony's College, available at www.sant.ox.ac.uk/about/history.html

19 'Directory of Fellows – Middle East Centre', St Antony's College Middle East Centre, available at www.sant.ox.ac.uk/mec/fellows.html

20 'Benefactions to the Middle East Centre since 1995', St Antony's College Middle East Centre, available at www.sant.ox.ac.uk/mec/glees/Benefactions-Since-1995.pdf

21 'Benefactions to the Middle East Centre since 1995', Middle East Centre

22 *ibid*.

PRINCE ALWALEED BIN TALAL / THE KINGDOM FOUNDATION

The Kingdom Foundation is a charitable and philanthropic organisation established by Prince Alwaleed bin Talal of Saudi Arabia in 1995. Prince Alwaleed was named by *Forbes* magazine as the world's 19th richest man in 2008,[1] and has built a reputation as a reformist, advocating greater rights for women and calling for greater democracy and accountability in Saudi Arabia.[2]

The Kingdom Foundation lists its 'five main concerns' as being 'interfaith dialogue', 'leadership development', 'Saudi Arabia development', 'poverty alleviation' and 'natural disaster relief'. Through 'interfaith dialogue', the foundation aims to 'reframe perceptions of Islam and the West through dialogue, programs, forums, and educational centres around the world'.[3] According to the *Daily Telegraph*, the Kingdom Foundation has earmarked £100 million for projects aimed at improving understanding between the West and the Islamic world.[4]

Alwaleed and the Kingdom Foundation have donated regularly to educational institutes, such as the $20 million donation to Georgetown University in Washington D.C., which led to it being renamed as The HRH Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, and the $20 million donation to Harvard University to create the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Islamic Studies Program and to fund the Islamic Heritage Project, which aims to preserve and digitise historic manuscripts.[5]

Shortly after the terrorist attacks on New York in September 2001, Alwaleed offered New York City $10 million. However New York mayor Rudy Giuliani rejected the offer due to Alwaleed issuing a press release calling for the US to 're-examine its policies in the Middle East', as well as his claim that Palestinians were being 'slaughtered at the hands of Israelis while the world turns the other cheek'.[6] Alwaleed told a Saudi newspaper that 'The whole issue is that I spoke about their position [on the Middle East conflict] and they didn't like it because there are Jewish pressures and they were afraid of them.'[7]

1 'Special Report: The World's Billionaires', *Forbes*, 3 May 2008, available at www.forbes.com/lists/2008/10/billionaires08_The-Worlds-Billionaires_Rank.html

2 'The 2008 Time 100 Builders and Titans: Prince Alwaleed bin Talal', *Time*, available at www.time.com/time/specials/2007/time100/article/0,28804,1733748_1733758_1735846,00.html

3 'The Kingdom Foundation', The Kingdom Holding Company, available at www.kingdom.com.sa/en/CorpCocial-Res_KF.asp

4 'Saudi Prince gives Cambridge University £8m for Islamic Studies Centre', *Daily Telegraph*, 7 April 2008, available at www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1584099/Saudi-prince-gives-Cambridge-University-andpound8m-for-Islamic-studies-centre.html

5 'Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal donates $20 million to support the Harvard University Islamic Studies Program', *Harvard University Gazette*, 12 December 2005, available at www.news.harvard.edu/gazette/daily/2005/12/13-islamic_gift.html

6 'New York Rejects Saudi Millions', *BBC News*, 12 October 2001, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/1594483.stm

7 'Big Bad Apple', *Al-Ahran Weekly*, 18-24 October 2001, available at http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2001/556/3war1.htm

❖ **1980s – the MEC receives 'small benefaction' from the Jordanian royal family**

MEC received what they described as a 'small benefaction' from the royal family in Jordan, in order to strengthen ties between Oxford and Jordanian universities.[23]

❖ **2001 – the MEC receives a £1 million endowment from the King Abdul Aziz Foundation**

In 2001, the Centre was awarded a major benefaction by the King Abdul Aziz Foundation for Research and Archives, which provided a £1 million endowment for the running of the Middle East Centre Archive.[24] Two years later – in 2003 – an annual lecture series in Arabian studies, named after King Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud, the founder of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was inaugurated.

❖ **2004 – the MEC receives a £1.5m endowment from the Moroccan British Society**

In 2004, St Antony's College announced that it had received a £1.5 million donation from the Moroccan British Society (MBS) to establish the King Mohammed VI Fellowship in Moroccan and Mediterranean Studies.[25]

❖ **2006 – the MEC receives a major benefaction from an unknown donor**

In 2006, the centre secured a major benefaction from a private donor to meet the cost of commissioning architect Zaha Hadid to design a new building for the Middle East Centre. St Antony's told the *Oxford Times* that it wished the centre to be 'widely used by the general public, to attend lectures to learn about events and issues in the Middle East'.[26]

❖ **2007 – the MEC receives £250,000 from three private donors**

The MEC received £250,000 from three private donors to endow the Hadid Scholarship for doctoral study on the modern Middle East.[27] Foulath Hadid is an Iraqi exile who is an Honorary Fellow at St Antony's, as well as a 'corresponding member' of the Moroccan British Society.[28]

23 *ibid*.

24 *ibid*.

25 *ibid*.

26 'Creating Controversy', *Oxford Times*, 2 November 2007, available at www.theoxfordtimes.net/search/display.var.1793923.0.creating_controversy.php

27 'Benefactions to the Middle East Centre since 1995', Middle East Centre

28 'About MBS – Corresponding Members', Moroccan British Society, available at www.mbs.ma/En/about3-2.htm

❖ **2007 – the MEC receives £280,000 from alumni contributions**

The MEC raised a further £280,000 from alumni contributions to its general endowment fund, and to create a new alumni-supported graduate studentship named in honour of Albert Hourani. Hourani (1915-93) was a prominent Arab academic and writer who spent most of his career at Oxford University, where he was, for a time, the head of the Middle East Centre.[29] The first two awards of £5,000 made by the Hourani scholarship for the 2008-09 academic year were given to Hastuki Aishima for her work on 'Production and Consumption of Islamic Knowledge in Contemporary Egypt: The Revival of the Intellectual Legacy of Shaykh 'Abd al-Halim Mahmud' and Farid Boussaid for his work on 'Business and Political Change in Contemporary Morocco: Morocco's Confederation Generale des Enterprises du Maroc'.[30] The MEC has not clarified whether these donations are from abroad.

❖ **2007 – the MEC received £35,000 from the Centre for Lebanese Studies**

The MEC received £35,000 to establish a new visiting fellowship in Lebanese Studies, funded by the Centre for Lebanese Studies, which describes itself as 'an independent academic institution, founded in 1984 by a group of Lebanese concerned with the state of affairs in their country'.[31] Its website states that the centre is affiliated to St Antony's College and that its founders' 'objective was to set up an institution that would undertake impartial and balanced research and contribute towards Lebanon's recovery'.[32]

Areas of concern

The MEC has received substantial sums of money from sources in the Middle East. The way in which this money has been used means there is a clear risk that donors will seek to influence the output and activities of the MEC. In addition, many large donations to the MEC have been anonymous, creating a lack of transparency. In many cases Oxford has knowingly accepted money from undemocratic states with poor human rights records.

■ Donor influence

Several agreements made between the MEC and donors appear to indicate that funders have sought to influence the centre's output and activities.

29 'Bridge over troubled waters', *Oxford Today*, Vol. 20, No. 1, Michaelmas 2007, available at www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk/2007-08/v20n1/04.shtml

30 'Studentships & Fellowships associated with the Centre', St Antony's College Middle East Centre, available at www.sant.ox.ac.uk/mec/middle-east-fellowships.html

31 'Benefactions to the Middle East Centre since 1995', Middle East Centre

32 'Centre for Lebanese Studies', Centre for Lebanese Studies, available at www.lebanesestudies.com/contents.htm

MOROCCAN BRITISH SOCIETY

The Moroccan-British Society (MBS) was created in February 2003 'to provide means and allow Moroccans and British people to acquire a better mutual understanding of their civilizations, cultures and political, academic, scientific, economic, financial, and commercial institutions so as to promote and foster their friendly relations and their cooperative ties in every domain'.[1]

Princess Lalla Joumala, president of the MBS, has called for greater dialogue between faiths. Speaking at a 2007 conference on the necessity for Muslims to adopt democracy, she said that there was a 'vital necessity' to increase dialogue between the three religions (Christianity, Judaism and Islam); that 'values shared by these religions transcend the theological differences of our spiritual pluralism'; and that a better understanding of 'what we share can help us better accept and respect what separates us.'[2] In the same year, the MBS became the main sponsor of 'Sacred: Discover what we share', a British Library project that displayed the oldest surviving texts of the Abrahamic faiths side by side.[3] Joumala described the project as 'aiming to foster inter-religious dialogue in these times of prevalent political and religious tensions internationally'. She went on: 'The Moroccan British Society, in contributing to this event, seeks to underline the Moroccan example, where interfaith respect is the norm. Islam in Morocco has always opposed extremism and enabled people to live in peace, harmony and good intelligence with all faiths and religious communities.'[4]

1 'About MBS', Moroccan British Society, available at www.mbs.ma/En/about.htm

2 'Muslims need to adopt political system that guarantees respect of law and religion, Minister', Government of Morocco, 3 May 2007, available at www.maroc.ma/NR/exeres/AE9A0238-41AD-4453-A8C9-76656F52E953.htm

3 'Sacred texts that reveal a common heritage', Guardian, 26 April 2007, available at www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2007/apr/26/religion.books

4 *'The Moroccan British Society at "Sacred": Discover What we Share'*, Moroccan British Society, p.9, www.mbs.ma/En/images/Press_Kit.pdf

Donations from the Moroccan British Society

In 2004, the MEC received a £1.5m donation from the Moroccan British Society (MBS) to establish 'the King Mohammed VI Fellowship in Moroccan and Mediterranean Studies'. In 2007, Eugene Rogan wrote that 'The King Mohammed VI Fellowship in Moroccan and Mediterranean Studies has served as the basis for extending cooperation between Moroccan academics and Great Britain, and has enabled the MEC to develop its work in North Africa significantly.'[33] But while Rogan saw the donation as a purely academic exercise, for the donors it was seen as a successful diplomatic move aimed at benefiting the Moroccan state and its unelected rulers; perhaps an indication that the purpose behind the agreement was insufficiently clear between the MEC and MBS. For example, on the website of the Moroccan British Society there is little mention of academia and instead it is the public relations aspect of the Fellowship and its

> "To promote Moroccan British relations through the organization of cultural and scientific events."

33 'Benefactions to the Middle East Centre since 1995', Middle East Centre

goal of 'raising the profile of Morocco at Oxford and in the UK in general' that is emphasised. The first line of the report on the fellowship reads:

> The first year of the Fellowship has been taken up with a number of different projects aimed at establishing the Fellowship and raising the profile of Morocco at Oxford and in the UK in general.[34]

The public relations aspect of the donation is explicitly written into the agreement reached on 1 June 2004 between the MBS and the MEC. The MBS has released the summary of the 'Trust Deed' which laid out the nature of this agreement, agreed on by both the MBS and the MEC. The most interesting section is the four point explanation of the 'main duties' of the fellow and, in particular, the fourth point which specifies that one of the fellow's 'duties' is to 'promote Moroccan British relations':

> The main duties of His Majesty King Mohammed VI Fellow will be:
>
> 1. To teach various courses on Morocco and the Mediterranean region,
> 2. To supervise research undertaken by Oxford students interested in Morocco and the Mediterranean,
> 3. To conduct advanced research and publication in Moroccan and Mediterranean Studies,
> 4. To promote Moroccan British relations through the organization of cultural and scientific events.[35]

A page on the MBS website about the fellowship further states that 'as well as strengthening and promoting Moroccan-British ties, the new Fellowship aimed to promote study of Morocco in Britain through the endowment of an academic position at Britain's most prestigious university'.[36] It was not just the MBS that saw this agreement, portrayed by Rogan as being purely academic, as in fact having a diplomatic function. According to the St Antony's College newsletter, even Tony Blair, then-prime minister, interpreted the new fellowship as having a quasi-diplomatic role. The newsletter quotes Blair as saying that the agreement would 'prove a most worthy and effective bridge in fostering dialogue and understanding between the United Kingdom, the Kingdom of Morocco and the region as a whole'.[37]

In light of the MBS's wish that the King Mohammed VI Fellowship in Moroccan and Mediterranean Studies should actively promote better relations between

34 'H.M. Mohamed [sic] VI Fellowship in Moroccan and Mediterranean Studies Report, 2004-2005', Moroccan British Society, available at www.mbs.ma/En/images/MBS_Fellowship_Report_2004_05.pdf

35 'Moroccan British Society Trust Deed', Moroccan British Society, available at www.mbs.ma/En/images/Summary_Trust_Deed.pdf

36 'H.M. Mohamed VI Fellowship in Moroccan and Mediterranean Studies: St Antony's College, Oxford', Moroccan British Society, available at www.mbs.ma/En/fellowship.htm

37 'St Antony's College Newsletter', Autumn 2004, p.2, available at www.sant.ox.ac.uk/antonians/Autumn04.pdf

the UK and Morocco, it is unsurprising that the MBS and Morocco's unelected rulers are closely linked. For example, the president of the MBS is Princess Lalla Joumala of Morocco.[38] The agreement between the MBS and the MEC that established the fellowship was also explicitly given the stamp of approval by the Moroccan government. For example, the autumn 2004 St Antony's newsletter reports that, on 8 October 2004, the 'memorandum of understanding' between 'the Kingdom of Morocco and St Antony's College' was signed in the presence of Morocco's Prince Moulay Rachid, 'deputising for the King who had been called away at the last minute', and Princess Lalla Joumala.[39] The event took place at the Royal Palace in Rabat, the Moroccan capital.

Therefore the fellowship appears to be perceived by its funders as having the clearly political role of 'raising the profile of Morocco' and as being to 'promote Moroccan British relations'. Moroccans are clearly entitled to seek to raise the profile of their country, and better relations between the UK and Morocco may well be desirable; however, the question is whether Oxford University should accept money from sources close to Morocco's ruling family to set up a fellowship in Moroccan studies whose goal is specifically to 'raise the profile of Morocco' in the UK, and whether it is able to be a centre for balanced and unbiased debate, on the one hand, and to act as a quasi-diplomatic platform for certain nations, on the other.

Donation from King Abdul Aziz Foundation for Research and Archives

Similar concerns arise from the £1 million donation to the MEC by the King Abdul Aziz Foundation for Research and Archives, an arm of the Saudi government, and the MEC's subsequent decision to 'celebrate' this donation by inaugurating the annual King Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud Lectures, 'named in honour of the founder of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia'.[40] The St Antony's newsletter of autumn 2003 states that 'HRH Prince Salman bin Abdul Aziz was the driving force that brought about the conclusion of this Agreement… The Cooperation Agreement also provides for exchanges of students and researchers, joint publications and the organization of conferences.'[41] The MEC has not made public the text of its agreement with the Saudis. However, it is clear that at least some Saudis have interpreted the lectures as playing a diplomatic role on behalf of the Saudi government. For example, in October 2003 the *Arab News*, Saudi Arabia's main English-language newspaper, interpreted the lectures as doing much to 'promote' the 'Saudi point of view', concluding a lengthy report on the Middle East Centre's first Ibn Saud lecture by saying that:

> A promising addition to other annual addresses which take place at St Antony's Middle East Center, the King Abdul Aziz ibn Saud lecture will surely to do much [*sic*] to pro-

38 'About MBS', Moroccan British Society

39 'St Antony's College Newsletter', Autumn 2004, p.1

40 *ibid*, p.5

41 *ibid*.

mote Western understanding of Saudi Arabia and of the Saudi point of view.[42]

There is evidence that the *Arab News* is correct in thinking that the lectures will indeed 'promote' the 'Saudi point of view', as three of the six annual lectures delivered so far have been given by members of the Saudi government, with the MEC inviting speakers from the West in alternate years. For example, the 2004 lecture was on the subject of 'The Shura Council Experiment in Saudi Arabia'.[43] It was delivered on 18 November by Professor Dr Saleh al-Malik, a member of Saudi Arabia's Shura Council, an unelected body whose members are all chosen by the Saudi king.[44] The King Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud lecture in 2007 was delivered by Prince Turki al-Faisal on the subject of 'Saudi Constitutional Reform, from Abdul Aziz to Abdullah', and in 2008 the lecture was given by Dr Abdullah Saleh M. al-Uthaimin on 'The Movement of Ibn Abdulwahab: a historical and doctrinal perspective'.[45] Al-Uthaimin is also a member of the Saudi Shura Council. In 2005, he was quoted by the *Chicago Tribune* as saying that 'We can't have a Western democracy in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia because that is based on the people, and for us, the first word is the Koran.'[46]

There are also indications that King Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud lectures which have not been delivered by members of the Saudi government have been attended by senior Saudi officials. For example, the first lecture – given on the subject of Saudi–German relations by a German scholar – was attended by Prince Turki al-Faisal, the then Saudi ambassador to the UK. The St Antony's College Record for 2007 suggests that Prince Turki also attended the second lecture, stating that 'the Saudi Ambassador to London, Prince Turki had attended the first two King Abdul Aziz Lectures, and only missed the third to take up his new embassy in the United States'.[47]

It is vital that the presence of Saudi government officials at these and other lectures held in St Antony's College does not limit what academics are willing to hear said publicly about Saudi Arabia in the college. For example, on 25–26 April 2003, St Antony's held a conference in Oxford entitled 'Muslims in Europe post 9/11'. Held in conjunction with Princeton University, this was the second in a series and aimed to 'assess the impact of the 2001 terror attacks against

42 'A Lecture Series in Honor of King Abdul Aziz', *Arab News*, 21 October 2003, available at www.arabnews.com/?page=9&section=0&article=33945&d=22&m=10&y=2003&pix=community.jpg&category=Features

43 'Teaching and Research at St Antony's College', St Antony's College Record 2005, p.88, available at www.sant.ox.ac.uk/antonians/2005teaching2.pdf

44 'FACTBOX – What is Saudi Arabia's Shura Council', *Reuters*, 15 July 2008, available at http://uk.reuters.com/article/marketsNewsUS/idUKL1563001220080715

45 'The Sixth King Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud Annual Lecture Theatre', St Antony's College Middle East Centre, available at www.sant.ox.ac.uk/mec/meclectures-mic2008.html#ibn-saud-lecture

46 'Saudi Arabia sees glimmer of reform', *Chicago Tribune*, 13 March 2005, available at www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/chi-0503130388mar13,0,4974908.story?page=1

47 'Teaching and Research at St Antony's College', St Antony's College Record 2005, p.85

Washington and New York on the Muslim communities in Europe'.[48] The event was made possible thanks to 'the support of an anonymous benefactor whose generosity has made both these conferences possible'.[49]

On Saturday 26 April, Eugene Rogan chaired a discussion on the key subject of 'Terrorist Networks in Europe'. During this he attempted to silence Dr. Mansour Yousif Elagab, the president of the Sudan Human Rights Organisation, an independent non-governmental organisation, when Elagab raised the subject of informal terrorist funding with an audience member he believed to be from Saudi Arabia. As Elagab started to speak, Rogan interrupted, telling him to 'show respect for other Muslims' beliefs' and to 'bear in mind what is appropriate to say in the venue where you might be going beyond what would be comfortable for everyone to hear'. A transcript of the event records the exchange:[50]

> Dr. Mansour Yousif Elagab:
>
> I think the way we are tackling this problem we concentrating on the superficial and not the root causes of terrorism. We have not looked at the breeding grounds of terrorism, the cultural aspects. And this cultural has two aspects, internal and external …. [***sic***] It is the responsibility of the international community to deal with this very important issue. The breeding of these martyrs is in the educational system. All this thinking around this brain washing, this brain washing people. They are not playing, they know what they are doing, but they brain wash them to the extent that they think when they die they will meet angel women. Another point is the views of the mosque and, I'm talking from experience, are taking educated people from the mosque and make, these people with PhDs, taking them as role models to be followed by these people. Another point, which is extremely important, the funding. And my sister from Saudi Arabia, you know that there are two levels of funding, formal and informal. Formal has relatively been checked. But what about the informal sources of funding? Throughout history….
>
> Dr. Eugene Rogan:
>
> Dr. Elagab I'm not going to cut you off, but I'm going to call you to order a little bit because I think we all have to be a little restrained in the language we use, even laxed [***sic***] Muslims must show respect for other Muslims' beliefs and I would like you to please bear in mind what is appropriate to say in the venue where you might be going beyond what would be comfortable for everyone to hear.
>
> Dr. Mansour Yousif Elagab:
>
> I think that rather than concentrating on the leaders, it would help to deal with the root cause of the problem. It's more important to know who are the breeding. For example

48 'Muslims in Europe post 9/11: Understanding and Responding to the Islamic World', Conference Report, p.2, available at www.sant.ox.ac.uk/ext/princeton/Report.pdf

49 *ibid*.

50 'Session 6 – Terrorist Networks in Europe', St. Antony's – Princeton Conference, available at www.sant.ox.ac.uk/ext/princeton/discussion-6.shtml

> with Mubarak, there was an assassination attempt. Who tried to kill him? What did the international community try to do about it?

The University of Oxford has said that:

> There was no Saudi speaker and the discussion was not about Saudi Arabia. Eugene Rogan was intervening to stop one member of the audience directing a personal attack on another member of the audience.

However Dr Elagab did not appear to be attacking the audience member, only raising the issues of the different sources of funding for terrorism, and the rest of the audience will never know exactly what subject Elagab was referring to as he was interrupted by the chair. Retention of freedom of speech is necessary at all higher education institutions, especially when such vitally important issues such as terrorist networks are being addressed. These discussions need to be taking place regularly without being discouraged and shut down.

■ Human rights

Two of the largest foreign donations to the MEC come from the organisations directly backed by the governments of Morocco and Saudi Arabia. These are both non-democratic states lead by hereditary rulers with few, if any, checks on their political power.

The year prior to St Antony's receiving their donation from the Moroccan government-affiliated British Moroccan Society, Amnesty International reported that in Morocco:

> Sahrawi human rights and civil society activists faced arrest, detention and imprisonment. Tens of demonstrators, charged with public order offences in Western Sahara, and scores of Islamists, held in secret detention and accused in connection with alleged violent acts, were reportedly tortured or ill-treated. Over 30 political prisoners sentenced after unfair trials in previous years remained in detention. The failure to bring those responsible for human rights violations to justice remained a major concern.[51]

In 2004, the same year in which St Antony's received its donation, Amnesty International said that curbs on freedom of expression and association were 'felt most acutely by Sahrawi human rights activists and those perceived to be questioning the authority of the monarchy'.[52] From 2003 to the present, St Antony's has only had one event specifically on Western Sahara, illegally occupied by Morocco since 1975. This talk, entitled 'Endgame in Western Sahara', was given

51 *Amnesty International Report Summary 2003 – Morocco / Western Sahara*, Amnesty International, available at http://asiapacific.amnesty.org/report2003/mar-summary-eng

52 *Amnesty International Report 2004 – Morocco/Western Sahara*, Amnesty International, 26 May 2004, UNHCR Refworld, available at www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/40b5a1fb0.html

by a *Financial Times* journalist in February 2005.[53]

Similarly, in the same year that the MEC received the donation from the King Abdul Aziz Foundation for Research and Archives, an Amnesty International report described how, in Saudi Arabia:

> The violations were perpetuated by the strictly secretive criminal justice system and the prohibition of political parties, trade unions and independent human rights organizations. Hundreds of suspected religious activists and critics of the state were arrested, and the legal status of most of those held from previous years remained shrouded in secrecy. Women continued to suffer severe discrimination. Torture and ill-treatment remained rife. At least 48 people were executed. Over 5,000 Iraqi refugees continued to live in Rafha camp as virtual prisoners. International non-governmental human rights organizations were denied access to the country and the government failed to respond to any of the concerns raised by AI during the year.[54]

The MEC's decision to 'honour' King Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud, the founder of Saudi Arabia, is also striking for its lack of consideration for basic human rights. King Abdul Aziz (1876–1953) established the modern Saudi state by force in the early part of the 20th century, imposing the harsh Wahhabi form of Islam across much of the Arabian Peninsula and forcibly ousting the comparatively moderate Hashemite dynasty from Mecca and Medina in 1925.

Anonymous donations

The Middle East Centre has not disclosed the sources of all its donations. Many of these are extremely substantial, helping to pay for new buildings and the commissioning of an internationally renowned architect. It is not clear whether these donations come from individuals or from states.

While the MEC have released details of all donations contributed to the university from 1995,[55] a large number of donations are entirely anonymous and the agreements signed between the MEC and donors have never been made public. To some extent, this is out of the university's hands. In response to a draft of this report, Oxford has stated that:

> The Charities Acts have no legal requirements that all donors' names are listed and one of their functions is to enshrine in law the safeguarding of the donors' preferences – which includes their desire to remain anonymous.
>
> Within the new Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) 2005 for accounting for charities (both registered and exempt as St Antony's is), the charity must show

53 'Events held at the Middle East Centre 2003 to present', St Antony's College Middle East Centre, available at www.sant.ox.ac.uk/mec/glees/MECEvents2003-08.pdf

54 *Amnesty International Report Summary 2003 – Saudi Arabia*, Amnesty International, available at http://asiapacific.amnesty.org/report2003/sau-summary-eng

55 'Benefactions to the Middle East Centre since 1995', Middle East Centre

> whether monies received have been given for a particular purpose, such as endowing a Programme in Contemporary Islamic Studies, but does not have to declare where the donation came from. The Charity Commission has confirmed that, so long as accounts comply with SORP, the University is under no legal obligation to declare who donors are and furthermore, has a legal obligation to keep them anonymous if they request it.
>
> In addition to this, the University's own Donations Review Committee says that 'donations will not be accepted if an intermediary negotiates on behalf of a donor who asks for complete anonymity'.

Therefore the university is legally obliged to retain the anonymity of the donor, if that is requested. However, such is the volume of the donations currently being accepted by universities that the concept of anonymous donations is made hugely problematic unless the terms of agreement and memorandums of understanding are made publicly available. Even if there are legal restrictions regarding donor anonymity, this should not necessarily affect the publishing of their agreements with the university.

This lack of openness about university agreements has proved a problem in the past with the MEC. For example, the MBS's requirement that its donations to the MEC serve a public-relations purpose on behalf of Morocco's monarchy is only known because the fact was published on the MBS website; the agreement was not made public by the MEC.

THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE

As is the case with the previously mentioned centres at Oxford University, the Oriental Institute has received large sums of money from overseas. In many ways, however, the nature of the donation to the Oriental Institute differs greatly: the agreement is publicly available and it clearly allows the university to control how the money is used. The Oriental Institute is an exemplary case which helps to further draw out the worries about the aforementioned faculties and their funding.

Background

Another of Oxford University's centres for research and teaching in Islamic studies is the Faculty of Oriental Studies, housed in the Oriental Institute. The Oriental Institute's website says:

> Oriental Studies is unique in introducing students to civilizations that are radically different from the Western ones which form the basis of the curriculum in most schools.

> The field embraces the study of Oriental cultures from prehistoric times to the present. More than half the world's population belong to Oriental civilizations studied in the Faculty of Oriental Studies. People in the West are becoming increasingly aware of these civilizations through travel, the diversification of social and ethnic groups, and rising general interest. The faculty's courses offer the opportunity to learn in depth about the modern and ancient traditions of these cultures.[56]

The faculty's research interests range from Japan to Muslim Spain, and from late prehistory to the modern day. It is home to a Hebrew and Jewish Studies Unit, which is run jointly with the Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies,[57] and, reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of the field, unit members belong to various faculties, including Oriental Studies, Modern Languages and Literature, Modern History, Theology and Classics. It also covers Inner and South Asian studies, as well as East Asian studies (China, Japan and Korea). About 140 dons are attached to the institute, of whom 40 teach about the 'Islamic World'.[58] Some of these 40 are also members of the university's Middle East Centre at St Antony's College, including MEC director, Dr Eugene Rogan.[59]

At undergraduate level, Islamic Studies is taught as Arabic, Arabic with Islamic Studies, Arabic with an additional language, or in combination with another subject as a joint degree.[60]

Donations

- **2005 – Oxford University receives £1.5 million from the Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahayan Charitable and Humanitarian Foundation**

In March 2005, Oxford University announced the creation of a new lectureship in Islamic Studies, based in the Oriental Institute, which was enabled by a donation of £1.5 million from the Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahayan Charitable and Humanitarian Foundation of the United Arab Emirates.[61]

56 'Oriental Studies in the University of Oxford', University of Oxford, available at www.orinst.ox.ac.uk/

57 'Hebrew and Jewish Studies in the Faculty of Oriental Studies', University of Oxford, available at www.orinst.ox.ac.uk/html/hjs/hjs_home.html

58 'Academic Staff – Faculty of Oriental Studies', University of Oxford, available at www.orinst.ox.ac.uk/html/staff/staff_a_z.html

59 'Dr Eugene L. Rogan – Academic Staff – Faculty of Oriental Studies', University of Oxford, available at www.orinst.ox.ac.uk/html/staff/iw/erogan.html

60 'Undergraduate Degrees – The Islamic World', University of Oxford, available at www.orinst.ox.ac.uk/html/iw/undergrad_degrees.html

61 '£1.5 million donation for new lectureship in Islamic Studies', University of Oxford, 16 March 2005, available at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/po/050316b.shtml

THE ZAYED BIN SULTAN AL NAHAYAN CHARITABLE AND HUMANITARIAN FOUNDATION

The Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahayan Charitable and Humanitarian Foundation, named after the late ruler of the UAE, has described its aims as undertaking 'welfare, charity and beneficence'[1] and specialising in 'charity and philanthropy inside and outside the U.A.E.'[2] The vision of the foundation is 'to be a distinguished organization that provides unique welfare instruments for improving the quality of life among all human beings and the Islamic society'.[3]

In countries as diverse as Bangladesh, Nepal and Chad, the foundation has set up mosques, Islamic centres and academies for research into Islam 'concerned with Islamic education and the correct teachings about the true faith, its legacy and civilization, and the contributions of its scholars to the advancement of the civilization of mankind'[4] as well as schools, other educational institutions and libraries.[5] It has also established hospitals, clinics, orphanages and homes for the elderly and disabled, provided relief to areas stricken by natural and social disasters, and supported studies that attempt to prevent and control their recurrence.

Despite some of the laudable achievements of his organisation, Sheikh Zayed has at times proved a controversial figure, with a think tank that he established accused of anti-Semitism, Holocaust denial and support for terrorism.[6]

1 'The Foundation- Objectives & Means', Zayed Foundation Online, available at www.zayed.org.ae/English/the-foundation3.htm

2 'Objectives & Means', Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahayan Charitable and Humanitarian Foundation, available at www.zayedfoundation.com/home.aspx?tabindex=11&tabid=4

3 'News and reports: The Foundation achieves ISO 9001 Certification', Zayed Foundation Online, available at www.zayed.org.ae/English/newsandreports.htm

4 'Objectives & Means', Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahayan Charitable and Humanitarian Foundation

5 'Photo Gallery', the Zayed Foundation Online, available at www.zayed.org.ae/photo1.htm

6 'ADL Backgrounder: The Zayed Center', Anti-Defamation League, available at www.adl.org/anti_semitism/zayed_center.asp

Areas of concern

■ Questionable links of previous groups set up by the institute's donor

The founder of an organisation that has been a significant funder to Oxford University has provoked controversy in the past, with a think tank he established connected to alleged anti-Semitism.

The Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahayan Charitable and Humanitarian Foundation was set up by Sheikh Zayed. In 1999, Sheikh Zayed established a think tank near Abu Dhabi called the Zayed Center for Coordination and Follow-up. The centre published a report on the Holocaust that claimed it was Zionists, and not

Nazis, who 'were the people who killed the Jews in Europe' and republished a French book denying that al-Qaeda had carried out the 11 September attacks. The institute also hosted a speaker who described 'The Protocols of the Elders of Zion' as 'not a theory but a real fact' and said that Israel was responsible for the assassination of John F. Kennedy, as well as for the Watergate scandal.[62] Also given a platform were the Saudi professor Umayma Jalahma, and Sheikh Ikrama Sabri, the mufti of the Palestinian Authority, both of whom have made extremely anti-Semitic remarks in the past.[63] In July 2004, Harvard University returned a $2.5m donation from Sheikh Zayed following the controversy over the Zayed Center's alleged promotion of anti-Semitism.

It must be noted, however, that the think tank has since been closed and while the Oriental Institute was perhaps unwise to accept such a large donation from a controversial source, there is no cause for concern that the donor has acquired any influence due to the funding.

■ Oriental Institute as a model for successful foreign funding

The agreement put in place clearly limits the donor's ability to influence academic activities, or how the money is spent, and can be used as a model for future funding of this nature

The lectureship based in the Oriental Studies faculty is intended to allow Oxford to play a greater part in the study of Islam, including its significance and role in the modern world. The foundation's website said that 'among the functions' of the lectureship was 'to provide the opportunity to the British Muslim students to be aware of their religion', as well as 'to encourage dialogue within the British Community and outside to reflect the true image of Islam to the West'.[64] The regulations governing the donation – published on 22 June 2007 – clearly limit the donor's ability to interfere with the university's academic activities or to influence the use to which the lectureship is put.

The regulations contain five points:

1. The benefaction from the Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahayan Charitable and Humanitarian Foundation which comprises £1,500,000, together with any further donations for this purpose, shall be used to establish a fund, to be known as the Shaikh Zayed Endowment Fund for Islamic Studies ('the Fund').

2. The University shall retain the entire Fund as permanent endowment and shall apply the net income of the Fund for the advancement of Islamic Studies within the University.

62 *ibid*.

63 'Harvard must give back tainted money', Boston Globe, 31 August 2003, available at www.boston.com/news/globe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2003/08/31/harvard_must_give_back_tainted_money/

64 'Sheikh Zayed Lectureship for Arabic Studies in Oxford University', Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahayan Charitable and Humanitarian Foundation, available at www.zayedfoundation.com/home.aspx?tabindex=41&tabid=30

3. The first charge on the net income of the fund shall be the salary and associated costs of a University Lecturership in Islamic Studies, which shall be known as the Shaikh Zayed Lecturership in Islamic Studies ('the lecturership'). Other charges on the fund shall be the provision, under such arrangements as the Faculty Board may from time to time determine, of support for the advancement of Islamic Studies.

4. The administration of the Fund, and the application of its income, shall be the responsibility of the Faculty Board of Oriental Studies.

5. Any income unspent in any year on the first charge as defined in regulation 3 above, whether in consequence of a vacancy in the lecturership or for any other reason, shall, at the discretion of the board of management, either be carried forward for expenditure in subsequent years or be spent in any other way or ways conducive to the advancement within the University of teaching, scholarship, and research in Islamic Studies.

6. These regulations may be amended by Council provided the object as specified in regulation 3 is kept in view.[65]

It is point four in particular, which denies the donor scope to interfere with the use of the funds, that contrasts markedly with the arrangements made between other universities and their donors. These types of regulation can possibly serve as a useful blueprint for all future agreements between foreign donors and UK universities.

THE ASHMOLEAN AGREEMENT WITH PRINCE SULTAN SALMAN BIN ABDUL AZIZ AL-SAUD

This is one of the most controversial donations Oxford has received. A year after the large donation from a Saudi Prince Sultan Salman bin Abdul Aziz al-Saud to establish an art museum, Oxford agreed to 'expedite' the scholarship application process for Saudi students, and identify colleges for 10 Saudi students from Prince Sultan University. When this became public, it provoked criticism from both academics and students for being of no academic worth to the university, bypassing Oxford's governing council, and breaching the admissions process for prospective students.

Donations

- **2005 – The University of Oxford receives £2 million from Saudi Prince Sultan Salman bin Abdul Aziz al-Saud**

In April 2005, Saudi Prince Sultan Salman bin Abdul Aziz al-Saud gave £2 million to the Ashmolean Museum.

65 'University Acts', *Oxford University Gazette*, 22 June 2007, University of Oxford, available at www.ox.ac.uk/gazette/2006-7/weekly/220607/acts.htm

A press release issued by Oxford University on 20 April 2005, said that:

> HRH Prince Sultan Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud has given the Ashmolean Museum a substantial donation to provide a fitting home for the Museum's internationally renowned collection of Islamic art. The total value of the gift is £2 million, which will also provide for ten scholarships at the University of Oxford for Saudi Arabian students.[66]

The press release added that 'the new gallery, part of the ambitious redevelopment of one of the world's oldest museums, will be named the "The [*sic*] Prince Sultan Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud Gallery"'. A report in Saudi Arabia's *Arab News* newspaper on 21 April 2005, said that the prince's donation was a 'move to promote understanding between Islam and the West', adding that 'Saudi and British officials' had said that the new gallery 'will help to portray Islamic culture and civilization in right perspectives [*sic*]'.[67]

Areas of concern

■ Admissions policy and bypassing academic monitoring

The university agreed to 'expedite the application process' for the scholarship application of some Saudi students, and was accused by some academics of bypassing regular donation procedure in accepting the cash.

A year later, in May 2006, Oxford signed a 'memorandum of understanding' governing the Ashmolean agreement. In this memorandum, signed by Jon Dellandrea, the former pro-vice chancellor responsible for development and external affairs at Oxford, and Dr Ahmed Yamani, the rector of Prince Sultan University (PSU), Oxford promised to help 'expedite the application process' with regard to scholarship applications for 10 students from the Saudi university over 25 years, and identify suitable colleges for them.[68] The University of Oxford has stated that 'this phrase referred to expediting the scholarship application process which would only occur once a student had already gone through the usual rigorous selection process for a place. To date, none of these scholarships have been taken up because no eligible students won places.'

When the agreement became public, it aroused significant opposition from within Oxford University. For example, *Times Higher Education* reported that the agreement had not been vetted or agreed by Oxford's governing council or its

66 'Major donation to Ashmolean to house Islamic art', 20 April 2005, University of Oxford, available at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/po/news/2004-05/apr/20.shtml

67 'SR13m Saudi grant to create Islamic art gallery at UK museum', *Arab News*, 21st April 2005, available at www.arabnews.com/services/print/print.asp?artid=62487&d=21&m=4&y=2005&hl=SR13m%20Saudi%20Grant%20to%20Create%20Islamic%20Gallery%20at%20UK%20Museum

68 'Sultan's £2m Oxford gift raises fear of favouritism', *The Times*, 3 November 2006, available at www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/education/student/news/article624214.ece

CROWN PRINCE SULTAN BIN ABDUL AZIZ AL SAUD

Crown Prince Sultan bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud is the son of former Saudi King Abdul Aziz. He is currently the Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, First Deputy Prime Minister, and Minister of Defence and Aviation and Inspector General.

He has served as Minister of Defence and Aviation since 1963. In this role has overseen the modernisation and development of Saudi Arabia's army, navy and air force and, according to the BBC, has been instrumental in 'turning Saudi Arabia into one of the world's largest arms procurers'. He has also played an integral role in developing the Saudi national airline and railway services. Before this he had served as governor of Riyadh, as well as minister of agriculture, and then head of the communications portfolio.[1]

Prince Sultan has proved a controversial figure around the world due to his position as chairman of the Higher Council for Islamic Affairs. This organisation is said to provide 'funds for Muslim communities around the world'; yet the BBC has reported claims that Saudi money has been paid to Islamic charities with alleged links to terrorist groups. These accusations have been firmly denied by Prince Sultan.[2]

He has been a staunch supporter of close ties between the Saudi Kingdom and the United States, as is his son, Prince Bandar bin Sultan bin Abdul Aziz, who formerly served as Saudi ambassador to the US and was well-known as a steadfast ally of both George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush. Howeverv Prince Sultan has not advocated widespread reform in Saudi Arabia, as he was quoted as saying that a more open system of democracy would allow 'illiterates' to be voted into power.[3]

1 'Profile: Saudi Prince Sultan', BBC News, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/4734609.stm

2 *ibid.*

3 *ibid.*

'congregation of academics'.[69]

Additionally, the *Oxford University Gazette* reported that in the university's Congregation (the university's parliament) on 28 November 2006, Dr A. D. Lunn, from Worcester College, spoke out against a change to the governance of Oxford, mentioning that recently 'a dodgy deal was made with Prince Sultan University which should have been an academic decision and, given the way women are treated, one involving an ethics committee'.[70]

Separately, Professor Gillian Evans of Cambridge was reported by *Cherwell* as saying:

69 'Saudi cash sparks row', *Times Higher Education*, 2 November 2006, available at www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=26&storycode=206491

70 'Report of Congregation Discussion on Governance', *Oxford University Gazette*, 7 December 2006, available at www.ox.ac.uk/gazette/2006-7/supps/1_4791.htm

> This is in breach of the Quality Assurance Agency guidelines… I think any partnership with another university is a very big thing for Oxford to take on. Not to ensure that this one was approved by Council and Congregation and not to announce it, or ensure it is visible somewhere on the University website, is, to say the least, remarkable.[71]

The *Oxford Student* newspaper also attacked the Ashmolean's agreement in an article entitled 'How Saudi Oil Money Corrupted Oxford'.[72] The newspaper printed substantial extracts from the memorandum of understanding and wrote that 'the deal was signed without discussion by the University's parliament of dons, Congregation, or permission from Council'.

In response, a spokesman from the university stated that: 'These things don't necessarily need to go through Council or Congregation… There's nothing sinister about it.'[73] The university also said that 'there is no suggestion whatsoever of preferential treatment of Saudi Arabian applicants for a place to study at Oxford'.[74]

The fact that the university has been largely silent over the agreement appears to be a concerted effort to play down the significance of the deal: the memorandum of understanding has not been publicly announced by Oxford. By contrast, the PSU has dedicated a web page to the deal, hailing it as a 'historic agreement'.

On 3 April 2008, the Ashmolean Museum issued a press release announcing that Prince Sultan had donated the second £1m of his promised donation towards the museum's new Islamic gallery.[75] The press release related that Prince Mohammed, the Saudi Arabian ambassador to the UK, said that 'HRH the Crown Prince's donation aims to build bridges of understanding and cooperation to a greater appreciation and a better understanding of the great heritage of Islam'. Also quoted was Dr. Christopher Brown, the director of the Ashmolean, as saying:

> We are extremely grateful to HRH Crown Prince Sultan for his generous benefaction, which will enable the Ashmolean to present Islamic culture to an even wider audience than before, thereby increasing the understanding and knowledge of Islamic culture in the United Kingdom.

A day later, on 4 April 2008, the Saudi embassy in London issued a press release which said that the new display of Islamic art at the Ashmolean 'would con-

71 'Dons suspicious over Oxford's new Saudi link', *Cherwell*, 3 November 2006

72 'How Saudi oil money corrupted Oxford', *Oxford Student*, 2 November 2006, available at www.oxfordstudent.com/mt2006wk4/News/how_saudi_oil_money_corrupted_oxford

73 'Has the University sold its principles?', *Cherwell*, 9 November 2006

74 'Saudi cash sparks row', *Times Higher Education*, 2 November 2006, available at www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=26&storycode=206491

75 'The Ashmolean Museum receives the second tranche of a major donation for a new Islamic galley', Ashmolean Museum, 3 April 2008, available at www.ashmolean.org/news/news/index.php?id=73

tribute to a greater understanding between the Muslim world and the British people'.[76]

The primary issue here is that the application process for some students can be altered dependent upon donations. Oxford reassures that no student receives preferential treatment, however the fact that a number of academics raised concerns suggests that much could be done to increase transparency in the donations received to alleviate any concerns regarding the purpose.

FURTHER DONATIONS TO OXFORD

- **1986 – Oxford receives an £800,000 donation from Fereidoun Soudavar**

In 1986, Oxford University accepted £800,000 from Fereidoun Soudavar (1908–97), an Iranian industrialist and philanthropist, to establish a professorship of Persian Studies.[77] Soudavar was one of Iran's leading businessmen under the shah, and after the Iranian revolution went into voluntary exile – although he rarely criticised the new Iranian government in public. In exile, he became well known as a philanthropist, giving money to cancer research charities and to the Brooklyn Museum of Art in New York.

Oxford University has also established the Soudavar Memorial Fund – almost certainly using a further donation from the Soudavar family. This fund has been used to fund events at Oxford University related to Persian studies[78] and also to provide 'small grants to assist students from Iran who are studying for a degree at the University of Oxford and who are facing financial difficulty'.[79]

- **2008 – Oxford receive unspecified amount from the Qatar Foundation**

The MEC received a donation from the Qatar Foundation to establish the Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani Chair in Contemporary Islamic Studies. The Qatar Foundation was established by the emir himself and is currently chaired by his wife, Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser al-Missned.[80] The endowment includes money for conferences, lectures, seminars and publications.

76 'Donation to build new gallery at the Ashmolean Museum', 4 April 2008, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia – London, available at www.mofa.gov.sa/Detail.asp?InNewsItemID=77628

77 'Court and Social: University news', *The Times*, 30 December 1986

78 For example, 'International Conference: The rise of the Persian Renaissance, 14–15 July 2008', Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford, available at www.orinst.ox.ac.uk/conferences/persian_renaissance.html

79 'Scholarships and Prizes 2003: Soudavar Fund', *Oxford University Gazette*, available at www.ox.ac.uk/gazette/2003-4/supps/schols/item_49.htm

80 'About Qatar Foundation', Qatar Foundation, available at www.qf.org.qa/output/page10.asp

The appointee will be a member of the Faculty of Oriental Studies and a fellow of St Antony's College and 'will work closely with Qatar Foundation's Faculty of Islamic Studies and with the Qatar Museums Authority'.[81] In response to the donation, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown praised the 'increasingly close educational and research links between top British universities and Qatar Foundation'.[82]

OXFORD CENTRE FOR ISLAMIC STUDIES (OCIS)

OCIS undertakes a large degree of outreach programmes, which appear to be helpful courses in allowing others to gain a better understanding of Islam. It has also advised the government in the past. Despite its growing prominence, however, OCIS is heavily dependent on funding from conservative Islamic sources; some of its trustees are prominent Islamists and members of foreign governments, many from states with poor human rights records. There are also concerns as to the transparency of the funding.

Background

The Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies (OCIS) was established in 1985.[83] Since then, it has become one of the most prominent centres of Islamic studies in the UK, despite not being formally part of Oxford University. In recent years, the centre has been recognised by Oxford University, the Foreign Office and other charities such as the Ford Foundation, and has also enjoyed the patronage of Prince Charles.[84]

OCIS is classified by the university as a 'Recognised Independent Centre [RIC] of the University of Oxford', which, according to Oxford, 'means that it is an educational charity in the Oxford area, which is not part of the University but works with the University in research and teaching and has had the RIC status conferred on it in recognition of this'. Several other centres in Oxford share a similar status, including the Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies, the Oxford Centre for Jewish Studies and the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies.[85] In January 2006, Oxford University published new regulations governing these centres,

81 'Qatar willing to help tackle financial crisis', *Gulf Times*, 3 November 2008, available at www.gulf-times.com/site/topics/article.asp?cu_no=2&item_no=252071&version=1&template_id=57&parent_id=56

82 'Qatar Foundation, UK universities in tie-ups', *Gulf Times*, 3 November 2008, available at www.gulf-times.com/site/topics/article.asp?cu_no=2&item_no=252023&version=1&template_id=36&parent_id=16

83 'About OCIS', Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, available at www.oxcis.ac.uk/about.html

84 The Foreign Office has also occasionally funded foreign students to study at OCIS. For example, see 'Scholarship for Uzbek Citizen', Civil Society International, available at www.civilsoc.org/announce/uzbekox.htm

85 'The role of Recognised Independent Centres', *Blue Print*, March 2008, p.10, available at www.ox.ac.uk/staff/blueprint/back_issues/document.rm?id=359

including a provision that they must be reviewed by the Joint Committee for the Coordination of Recognised Independent Centres at least once every five years.[86] Many OCIS fellows are university staff.

Although OCIS aims to become a centre for the teaching and study of Islam, it is not yet fully operational, largely because its buildings are still under construction. However, OCIS fellows currently teach in the faculties of Anthropology, History, Oriental Studies, Politics and International Relations, Theology, Development Studies and Continuing Education.[87] In addition, OCIS itself offers courses in subjects such as Qur'anic Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic and 'Understanding Islam and the Muslims'. Furthermore, it is presently running several research projects, ranging from 'The Atlas Project,' which concerns itself with the 'intellectual roots of Muslim civilization and with contemporary social movements in the Islamic world', to others on 'Muslims in Britain' and 'Islamic Finance'.[88] These are courses offered by OCIS as an independent centre, rather than as part of the university degree programme.

OCIS also runs an outreach programme, which it describes as aiming to 'facilitate understanding of those global and national issues which require knowledge of the culture and civilization of Islam and of contemporary Muslim societies'.[89] It has collaborated with the Royal College of Defence Studies, Oxford University's Foreign Service programme, has provided workshops for teachers of religious studies 'to provide a better understanding of Islam and of the needs of Muslim pupils', and runs regular introductory courses on Islam with Oxford University's Department for Continuing Education.[90] The Department for Continuing Education says that one of the aims of its course 'Understanding Islam and the Muslims' (taught by Dr M. Afifi al-Akiti, an OCIS fellow), is 'to present the Muslim faith from an 'insiders' [*sic*] view and for what it is, but in an objective manner not merely from simplified judgements of the popular media'.[91] OCIS also seems to make occasional goodwill gestures, such as the donation of £100,000 to allow a new play area to be built in Oxford.[92]

OCIS has developed close relations with various branches of government. For example, on 2 November 2006, Harriet Harman, then minister of state for the Department for Constitutional Affairs, told Parliament that: 'My Department

86 'Council of the University', *Oxford University Gazette*, 12 January 2006, available at www.ox.ac.uk/gazette/2005-6/weekly/120106/acts.htm

87 'OCIS – Fellows', Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, available at www.oxcis.ac.uk/fellows.html

88 'OCIS – Research', Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, available at www.oxcis.ac.uk/research.html

89 'OCIS – Outreach', Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, available at www.oxcis.ac.uk/outreach.html

90 *ibid*.

91 'Course Details: Oxford University Department for Continuing Education', University of Oxford, available at www.conted.ox.ac.uk/courses/details.php?id=O08P748THW

92 'Swings and roundabouts', *Oxford Mail*, 4 August 2005, available at http://archive.oxfordmail.net/2005/8/4/87690.html

has developed a relationship with the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies (a body within Oxford University[93]). Although it has not advised me directly my officials consulted it on numerous occasions.'[94] From summer 2004, Farhad Nizami, the director of OCIS, was also the chairman of the advisory council of Wilton Park, an executive agency of the Foreign Office that specialises in holding conferences relating to international diplomacy.[95]

It seems likely that in the future OCIS will become more closely involved with Oxford University. In late 2007, the OCIS newsletter reported that Dr John Hood, Oxford's vice-chancellor, had visited OCIS, where he had 'discussed opportunities for the Centre, as a Recognised Independent Centre of the University, to expand its cooperation with the University, particularly with regard to its valued contribution to teaching and research in various faculties'.[96] The newsletter quoted Hood as saying that 'the university looks forward to developing the strong research, teaching and outreach linkages and associations with OCIS'.

OCIS's success in raising money from the private sector was specifically praised by Bill Rammell, then-Minister of State in the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills, during his visit to OCIS in 2007. OCIS's newsletter reported that he had

> emphasized the need to encourage support from the private sector to develop university endowments which could give provision for such wider access [and] expressed his support for the work of the Centre and its efforts to improve the quality of higher education teaching about Islam and the Muslim world.[97]

Rammell is also quoted on OCIS's website as saying that the 'Centre will be a real asset to the University and will greatly help to improve cross-faith and cultural understanding'.[98]

Donations

OCIS is almost entirely foreign funded, receiving the majority of its financial support from governments of nations with poor human rights records. As the total amount of publicly-announced donations falls short of the total cost of OCIS's new buildings, it is possible that many donations have not been publicly announced.

93 Harriet Harman appears to be mistaken in believing that OCIS is formally a part of Oxford University

94 'Constitutional Affairs: Committal Hearings', British Parliament, 2 November 2006, available at www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmhansrd/vo061102/text/61102w0001.htm

95 'Wilton Park Academic Council', Foreign and Commonwealth Office, available at http://foi.fco.gov.uk/en/access-information/Ndpbs/wilton-park-ac

96 *OCIS News*, Winter 2007, p.2, available at www.oxcis.ac.uk/newsletter/Winter%202007%20newsletter%20English.pdf

97 *ibid.*, p.4

98 'International Support', Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, available at www.oxcis.ac.uk/about2.html

KING FAHD BIN ABDUL AZIZ / KING ABDUL AZIZ FOUNDATION FOR RESEARCH AND ARCHIVES

King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz, who died in August 2005, served in a variety of roles within the Saudi Arabian government. These included acting as the nation's first education minister[1] (in which capacity he introduced the foundations of a nationwide school system); minister of the interior; and deputy prime minister after Khalid bin Abdul Aziz became king in 1975. His personal biography describes how, as deputy prime minister, he came to assume 'an increasingly active role in international affairs' and stresses 'how his relationship with U.S. officials deepened into one of mutual confidence'. Fahd also then played a 'major role in forming Arab, Muslim and international support in the effort for Kuwait's liberation'.[2]

Fahd was crowned king in 1982, and went on to introduce a number of political and administrative measures, including the 1992 Basic Law for the System of Government, which is described as outlining the government's 'goals and responsibilities and defines the relationship between the ruler and citizens'.[3] Human Rights Watch, however, has criticised the law, saying it was 'either silent or tentative on most universally recognized human rights. It does not, for example, ban extrajudicial killings, torture or cruel or inhuman punishment… The new laws do not ban discrimination on the basis of gender or religious beliefs. Neither do they protect free speech, assembly or association.'[4]

However the king has supervised projects to allow more than 2 million pilgrims to visit Mecca and Medina. For example, in 1985 the areas of the mosques were doubled to allow a larger number of Muslims to come and worship. He also donated funds for the restoration of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, the third holiest site for Muslims.[5]

King Fahd also established the King Abdul Aziz Foundation for Research and Archives, which he used to donate money to universities.

1 'Biography', King Fahd Bin Abdul Aziz, available at www.kingfahdbinabdulaziz.com/main/b20.htm

2 'Bio of late King Fahd bin Abdulaziz', Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia: Washington D.C., available at www.saudiembassy.net/Country/Government/bio-late-King-Fahd.asp

3 *ibid.*

4 *Empty Reforms: Saudi Arabia's New Basic Laws*, Middle East Watch (Human Rights Watch, 1992), p.1, available at www.hrw.org/reports/1992/saudi/INTROTHR.htm#TopOfPage

5 'Bio of late King Fahd bin Abdulaziz', Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia: Washington D.C.

❖ 1989 – OCIS receives £150,000 from the bin Laden family

In 1989, the bin Laden family donated £150,000 to establish the Bin Laden Visiting Fellowship, established in honour of Muhammad bin Laden, Osama's father.[99]

99 'A Nation Challenged: Scholarships Endowments From bin Ladens Prove Awkward', *New York Times*, 3 October 2001

- **1990 – OCIS receives an unspecified amount from Prince Bandar bin Sultan bin Abdul Aziz**

In 1990, five years after OCIS was founded, Prince Bandar bin Sultan bin Abdul Aziz agreed to underwrite the cost of constructing a permanent home for the centre.[100]

- **1992 – OCIS receives an unspecified amount from the sultan of Brunei**

In 1992, the sultan of Brunei announced the establishment of an international programme for the study of Islamic civilisation to be based at the centre.[101]

- **1997 – OCIS receives a £20 million donation from King Fahd of Saudi Arabia**

In 1997, King Fahd of Saudi Arabia gave £20 million to OCIS 'within the framework of King Fahd's constant efforts in the service of Islam throughout the world'[102] towards the construction of the new buildings at OCIS.[103] OCIS' new buildings are presently being completed on 3.25 acres of land purchased from Magdalen College, and state-run Saudi television said that 'His majesty's contribution falls within the context of his continued keenness on serving Islam worldwide.'[104]

- **1997 – OCIS receives a £2.5 million donation from the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences**

In 1997, the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) agreed to give OCIS £2.5 million for the Kuwait International Programme for the Study of the Islamic World.[105]

- **'Prior to 2000' – OCIS receives £1.25 million from Yayasan Albukhary**

Yayasan Albukhary, a Malaysian organisation, donated £1.25 million to OCIS prior to 2000,[106] in order to 'promote inter-faith understanding'.[107]

100 'Islam and the West', HRH Prince of Wales lecture to Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford, available at www.oxcis.ac.uk/lectures/PrOW.doc

101 *ibid*.

102 'King Fahd donates to U.K.'s Oxford Islamic Studies Centre', Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia: Washington D.C., 29 May 1997, available at www.saudiembassy.net/1997News/News/IslDetail.asp?cIndex=3993

103 'Islamic Centre Work Restarts', *Oxford Mail*, 8 January 2008, available at www.oxfordmail.net/search/display.var.1950184.0.islamic_centre_work_restarts.php

104 'Saudi king helps fund Islamic centre at Oxford', Reuters, 28 May 1997

105 'Kuwait backs international academic cooperation', *Kuwait Times*, 25 April 1999

106 'Syed Mokhtar: Bumiputera Conglomerate Icon', Islamic Da'wah Foundation Malaysia, 5 November 2007, available at www.yadim.com.my/english/Ulama/UlamaFull.asp?Id=82#

107 'Foundations of Charity', *Malaysian Business*, 16 September 2005, available at http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn6207/is_20050916/ai_n24909269/pg_3

- **2003 – OCIS receives £1.75 million from the Malaysian government and Yayasan Albukhary**

In 2003, £1.75 million was donated to OCIS by the Malaysian government to help fund the auditorium in the new OCIS building. The remainder of the money needed would come from Yayasan Albukhary.[108]

- **2006- OCIS receives approximately £2 million[109] from the Malaysian government**

In 2006, Malaysian carvings from Merbau timber worth RM12 million were donated to the OCIS auditorium by the Malaysian government. A craftsman from Malaysia was also sent to OCIS to help complete the project.

- **Ongoing work – total overall cost is estimated at £75 million[110]**

OCIS's new buildings have had money donated by 12 Islamic countries,[111] with Malaysia, Turkey, Yemen, UAE and Brunei all having made contributions to materials for the building's construction.[112]

Areas of concern

Lack of transparency on funding

The cost of OCIS's new buildings has vastly outweighed the donations that have been made available for public record, suggesting that some funding has not been publicly announced. None of the agreements with foreign donors have been made public, so there is no way of knowing under what terms the donations were signed.

OCIS's new buildings have so far reportedly cost £75 million, and were due to open in 2004.[113] However, while the outer structures, which include a 40-metre high minaret and a mosque dome 30 metres high, were completed in 2004, the interiors of the buildings are not yet finished. Dr David Browning, registrar of OCIS, said that this was because 'with many Islamic countries keen to contrib-

108 'Govt donates RM10.8 Million for Auditorium at Islamic Centre', *Bernama Daily Malaysian News*, 10 September 2003

109 Currency conversion as of 23 October 2008, via xe.com

110 It is unclear to what extent this figure includes the initial £20 million donation from King Fahd

111 'Work on Centre is Halted', *Oxford Mail*, 6 April 2007, available at www.oxfordmail.net/search/display.var.1313386.0.work_on_centre_is_halted.php

112 *ibid*.

113 'City Islamic centre delayed until 2009', *Oxford Mail*, 6 April 2007, available at http://archive.oxfordmail.net/2007/4/6/143409.html

KUWAIT FOUNDATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCES

The Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) is a private, non-profit organisation that was established by the amir of Kuwait in 1976 and that 'supports efforts related to modernization and scientific progress in Kuwait'.[1] Therefore it sponsors 'basic and applied research in such areas as natural science, engineering, economics and health',[2] with its focus on 'priorities such as environmental protection, pollution reduction, and the development of water resources, oil, and petrochemicals [and] also investigates cures for major health problems like diabetes'.[3]

The foundation is managed by a board of directors, chaired by HH the Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and comprising six members selected by Kuwait shareholding companies.[4] Its main source of funding comes from the Kuwait shareholding companies, although it is a non-profit organisation.

It also awards a yearly Kuwait Prize, which recognises 'outstanding achievement in the sciences and related realms by individuals of Arab extraction'.[5]

1 'MIT, Kuwait foundation announce partnership to advance management of water, energy resources', Massachusetts Institute of Technology News Room, 12 May, 2005, available at http://web.mit.edu/newsoffice/2005/kuwait.html

2 *ibid*.

3 'Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences: A global leader in scientific research', Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, available at www.unitedworld-usa.com/reports/kuwait/kuwaitfoundation.asp

4 'Kuwait Foundation for Advancement of Sciences', Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research: The Fourth Gulf Seismic Forum, available at www.kisr.edu.kw/webpages/earthquake/Kuwait%20Foundation%20for%20Advancement%20of%20Sciences%20(KFAS).htm

5 'MIT, Kuwait foundation announce partnership to advance management of water, energy resources', Massachusetts Institute of Technology News Room

ute materials, key decisions were still to be made about interior designs'.[114]

None of the agreements signed between OCIS and the funders are publicly available, meaning that there is no way of knowing the nature of these agreements and whether the donations were in any way conditional. OCIS could do much to clear up any misgivings by showing greater transparency with regard to donations from foreign sources, especially from those with questionable human rights records.

■ Questionable quality of trustees

A significant number of current or former OCIS trustees are prominent Islamists, religious conservatives or members of foreign governments with poor human rights records.

114 *ibid*.

OCIS has a board of 13 trustees. Several of them are prominent Islamists,[115] while others represent foreign governments with poor human rights records. Examples of high-profile Islamists include Abdullah Omar Nasseef,[116] formerly the vice-chancellor of the Saudi King Abdul Aziz University and, from 1983 to 1993, secretary-general of the Muslim World League, which was created in 1962 and, according to the Jamestown Foundation, is 'a primary tool for disseminating Wahhabi ideology worldwide'.[117] Abdullah Gül, the president of Turkey and a leading member of Turkey's Islamist AK party, is also a trustee.[118]

Many former trustees are also leading Islamist or religious conservatives. Yusuf al-Qaradawi, widely described as the spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, has also served as a trustee.[119] Al-Qaradawi has said that Palestinian suicide bombers are committing 'martyrdom in the name of God';[120] has called homosexuality an 'abominable practice' that may require execution of gays in order 'to maintain the purity of the Islamic society and to keep it clean of perverted elements'; supported female genital mutilation, saying that 'whoever finds it serving the interest of his daughters should do it, and I personally support this under the current circumstances in the modern world'; and believes that any apostate from Islam is a 'traitor to his religion and his people and thus deserves killing'.[121]

Another former trustee is Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi,[122] an Indian cleric closely associated with Jamaat-e-Islami in his earlier years,[123] and in his later years Tablighi Jamaat[124] – both highly conservative Islamic groups. Nadwi is a founding mem-

115 An Islamist is defined as someone who believes Islam is a political ideology, and is in fact inseparable from Islam as a religion. As part of this world view, Islamists tend to believe that state sovereignty belongs to Allah, the imposition of Sharia law is a religious duty, and the Muslim *ummah* should unite in seeking to increase the influence of what they view as a purer version of Islam within all sections of society

116 'Dr Abdullah Omar Nasseef', Dr Abdullah Omar Nasseef, available at http://drabdullahomarnasseef.org/biodata.html

117 Evgenii Novikov, 'The World Muslim League: Agent of Wahhabi Propagation in Europe', The Jamestown Foundation, Vol. 3, Issue 9, 6 May 2005, available at www.jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2369686

118 *OCIS News*, Vol. 46, Winter 2007, available at www.oxcis.ac.uk/newsletter/Winter%20 2007%20newsletter%20English.pdf

119 'Reform Religious Obligation: Qaradawi', *Islam Online*, available at www.islamonline.net/English/News/2004-08/27/article05.shtml

120 Al-Qaradawi full transcript, *BBC Newsnight*, 8 July 2004, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/newsnight/3875119.stm

121 Nick Cohen, 'Ken has a lot to be sorry for', *Observer*, 20 February 2005, available at www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2005/feb/20/london.politicalcolumnists

122 'The Oxbridge Connection', Q-News, December 2003, p.21, available at http://q-news.co.uk/352.pdf

123 'Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi', *Milli Gazette*, available at www.milligazette.com/Archives/15-1-2000/Art17.htm

124 'Nadwi, Abul Hasan Ali', *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, available at www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e1686?_hi=0&_pos=11

ber of the Saudi-sponsored Muslim World League,[125] and wrote the preface to a book widely circulated across the Muslim world entitled *Iranian Revolution: Imam Khomeini and Shiism*, which denounced Shiism by using 'Iranian excesses as proof that Shiism was beyond the Islamic pale'.[126]

Several current trustees are representatives of foreign governments. These include Prince Turki al-Faisal bin Abdul-Aziz, the former head of the Saudi intelligence service, and Easa Saleh al-Gurg, the UAE's ambassador to the UK. Other trustees include respected Oxford academics, such as Andrew Graham, the master of Balliol College, Oxford, and distinguished civil servant Sir Marrack Goulding, a former under secretary-general of the United Nations.

■ OCIS undertaking diplomacy and funder oversight

It appears that OCIS maintains close contact with its foreign donors, with OCIS often presenting visits from donors as the institute performing a diplomatic function.

The centre regularly receives visits from members of the foreign governments that fund the centre. The most recent edition of OCIS's newsletter reports that Brunei's minister of higher education had visited the centre. The newsletter says that:

> Brunei Minister of Higher Education, Pehin Awang Haji Abdul Rahman bin Dato Setia Haji Mohamed Taib, visited the Centre with a delegation from his Ministry in Hilary Term. The visit provided an opportunity to review the Centre's cooperative agreements with institutions of Higher Education in Brunei.[127]

Similarly, a visit from a UAE minister was presented by the same newsletter in a way that underlined the UAE's links to the new centre:

> To mark the strong ties between the Centre and the United Arab Emirates, HE Sheikha Lubna Al-Qassimi, Minister of Economy visited the Centre in Hilary Term. She was received by the Director and Registrar and was introduced to senior academic staff. Sheikha Lubna also visited the new building which has received support from the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan. Sheikha Lubna expressed pleasure at the association of her country with the Centre's new building, and the hope that this would provide opportunities for strengthening cooperation with academic institutions in the United Arab Emirates.[128]

This was also the case following a visit from a Jordanian minister for Islamic affairs:

125 *ibid*.

126 Vali Nasr, *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future* (W. W. Norton & Co, 2007), p.164

127 *OCIS News*, Winter 2007, Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, available at www.oxcis.ac.uk/newsletter/Winter%202007%20newsletter%20English.pdf

128 *ibid*.

YAYASAN ALBUKHARY

Yayasan Albukhary was founded in 1996 by Syed Mokhtar al-Bukhary, listed by Forbes as the seventh richest man in Malaysia, with assets valued at RM 6.6 billion (approximately £1 billion).[1] According to the Islamic Da'wah Foundation Malaysia (YADIM), Yayasan Albukhary was established in March 1996 to 'aid the poor, support Islamic arts and culture and promote civilisational understanding'.[2] The foundation consists of two components: the section that carries out charity work, and a corporate arm that contributes 'a portion of its profits to the foundation'.[3]

The company is said to have spent over RM 300 million (approx £48 million) on 'religious, cultural [and educational activities'.[4] This has included the construction of mosques, medical centres, community centres and art museums. It also distributes scholarships. Donations are not restricted to Malaysia, and money has been given to nations in the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), which describes itself as 'the collective voice of the Muslim world… ensuring to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony among various people of the world'. The OIC was created in 1969 following what it says was the 'criminal arson of Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied Jerusalem'.[5]

The foundation also contributes to humanitarian causes, such as through a donation to the Lebanese [Humanitarian Fund in order to 'lessen the burden suffered by people of that country, who [are victims of Israel's atrocity'.[6] It likewise gave $500,000 to the Iranian government after the 2003 earthquake.[7]

The foundation 'also helps non-Islamic based organisations'. For example, it gave RM 1 million (approximately £160,000) to the Langkawi [Project, an attempt spearheaded by the Malaysian Chinese Association to improve education in rural areas of Malaysia.[8]

1 'Syed Mokhtar: Bumiputera Conglomerate Icon', Islamic Da'wah Foundation Malaysia, available at www.yadim.com.my/english/Ulama/UlamaFull.asp?Id=82

2 'Business With A Heart', Malaysian Business, 16 August 2003, available at: http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn6207/is_20030816/ai_n24906608/pg_1?tag=artBody;col1

3 *ibid.*

4 'Syed Mokhtar: Bumiputera Conglomerate Icon', Islamic Da'wah Foundation Malaysia

5 'About OIC', Organisation of the Islamic Conference, available at www.oic-oci.org/oicnew/page_detail.asp?p_id=52

6 'Syed Mokhtar: Bumiputera Conglomerate Icon', Islamic Da'wah Foundation Malaysia

7 'RM 1.9m for quake victims', *Asia Africa Intelligence Wire,* 31 December 2003, available at www.accessmylibrary.com/coms2/summary_0286-19867817_ITM

8 'Syed Mokhtar: Bumiputera Conglomerate Icon', Islamic Da'wah Foundation Malaysia

The Jordanian Minister of Awqaf [Islamic endowments] and Islamic Affairs, HE Mr Abdul Fattah Salah visited during Trinity Term. The Minister viewed an exhibition about the Centre's work and met with its senior members. The visit provided an opportunity to review the Centre's long-standing academic links with Jordan and to explore possibilities for strengthening and extending them.[129]

129 *ibid.*

There has also been an occasion when a donation from a foreign government for a specific purpose allowed it a degree of oversight over the project. Upon the donation of Malaysian carvings to the OCIS auditorium in 2006, a sub-committee was established to monitor the project, which was chaired jointly by an OCIS representative and the Malaysian government's secretary-general, Azizah Abod.[130]

There have been occasions when financial support for OCIS has resulted in other benefits for foreign governments. For example, Abdullah Gül, then Turkey's foreign minister (now its president) and an OCIS trustee, announced in 2005 at a dinner in support of OCIS that Istanbul would lend its name to the entry court of a new building at OCIS. The Turkish Foreign Ministry said this was 'a major opportunity for publicizing our country, and it should be viewed in the best way possible'.[131]

■ Accepting donations from governments with poor human rights records

OCIS has received large donations from nations with poor human rights records. It has also on occasion provided them with a platform to give a one-sided view on conditions within that country.

Reporting on events in 1997, the year of Oxford's acceptance of King Fahd's £20 million donation, Human Rights Watch said that:

> The government of Saudi Arabia…continued to violate a broad array of civil and political rights, allowing no criticism of the government, no political parties, nor any other potential challenges to its system of government. The use of arbitrary arrest and incommunicado detention, torture, and corporal and capital punishment was common…Muslim religious practices deemed heterodox by government-appointed Islamic scholars, and all non-Muslim religious practices, were banned and subject to criminal prosecution.[132]

In 1997, commenting on the Saudi donation, Professor Akbar Ahmed, a Cambridge academic, told the *Financial Times* that: 'it is a big minus that the money is so directly linked to one family. It means that there has to be a "line" on something when research is carried out'.[133]

On 24 February 2005, the Saudi foreign minister, Prince Saud al-Faisal, gave a speech at OCIS entitled 'Overcoming Disconnect'. Prince Saud used the opportunity to defend the Saudi government's ideology, telling the audience that

130 'Malaysian carvings adorn Oxford Centre', *Organisation of Asia-Pacific News Agencies*, 18 May 2006

131 'Oxford and "Istanbul" side by side in London', *ANK – Turkish Daily News*, 20 June 2005

132 Human Rights Watch World Report 1998: Events of 1997, Human Rights Watch, 1998, p.343-344

133 'British Muslims Monthly Survey for May 1997- Oxford Centre building', University of Birmingham Artsweb, available at http://artsweb.bham.ac.uk/bmms/1997/05May97.html#Oxford%20Centre%20building

'Saudi Arabia is thrust towards assuming a position of influence and authority to maintain the moral tradition and the purity of Islam', dismissing calls for faster political reform, and saying that the government would 'follow our own measured pace'. He then went on to describe 'the plight of the Palestinian people' as the 'greatest human-rights crisis in the modern history of our region'.[134] However, the Human Rights Watch report of the same year had the following to say on what a Saudi desire 'to maintain the moral tradition and the purity of Islam' had meant for Saudi Arabian human rights:

> Human rights violations are pervasive in Saudi Arabia…in recent years, the government has carried out a campaign of harassment and intimidation of Saudi Arabian human rights defenders…Arbitrary detention, mistreatment and torture of detainees…remain serious concerns.[135]

The year prior to the prince's speech, Amnesty International had commented that:

> Torture and ill-treatment remained rife [and] at least 50 people were executed. Over a dozen foreign nationals were forcibly handed over to their governments. Around 3,500 Iraqi refugees remained as virtual prisoners in Rafha camp.[136]

134 'Overcoming Disconnect: Statement of HRH Prince Saud Al Faisal the Saudi Foreign Minister, February 24, 2005', Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, available at www.oxcis.ac.uk/lectures/Saud%20al-Faisal.doc

135 Human Rights Watch World Report 2005: Events of 2004, Human Rights Watch, p.480

136 *Amnesty International Report 2004 – Saudi Arabia*, Amnesty International, 26 May 2004, UNHCR Refworld, available at www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/40b5a2010.html

University of Cambridge

Cambridge University is an example of how funding has had a significant impact upon how the university is run. Recent donations have been attached with conditions that could lead to donors gaining oversight via university Management Committees. While the principal donor's intentions seem honourable, a precedent appears to have been set where wealthy donors can influence the running of an independent academic institution.

Donations

- **1996 – Cambridge receives a £1.2 million donation from the Zayed Bin Sultan Nahayan Charitable and Humanitarian Foundation**

Cambridge University was given £1.2 million by the Zayed Bin Sultan Nahayan Charitable and Humanitarian Foundation of the United Arab Emirates. This allowed the university to appoint a full-time religious lecturer specialising in Islam.[137]

- **2001 – Cambridge receives 'approximately £1 million' from the trustees of the estate of Fereidoun Soudavar and his wife**

The Ali Reza And Mohamed Soudavar Fund For Persian Studies was created after a donation from Fereidoun Soudavar. Furthermore, in 2001, Cambridge accepted an unspecified amount of money from the trustees of the estate of Soudavar and his wife.[138] The money was used to establish the Ali Reza And Mohamed Soudavar Lectureship Fund. Cambridge has not published the full amount of the donation; however at the time, in May 2001 the *Cambridge University Reporter* said that the amount totalled 'approximately £1m'.[139] Money from this fund has been used to pay for research studentships[140] and to support cultural events at Cambridge University relevant to Iran.[141]

137 'Islamic Studies post', British Muslims Monthly Survey, March 1996, Vol. IV, No. 3, p.11, available at http://artsweb.bham.ac.uk/bmms/1996/03March96.html#Hamas%20funding%20accusation

138 Soudavar is not listed as a major donor in this report as donations only topped the £1 million mark posthumously, via the trustees of his estate

139 'Notice of Benefactions', Cambridge University Reporter, 14 May 2001, available at www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/2000-01/weekly/5846/2.html

140 'Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies', University of Cambridge, available at www.ames.cam.ac.uk/dmes/islamic/index.html

141 For example, 'Thirty Years of Solitude: Iranian Women Photographers and Film Directors', University of Cambridge, New Hall, available at www.newhall.cam.ac.uk/events/2007.html#tys

❖ 2005 – Cambridge receives a £3.1 million donation from Sultan Qaboos bin Said

Sultan Qaboos bin Said, the Sultan of Oman, donated £2.8 million to establish a Professorship of Modern Arabic, known as the 'His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said Professorship of Modern Arabic', located in the Faculty of Oriental Studies. Bin Said also gave a further £300,000 to support a Fellowship in Oriental Studies at Pembroke College.[142]

Cambridge Vice-Chancellor Professor Alison Richard said 'This generous endowment will enhance the teaching of Arabic at Cambridge, benefiting not just our students but the UK as a whole.'[143]

❖ 2008 – Cambridge receives £8 million from Prince Alwaleed of Saudi Arabia

In one of the largest ever such donations, Cambridge received £8m from Prince Alwaleed of Saudi Arabia, through the Kingdom Foundation, to establish the HRH Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Centre of Islamic Studies. A press release issued by Cambridge University on 8 May 2008 said:

> The Cambridge-based HRH Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Centre of Islamic Studies will enable the development of a 'constructive and critical awareness of the role of Islam in wider society', initially through research programmes on Islam in the United Kingdom and Europe, and Islam and the media. It will also run various public programmes, such as public lectures, conferences and summer schools, designed to promote understanding of Islam in the wider world. Policy-makers and other public figures will be invited to become visiting fellows at the Centre and take part in its research programmes.[144]

❖ The E.G. Browne Memorial Fund – unknown amount

Cambridge also offers the E.G. Browne Memorial Research Studentship in Iranian or Persian Studies, established in 1960, and 'of which the emolument is provided by the Iranian Government'. Cambridge specify that the studentship 'shall be offered for competition in each year for so long as the Iranian Government shall continue the benefaction'; however the exact amount donated is unclear, only being described as 'such sum as may be provided by the Iranian Government'.[145]

142 'Sultan of Oman funds Professorship of Modern Arabic at University of Cambridge', News and Events –University of Cambridge, 4 July 2005, available at www.admin.cam.ac.uk/news/press/dpp/2005070401

143 'Cambridge and Edinburgh Universities announce new Centres for Islamic Studies', News and Events – University of Cambridge, 8 May 2008, available at www.admin.cam.ac.uk/news/dp/2008050801

144 *ibid*.

145 'Chapter XII: Trust Emoluments', *University of Cambridge Statutes and Ordinances 2008*, p.737

SULTAN QABOOS BIN SAID AL SAID

Sultan Qaboos became the Sultan of Oman in 1970 when he overthrew his father. He has largely been seen as a moderate and progressive leader, and the CIA has said that domestically 'his extensive modernization program has opened the country to the outside world while preserving the longstanding close ties with the UK', while their 'moderate, independent foreign policy has sought to maintain good relations with all Middle Eastern countries'.[1]

According to the Omani Ministry of Information, some of the sultan's notable achievements have included a 662 per cent increase in the number of children receiving education, as well as free schooling for girls; the construction of a university where 'the government subsidises the study fees, books, food and on-campus accommodation, as well as public transport to and from the University'; and a life expectancy increase from 49.3 years in 1970 to 72 years in 1999.[2]

The Ministry of Information states that, in 1996, Oman passed the Basic Law of the State, which sought 'to clarify every aspect of the state apparatus and to address the fundamental rights and duties of the Omani citizen. The Basic Law guarantees the equality of all citizens before the law, freedom of religion and of speech, a free press, the right to a fair trial and the right to create national associations'.[3] However the law has been criticised by the likes of Nikolaus Siegfried, as 'the civil liberties it grants do not extend to the public sphere…Oman's Basic Law does nothing more than to freeze the status quo, according to which the Sultan remains the only recognized authority in the state'.[4]

Oman itself is largely dependent on its oil supplies, although it is currently pursuing a diversification programme, and has tried to liberalise the market with a variety of free trade agreements. Politically, it is also relatively moderate for a Gulf state. For example, in 1990 the Majlis al-Shura, described as 'an Islamic-style council that has no formal powers but is consulted by… Sultan Qaboos on new laws and public policy',[5] was formally established. Qaboos has also allowed parliamentary elections to select who should make up this council. Although the sultan initially had the final say as to who sat (irrespective of how many votes they received), by 2000 this had also been relaxed.[6] As of 2003, suffrage was extended to all citizens over 21, and at the time of the 2007 elections, in a nation of approximately 3 million people, 388,000 were eligible to vote.[7] There were formerly two women on the 84-seat council; however, both lost their seats in the 2007 elections.[8]

1 'The CIA World Factbook: Oman', Central Intelligence Agency, available at www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mu.html

2 'Tribute to His Majesty, Sultan Qaboos bin Said', Ministry of Information: Sultanate of Oman, available at www.omanet.om/english/government/hmspage/tribute.asp

3 'Wise Leader', Ministry of Information: Sultanate of Oman, available at www.omanet.om/english/hmsq/hmsq1.asp

4 Nikolaus A Siegfried, 'Legislation and Legitimation in Oman: The Basic Law', *Islamic Law and Society*, Vol. 7, No. 3, 2000, pp. 359-397(39)

5 'Election test for Oman', *BBC News*, 14th September 2000, available at *news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/923671.stm*

6 *ibid*.

7 'Oman Shura poll results trickle in', *Gulf News*, 28 October 2007, available at http://archive.gulfnews.com/articles/07/10/27/10163372.html

8 'Democracy at our own pace', *The Middle East*, December 2007, available at http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2742/is_/ai_n25015912

Areas of concern

■ The running of the university is potentially altered by the donation

Prince Alwaleed has considerable influence over the Alwaleed Centre through its Committee of Management, of whom three members (out of a minimum of five, or maximum of ten), can be Alwaleed's appointments. The committee is also establishing an advisory group whose membership includes representatives of Alwaleed. While academics have protested about this, the university has dismissed fears that Alwaleed has excessive control.

Cambridge's website says that the centre's work is

> led by a director…appointed by the Board on the recommendation of the Centre's Committee of Management. The Committee of Management will include members appointed by the General Board and members nominated by HRH Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal.

It goes on to explain that this Committee of Management will include:

> (*a*) the Chairman of the Council of the School of Arts and Humanities who shall be Chairman;
>
> (*b*) a representative of the Department of Middle Eastern Studies;
>
> (*c*) the Director of the Centre;
>
> (*d*) no fewer than two other members appointed by the General Board including one on the recommendation of the Council of the School of the Humanities and Social Sciences and one on the recommendation of the Faculty Board of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies;
>
> (*e*) up to three persons nominated by HRH Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal;
>
> (*f*) up to two additional persons co-opted at the discretion of the Committee, provided that it shall not be obligatory to co-opt any person.

The Committee of Management therefore contains a minimum of five people and a maximum of ten. Of these, up to three may be appointed by Alwaleed – as well as the director who is both a member of this board, and is also appointed by it. In addition, the committee is instructed 'to appoint at their discretion an advisory group comprising eminent persons who can assist in the development of the Centre and whose membership shall include representatives of HRH Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal'.[146]

146 'Chapter IX: Faculties, Departments, and other institutions under the supervision of the General Board', *University of Cambridge Statutes and Ordinances 2008*, p.621, available at www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/so/pdfs/cso_4_ordinance09.557_636.pdf

Furthermore, the General Board's report makes clear that the centre will be explicitly held to account by Prince Alwaleed:

> The Committee of Management shall prepare annual estimates for submission to the General Board and shall submit written reports at least twice a year to HRH Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal.[147]

Cambridge have responded to this by stating that this is 'an act of courtesy and good donor stewardship', and 'does not imply that the Centre is accountable to the donor'.

Alwaleed's influence over the Centre also extends to the fact that the university can only 'have the power to alter these regulations by Grace on the recommendation of the Managers, subject to the approval of HRH Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal'.[148] Cambridge has stated that this clause was inserted in order to protect Alwaleed from 'arbitrary or capricious alterations of regulations' by the university itself.

The decision to grant Alwaleed such influence over the university was soon questioned by Cambridge academic Professor Richard Bowring, professor of Japanese Studies at the University of Cambridge and Master of Selwyn College. At a discussion in the University's Senate House on 18 March 2008, Bowring congratulated the university for establishing the Alwaleed Centre, but also voiced some of worries.[149] He said that while he applauded the decision to give the Alwaleed Centre independence from the university's usual system of faculties and departments, labelling it a 'sensible precedent', he conceded that this amounted to 'a complete reversal of previously stated policy on where to situate such centres'. He added that it was 'a little depressing to see academic policy so openly revealed to be driven by financial considerations' and that 'in the absence of any indication to the contrary, one must assume that such a volte face on the part of the General Board was in response to outside pressure'.

> "... A little depressing to see academic policy so openly revealed to be driven by financial considerations..."

He added:

> I note that the arrangements for the Committee of Management make it possible (though not, I admit, probable) that five members would be external (classes ***e*** and ***f***) and five members (classes ***a, b, c, d***) internal to the University. I am sure that the General Board would not allow this to happen but it seems unwise to even allow the possibility.

147 'Report of the General Board on the establishment of a HRH Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Centre of Islamic Studies and related matters', *Cambridge University Reporter*, available at www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/2007-08/weekly/6105/10.html

148 'Chapter XII: Trust Emoluments', *University of Cambridge Statutes and Ordinances 2008*, p.722

149 'Report of the General Board on the establishment of a HRH Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Centre of Islamic Studies and related matters', *Cambridge University Reporter*

On 23 April, the university's General Board published a response, which rejected Bowring's fear that the new Centre enjoyed excessive independence and that Alwaleed enjoyed too much influence over the management committee, saying that the centre's constitution 'contains adequate provision for oversight by, and representation of, the relevant Schools consistent with the Board's general policy'.[150] Cambridge has reassured that Professor Bowring is content with the General Board's response to his concerns.

There is a similar concern over the 2001 Soudavar donation. Cambridge University ordinances state that the donation towards Persian Studies should be used 'for the promotion and encouragement of Persian Studies in the University, by such means as the Managers shall think fit'.[151] The fund's board of managers contains five people. While three are university staff, however, two represent the donors.[152] Similarly, the lectureship in Persian Studies is controlled by a board of four members of the university's staff – one of whom is to be nominated to the board by the trustees of Soudavar's estate.[153]

In response to the issues raised in this report, Cambridge have said that the 'the influence that a donor might potentially have through the right to nominate a representative on a specific management committee is over-stated.' Furthermore:

> 'The acceptance of…donations only takes place after detailed consultation with the academic authorities and academics concerned and, if the gift involves new academic initiatives, with the General Board…The process for acceptance of donations for specific purposes is therefore thorough and transparent involving scrutiny by the Faculty Board, Council of School and ultimately by the General Board to ensure that the independence and integrity of the University are maintained'.

■ Academic integrity conflicting with outreach

An academic has expressed his worry that academic integrity at Cambridge could be compromised in favour of 'outreach' designed to achieve the wishes of the funder. Cambridge have denied that such a danger exists, stressing that the donors understand that academic integrity is 'absolutely sacrosanct'.

While being in favour of Prince Alwaleed's benefaction, in March 2008 Professor Bowring raised concerns as to the implications for impartial academia following the Alwaleed donation, saying:

> While we are all in favour of 'an informed understanding of Islam in today's societies', it should be recognized that although Schedule I, item 5(***a***) mentions 'the twin paths of high quality research and effective outreach' the details in 5(***b-i***) are overwhelmingly

150 *ibid.*

151 'Chapter XII: Trust Emoluments', *University of Cambridge Statutes and Ordinances 2008*, p.890

152 *ibid.*

153 *ibid.*

> concerned with matters of public outreach. It would be unfortunate if this bias apparent in the drafting became a guiding principle by default. Outreach may be important but must always remain secondary to scholarship in a University such as ours.[154]

While the Alwaleed Centre has said that its first objective is 'to create…a world-class cadre of researchers at the postgraduate and postdoctoral levels',[155] the university press release of 7 May 2008 also stressed the importance of the new centre's role in outreach and changing public perceptions of Islam, saying:

> The Cambridge-based HRH Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Centre of Islamic Studies will enable the development of a 'constructive and critical awareness of the role of Islam in wider society,' initially through research programmes on Islam in the United Kingdom and Europe, and Islam and the media.
>
> It will also run various public programmes, such as public lectures, conferences and summer schools, designed to promote understanding of Islam in the wider world. Policy-makers and other public figures will be invited to become visiting fellows at the Centre and take part in its research programmes.[156]

Quotes in the same press release from Yasir Suleiman, director of the Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at Cambridge and a key figure in obtaining the funding,[157] were also insufficiently clear in highlighting the academic worth of the project to UK education. Instead, they focussed on the diplomatic function of the institute, and how it was to carry out the aims, albeit laudable ones, of its chief funder:

> We intend to create a world-class cadre of researchers and build partnerships with other centres and members of the European Muslim community to advance tolerance, mutual understanding and cross-cultural dialogue between Islam and the West.[158]

These sentiments mirrored Prince Alwaleed's belief in the role of the Centre:

> It is paramount for both Islam and the West to reach mutual ground for pro-active dialogue, respect, acceptance and tolerance. We are determined to continue building the

154 Report of the General Board on the establishment of a HRH Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Centre of Islamic Studies and related matters', *Cambridge University Reporter*

155 *ibid*.

156 'New Centre for Islamic Studies', University of Edinburgh, available at www.ed.ac.uk/news/all-news/islamic-studies-centre

157 On 18th March 2008, at a discussion in the University's Senate House, Professor H.J. Van de Ven, the Chairman of the Faculty Board of the Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, said of Alwaleed's donation that "The possibility of this benefaction has come about as the result of the very hard work since last spring of Professor Yasir Suleiman, the Professor of Modern Arabic Studies" as well as the chair of the Council of the School of Arts and Humanities, and Mr Peter Agar, the Director of the Development Office.

158 'New Centre for Islamic Studies', University of Edinburgh

> bridge between Islam and the West for peace and humanity.[159]

Suleiman has since attempted to soothe fears as to the affect of funding on academic integrity, saying:

> We have made contact with our colleagues in the States and have been assured there have been absolutely no attempts at interference at any stage. There is a very clear understanding in the Kingdom Foundation that if these centres are to be seen as academically respectable their integrity is absolutely sacrosanct.[160]

The main concern here is not over how university output will be affected by this donor specifically, but instead that a worrying precedent has been set where donors are allowed to have a say in guiding the aims of an academic institute in return for a large donation. Cambridge have responded by saying that it is 'unthinkable that the University would choose to put its reputation at risk in return for a gift'.

■ Cambridge accepting money from governments with poor human rights records

The University of Cambridge has received donations from the Iranian government, who are widely acknowledged as having an extremely poor human rights record.

Cambridge has specified that it will continue to offer its E.G. Browne Memorial Research Studentship 'for so long as the Iranian Government shall continue the benefaction'.[161] However the Iranian government have consistently and flagrantly violated human rights domestically. For example, Amnesty International has recently commented that:

> The authorities continued to suppress dissent. Journalists, writers, scholars, and women's rights and community activists were subject to arbitrary arrest, travel bans, closure of their NGOs and harassment. Armed opposition, mainly by Kurdish and Baluchi groups, continued, as did state repression of Iran's minority communities. Discrimination against women remained entrenched in law and practice. Torture and other ill-treatment were widespread in prisons and detention centres. A security clampdown announced in April was marked by a sharp rise in executions; at least 335 people were executed, among them seven child offenders. Sentences of stoning to death, amputation and flogging continued to be passed and carried out.[162]

159 'Saudi prince gives universities £16m for study of Islam', *Independent*, 8 May 2008, available at www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/saudi-prince-gives-universities-16316m-for-study-of-islam-822827.html

160 'Saudi prince donates £16m to improve Islamic studies', *Times Higher Education*, 8 May 2008, available at www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storyCode=401799&sectioncode=26

161 'Chapter XII: Trust Emoluments', *University of Cambridge Statutes and Ordinances 2008*, p.890

162 *Amnesty International Report 2008* – Iran, Amnesty International, available at http://thereport.amnesty.org/eng/regions/middle-east-and-north-africa/iran

Furthermore, Human Rights Watch has commented that 'the government routinely tortures and mistreats detained dissidents', that

> Iranian authorities systematically suppress freedom of expression and opinion by closing newspapers and imprisoning journalists and editors… the authorities have subjected those imprisoned for peaceful expression of political views to torture and ill-treatment, including beatings, sleep deprivation, and mock executions, with judges often accepting forced confessions.[163]

Iran's ethnic and religious minorities are also regularly persecuted; and in 2008 alone, Iran executed seven minors. This accounts for more than 80 per cent of juvenile worldwide executions during the past three and a half years.[164]

The Iranian government's human rights abuses are widely known; and it would be unfortunate that an institute as respected worldwide as Cambridge could be financially relying on the Iranian regime for a research studentship. Cambridge has reassured that they have received no donations to the fund for at least ten years, and that the money still in the trust fund is spent 'in accordance with university regulations'.

163 *Human Rights Watch World Report 2007*, Human Rights Watch, (Seven Stories Press, 2007), p.463-64

164 'Iran hangs seventh juvenile offender this year', Human Rights Watch, 4 November 2008, available at www.hrw.org/en/news/2008/11/04/iran-hangs-seventh-juvenile-offender-year

University of Edinburgh

There are concerns that the university's independence and autonomy appears to be undermined by the advisory committee of Edinburgh's new centre, which is partly made up of nominees of Prince Alwaleed's Kingdom Foundation. The university has strongly denied that this will affect academic output.

Donations

- **1982 – Edinburgh receives an unspecified amount from the University of Baghdad**

A permanent professorial post, the Iraq Chair of Arabic and Islamic Studies, was established thanks to what the University of Edinburgh website describes as a 'handsome endowment' from the University of Baghdad in Iraq.[165] Baghdad University was a state-run institution under the Saddam Hussein regime, and the year that Edinburgh received its donation, Amnesty International had reported that officially over 350 people had been executed in Iraq.[166] In 1981, the year before Edinburgh accepted the donation, the Committee Against Repression in Iraq published biographies of 798 executed Iraqis and 428 unsentenced detainees and missing persons. There were a further 264 Iraqis who had been killed but were unidentified.[167]

> "… But will also benefit from the input of an Advisory Board involving members appointed by the Kingdom Foundation and senior managers within the University"

- **2008 – Edinburgh receives £8 million from Prince Alwaleed**

Edinburgh University's 2008 deal with Prince Alwaleed, through the Kingdom Foundation, for a sum of £8m was the greatest recent influx of foreign cash to enter the university. It was announced on the same day as the donation to Cambridge, and Edinburgh's website reported that the university had 'recently received a large donation to establish the Alwaleed Bin Talal Centre of the Study of Islam in the Contemporary World'.[168] Carole Hillenbrand, head of Edinburgh's department of Islamic and Middle Eastern studies, said: 'This is the biggest thing to hit Islamic studies in the UK ever'.[169]

165 'About the Department – Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies', University of Edinburgh, available at www.imes.ed.ac.uk/index_pages/department/about_us.html

166 *Amnesty International* – 1982 Annual Report, Amnesty International, (London: Amnesty International Publications, 1982)

167 *Nahnu Nadeen*, French Committee Against Repression in Iraq (Paris, 1981) cited in Kanan Makiya, *Republic of Fear: The Politics of Modern Iraq* (University of California Press, 1998), pp.63-64

168 'Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies', Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies department at the University of Edinburgh, available at www.imes.ed.ac.uk/

169 'Saudi prince donates £16m to improve Islamic studies', *Times Higher Education*, 8 May 2008, available at www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storyCode=401799&sectioncode=26

Areas of concern

■ Neutrality of the advisory board

The new Edinburgh centre's advisory board will be partly made up of nominees of Prince Alwaleed's Kingdom Foundation.

Just as at Cambridge, Edinburgh University's new centre has Prince Alwaleed's nominees sitting on its advisory board. The minutes of the meeting, available on the website of the Central Management Group, outline the centre's role and management structure:

> The Centre will be based within the department of IMES in the School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures, although it will draw upon the expertise of colleagues in Anthropology, Politics, Geography, Divinity and Education. It will be managed from IMES, but will also benefit from the input of an Advisory Board involving members appointed by the Kingdom Foundation and senior managers within the University.[170]

The university has confirmed that the proposed structure of the advisory board will involve four of its eighteen members being nominated by the Kingdom Foundation.

■ Conflicts of interest between research and conducting 'outreach'

The centre has strenuously denied that there will be any agenda being pushed by the university; however, academics involved have stated that they aim to have an activist role in changing perceptions of Islam.

The potential conflict of interest between conducting impartial research, on the one hand, and outreach, on the other, has already been highlighted in other examples, especially where 'outreach' implies a quasi-diplomatic role for the institution.

On 26 March 2008, the University of Edinburgh's Central Management Group met to discuss the establishment of the HRH Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Centre for the Study of Islam in the Contemporary World. An agreement seems to have been reached that places the university's traditional commitment to conducting impartial research and teaching at risk of becoming compromised in the interests of conducting 'outreach':

> The gift of £8million from HRH Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal will enable us to endow a Chair to direct the Centre, two postdoctoral fellows, three PhD studentships, a projects manager, and a series of outreach projects. The focus of the Centre will be on research projects and outreach and dissemination activities within the UK, aimed at fostering a

170 'University of Edinburgh Central Management Group', University of Edinburgh Governance and Strategic Planning section, 26 March 2008, p.4, www.planning.ed.ac.uk/Governance/CMG/Pub/20080326/PaperI-Centres.pdf

> deeper understanding between the Muslim world and the West.[171]

In interviews and press releases to mark the official creation of the centre, academics again emphasised its activist role and its aim of changing perceptions of Islam. For example, in a press release issued by the University on 8 May 2008, Professor Sir Timothy O'Shea, the university's principal, was quoted as saying that:

> The University of Edinburgh is honoured to be entrusted with the task of creating this centre, which will foster deeper understanding between the Muslim world and the West through the twin paths of effective outreach and high-quality research.[172]

The head of the department for Islamic and Middle Eastern studies is the Professor Carole Hillenbrand. Hillenbrand has said that the new centre will seek to 'improve understanding of Islam' and

> build bridges…there is ignorance and phobia about Islam. Our major aim is to improve public knowledge of Islam, not just in the present context but about the many, many achievements of the Muslim world in the past. If you improve knowledge you improve understanding, and we can really build bridges.[173]

Responding to the possibility that the donation could harm academic neutrality, Hillenbrand gave an assurance that 'these centres are not going to push a line. We don't have any 'agenda' at all. We are going to do very serious research projects and publish them through public outreach.'[174] However, her claims that there was no 'agenda' seem to conflict with her other claim that the centre would aim to 'build bridges' and seek to 'improve understanding' in order to combat 'ignorance and phobia'. These are in themselves laudable aims, but arguably not the task of a university which is 'not going to push a line'.

171 *ibid*.

172 'New Centre for Islamic Studies', University of Edinburgh

173 'Saudi prince donates £16m to improve Islamic studies', *Times Higher Education*

174 *ibid*.

The School of Oriental and African Studies

The School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) has received donations from the governments of Saudi Arabia and Iran. Both of these donations provoked protests by university academics, who feared that SOAS' independence would be compromised. There is evidence that this has occurred, with SOAS recently forced to censor artwork at the behest of one of its funders. However SOAS has also received large donations towards Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies from foreign funders which could in fact serve as models for other universities to follow.

Donations

- **1995 – SOAS receives a £1 million donation from King Fahd of Saudi Arabia**

SOAS's Centre for Islamic Studies was established in 1995 with the help of a £1 million donation from King Fahd of Saudi Arabia to establish a chair in Islamic Studies.[175] The donation was announced on 17 May 1995 at a ceremony at the Saudi Arabian embassy attended by Ghazi Algosaibi, Saudi Arabia's ambassador to the UK, and Michael McWilliams, the then-director of SOAS. Reuters reported that the Saudi ambassador told the audience in a speech that:

> The endowment of this chair should be seen as part, and a very important part, of the kingdom of Saudia Arabia's efforts to present the beliefs, thinking and culture of Islam to the non-Moslem world. The professor of Islamic Studies, when he is appointed, will not be here simply to pronounce on dogma but to enlighten and explain the development of Islamic thinking in the past and to encourage its development in the future.[176]

- **1999 – SOAS receives approximately £35,000 from the Iranian government and an affiliated organisation**

SOAS admits having received £35,000 from the Iranian government and from a charity closely linked with the Iranian government in order to fund two studentships over a three year period, starting in 1999. One of these was awarded to an Iranian cleric with close links to the Iranian government.[177]

175 'King Fahd creates Islamic chair in London', *Reuters*, 17 May 1995

176 *ibid*.

177 'Uproar as SOAS takes Iran cash', *Times Higher Education*, 10 December 1999, available at www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storyCode=149196&sectioncode=26

❖ 2001 – SOAS receives £1.25 million from Mohamed bin Issa Al Jaber

The London Middle East Institute (LMEI) (charity number 1103017) was launched by SOAS in 2001, thanks mainly to a donation of £1.25 million from Sheikh Mohamed bin Issa Al Jaber.[178] The LMEI had been set up to become 'a high-profile international forum for the study and understanding of the Middle East'.[179] Al Jaber's website says that he established it so that it could become 'a centre of expertise and resources for academics as well as for the world of business, government, the media and NGOs'.[180]

Among his unspecified donations to the Institute was the endowment of a Professorship in Middle East Studies at SOAS, the holder of which is designated as the Director of the LMEI. The LMEI's relationship with SOAS is advertised on its homepage; along with all other University of London institutions, the LMEI has access to the SOAS library, while it is also specified that 'LMEI is closely linked to SOAS'.[181]

❖ 2003/04 – SOAS receives £200,000 from Mehraban Zartoshty

In 2003/4, SOAS received £200,000 from Mehraban Zartoshty, a US-based businessman who is a follower of Zoroastrianism, an ancient religion practiced in parts of Iran and South Asia. The account is made jointly in the name of the Zartoshty brothers, including the late Feraydoon. The donation was formally presented to Colin Bundy, then director of SOAS, at a Zoroastrian New Year festival in London's Zoroastrian Centre.[182] The money is to be used to support a professorship in Zoroastrianism.

According to one academic account, the Zartoshty family first gave money to fund Zoroastrian studies in 2000,[183] and a SOAS document describes the donation as the second donation given by the Zartoshty family to support Zoroastrian Studies at SOAS.[184] SOAS has not made any of its agreements with the Zartoshty family publicly available.

178 'Scholars slam underfunding', *Times Higher Education*, 21 September 2001, available at www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storyCode=164926&sectioncode=26

179 'Sheikh Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber', MBI Al Jaber Foundation, available at www.mbifoundation.com/mbi-foundation-about/mbi-Al Jaber.html

180 'MBI Al Jaber Foundation – Board of Trustees', MBI Al Jaber Foundation, available at www.mbifoundation.com/mbi-foundation-about/trustees.html

181 'London Middle East Institute at SOAS', London Middle East Institute, available at www.lmei.soas.ac.uk

182 *The Middle East in London*, London Middle East Institute, p.6, available at www.lmei.soas.ac.uk/docs/lmei_meil_editions/1/MEL1%5B1%5D.pp_3-7.pdf

183 John R. Hinnells, *The Zoroastrian Diaspora: Religion and Migration* (OUP Oxford, 2005), p. 466

184 *The Middle East in London*, the London Middle East Institute, p.5

SHEIKH MOHAMMED BIN ISSA AL JABER/ MBI AL JABER FOUNDATION

The MBI Al Jaber Foundation (charity number 1093439) was established by Sheikh Mohamed bin Issa Al Jaber. Al Jaber, a Saudi Arabian businessman, is the founder and chairman of MBI International, which Forbes has called 'a diversified group with investments in luxury real estate and food'.[1]

The MBI Al Jaber Foundation grew from a scholarship scheme based at the London Middle East Institute,[2] which Al Jaber established in 2000. The foundation's website says that its 'focus is on educational and cultural projects, and we concentrate on forging partnerships rather than simply giving grants…we strive to create an environment in which we can bring people together in the name of greater understanding and awareness of one another's cultures.'[3] The foundation offers scholarships to students 'from across the Arab world wishing to study for Master's degrees' at its partner institutions throughout the world.

It also supports a wide range of projects in the Middle East, with a focus on education, health and interfaith dialogue. For example, the foundation has promoted women's education through its Dar al-Hikma College in Saudi Arabia, and has sought to bring Palestinian and Israeli children together though the Olive Tree Educational Trust[4].

Mohamed bin Issa Al Jaber's personal philanthropy has been widely recognised. In 2007, the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (part of UNESCO) gave him its highest award, and in the same year he was named spokesperson for the UN's Global Forum on Reinventing Government.[5] MBI's own website describes Al Jaber as 'a well-known regional moderniser and businessman' who 'is committed to education as the key to progress and stability in the region'.

He has provided the financial backing for various Islamic studies programmes in UK universities, such as the London Middle East Institute , while the MBI Al Jaber Foundation is also a partner institution with the likes of the London School of Economics (LSE), Goldsmiths College, the University of Westminster, and the Cambridge Colleges Hospitality Scheme.

1 'The World's Billionaires: Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber', *Forbes*, 8 March 2007, available at www.forbes.com/lists/2007/10/07billionaires_Mohamed-Bin-Issa-Al Jaber_LATV.html

2 'About the MBI Al Jaber Foundation', MBI Al Jaber Foundation, available at www.mbifoundation.com/mbi-foundation-about/default.html

3 *ibid*.

4 'The Olive Tree Educational Trust', MBI Al Jaber Foundation, available at www.mbifoundation.com/mbi-foundation-projects/olive-tree-educational-trust.html

5 'H.E. Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber named as UN Spokesperson for Global Forums on Reinventing Government', MBI Al Jaber Foundation, 27 June 2007, available at www.mbifoundation.com/mbi-foundation-news-press/article.aspx?t=H.E.+Mohamed+Bin+Issa+Al+Jaber+named+as+UN+Spokesperson+for+Global+Forums+on+Reinventing+Government

Areas of concern

■ Academic protests and worries over independence

SOAS academics protested about the impact that donations to SOAS from Iran and Saudi Arabia could have on the university.

On 20 June 1995, the *Guardian* reported that 'thirty senior academic staff members at London's prestigious School of Oriental and African Studies have signed a petition protesting at the university's acceptance of a donation from Saudi Arabia's monarch, King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz'.[185] Commenting on the petition, one of the signatories said that:

> We wanted to protest about the fact that such a large sum of money was accepted from such a source without consultation. Saudi Arabia is known to have a certain agenda on Islam and there could be implications about accepting money from such a source.

The signatory also claimed that the donation had been presented to the staff as a *fait accompli* by university management. At the time, SOAS refused to comment on the petition, while the Saudi Embassy told the *Guardian* that:

> The University came to us. We did not approach them. There were no conditions. As for the petition, it is an internal matter for SOAS.[186]

SOAS admit that academics were concerned about the Saudi and Iranian donations, which they say were considered by their academic board and governing body. Subsequently, a working party was established to 'codify the principles on working with sponsors'.

The article further cited the Arabic-language newspaper *al-Quds al-Arabi* as saying that the professors were also angry that Professor Muhammad Abdel Haleem had been appointed to a professorship at the new centre. The paper reported that the new post had not been advertised either inside or outside the university and that the lecturers believed that the donation could influence SOAS's teaching. By 1995, Abdel Haleem had been a senior lecturer at SOAS for several years, and according to university was told in 1994 that it 'was likely that he would be promoted to a professorship'. Abdel Haleem himself was quoted by the paper as saying in his defence that, he had only visited Saudi Arabia once, and that his appointment to the new chair was only a 'natural promotion'.[187]

Abdel Haleem is still the director of SOAS's Centre for Islamic Studies and is also

185 'Troublesome Gifts - A Saudi Arabian Donation Has Outraged Staff At The School Of Oriental And African Studies', *Guardian*, 20th June 1995

186 *ibid.*

187 'Lecturers worry over Saudi cash', *Guardian*, 10th June 1995

the university's King Fahd Professor of Islamic Studies.[188] In 2008 he was awarded an OBE for 'his services to Arabic culture and literature and to inter-faith understanding'.[189] He has contributed to interfaith groups such as the Building Bridges Seminar, led by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Foundation for Inter-religious and Inter-cultural Research and Dialogue, which was partly founded by the Pope and the Chief Rabbi of France. However he is also one of seven trustees[190] at the controversial King Fahd Academy in London, which operates 'under the support and supervision of the Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in London'[191] and admitted to using textbooks that two independent translators for BBC Newsnight said called Jews 'apes' and Christians 'pigs'.[192]

There were similar academic protests in the wake of the Iranian donation. In October 1999, the *Times Higher Education* reported that SOAS had received £180,000 from the Iranian government.[193] The university denied this but said it had received 'less than Pounds 35,000 over three years' for two research fellowships.[194] The Iranian donation to SOAS came via the Islamic Centre of England, a registered charity, which, as the Centre itself has acknowledged,[195] has extremely close links to the

Iranian government.[196] The head of the Islamic Centre of England is Mohsen Araki, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's representative in England. The Centre's constitution states that its board of trustees must 'at all times' include a 'representative of the Supreme Spiritual Leadership of the Islamic Republic of Iran';[197] and in its most recent accounts deposited with the Charity Commission, the Centre says of itself that 'the propagation of Islam was the main activity of

188 'Welcome to the Centre of Islamic Studies', School of Oriental and African Studies Centre of Islamic Studies', available at www.soas.ac.uk/islamicstudies/

189 'SOAS academic awared an OBE in Queen's Birthday Honours, School of Oriental and African Studies, available at www.soas.ac.uk/news/newsitem44235

190 'The King Fahad Academy's Board of Trustees', King Fahad Academy, available at www.thekfa.org.uk/index.php?lang=en&content=bot&sub=school

191 'History of the Academy', King Fahad Academy, available at www.thekfa.org.uk/index.php?lang=en&content=history&sub=school

192 See 'BBC Newsnight, Friday February 9th, 2007', available at news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/newsnight/6347851.stm and for the interview in full, www.youtube.com/watch?v=-0-jadXUKWM&feature=related

193 'Uproar as SOAS takes Iran cash', *Times Higher Education*, 10 December 1999, available at www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storyCode=149196&sectioncode=26

194 'SOAS Fellowships', *Times Higher Education*, 17th December 1999, available at www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storyCode=149398&sectioncode=26

195 'Muslim students "being taught to despise unbelievers as filth"', *The Times*, 20th April 2006, available at www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article707299.ece?token=null&offset=12&page=2

196 'Iranian students warned, foreign academics funded', *Global Security*, 8th November 1999, Vol. 2, No. 44, available at www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iran/1999/44-081199.html

197 'Islamic Centre of England Ltd: Trustees' Reports and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2006', p.1, available at www.charity-commission.gov.uk/registeredcharities/ScannedAccounts/Ends98%5C0001058998_ac_20061231_e_c.pdf

the charity' and that 'The company is a registered charity with the object of advancing the religion of Islam'.[198]

Soon after the news of the Iranian donation became public, a hundred SOAS academics signed a petition saying that the agreement had 'serious implications for the academic reputation of the school'. Another letter of protest from a further 74 international academics was also sent to SOAS, stating that 'the recent development raises serious issues about academic integrity and freedom at SOAS…SOAS's link with the ultra conservative factions of the Iranian regime is particularly worrying at this time… we are writing to appeal to you to rescind your cooperation agreement with immediate effect.' Nineteen professors, nine department heads and over a third of the SOAS academic board also called for the fellowships to be 'subject to the school's established appointment procedures, including observance of equal opportunity and procedural transparency'.[199] There were also fears that SOAS's acceptance of money may also affect academic freedom at the university. According to the Times Higher Education, independent Iranian academics at SOAS also said that they feared being intimidated by the presence of Iranians with links to state security forces on the university's campus.[200]

"The recent development raises serious issues about academic integrity and freedom at SOAS … SOAS's link with the ultra conservative factions of the Iranian regime is particularly worrying at this time … we are writing to appeal to you to rescind your cooperation agreement with immediate effect"

Following the academic protests against the Iranian donation, the then-director of SOAS, Sir Tim Lankester, sought to defend his acceptance of the Iranian donation by saying that Iran had not dictated who the fellowships were awarded to. He said:

> The funding has safeguards built in. Both fellowships are appointed by us. We took the decisions and the arrangement is that it is entirely our prerogative to decide. They will both have a one-year probation period. The appointments were made entirely on academic grounds by our academic managers … I accept there are issues regarding the provenance of the funding. But on balance we thought the support offered was worth taking. Iranian studies has been in decline in Britain, and this relationship is in line with the British government's policy of constructive engagement with Iran.[201]

In 2002 the then-SOAS director Professor Colin Bundy stated that

> this School has sought to expand academic relations with Iran through organizing joint conferences and inviting academics and researchers from Iran. This is done completely on an academic basis and without any political motivation.[202]

198 *ibid*., p.2

199 'Uproar as SOAS takes Iran cash', *Times Higher Education*

200 *ibid*.

201 *ibid*.

202 'Text of SOAS Director's letter to Majiles Cultural Commission', *Netnative*, available at www.netnative.com/news/02/nov/1061.html

SOAS claim that they made the appointments on 'entirely academic grounds'. One of the fellowships went to Professor Yahaqqi, who the university have said had an impressive CV, had been at Cambridge University and was the 'most appropriate' candidate for the classical Persian fellowship. The university gave the other fellowship to Seyyed Safavi. SOAS have said he was the best candidate for the fellowship, as he was finishing his doctorate the university, having been a student there since 1997, and had previously studied in Qom and Tehran. However Safavi was also a Shia cleric closely linked to hard-line members of the Iranian government, as he is the brother of the then-head of Iran's Revolutionary Guards (lit. the 'Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution).[203] Safavi accordingly graduated from SOAS with a PhD in 2002 with 'Love The Whole But Not The Part; An Investigation Of The Rhetorical Structure Of Book One Of The Mathnawi Of Jalal Al-Din Rumi'.[204] He then quickly became involved with a Tehran-backed organisation in the UK, becoming the director[205] of the Institute of Islamic Studies,[206] established in 1997,[207]which shares a building, telephone number[208] and staff members[209] with the Islamic Centre of England, which gave the money to SOAS that funded Safavi's fellowship.[210] A letter written in 2002 by the then SOAS director to the Cultural Commission of Iran also described Safavi as a member of the Islamic Centre of England,[211] further highlighting just how interchangeable it is with the Institute of Islamic Studies. Since getting his PhD, Safavi has remained affiliated with SOAS as a Research Associate in the Department of Art and Archaeology, where he is studying Islamic monuments in Iran.[212]

Despite holding this position, Safavi has found time to unsuccessfully run as a candidate for the National Trust party in the 2008 Iranian parliamentary elections. Although his party has been described as 'relatively liberal'[213] and 'reform-

203 Upon learning of reformist elements in Iran, Rahim Safavi is said to have claimed that "we are seeking to root out counterrevolutionaries wherever they are. We have to cut the throats of some and cut off the tongues of others." *World Report 1999 – Iran*, Human Rights Watch, 1999

204 'Department of the Study of Religions at SOAS: Previous PhD Theses', School of Oriental and African Studies, available at www.soas.ac.uk/religions/phdstudents/previous/

205 'Letters to the Editor 30 June 2003', *Daily Telegraph*, available at www.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/main.jhtml?xml=/opinion/2003/06/30/dt3001.xml

206 'Bio: Seyyed Safavi', Fora TV, available at http://fora.tv/speaker/Seyyed-Safavi

207 Kathryn Spellman, *Religion and Nation: Iranian Local and Transnational Networks in Britain* (Berghahn Books, New York: Oxford), p.58.

208 'Islamic Centre of England - Contact us', Islamic Centre of England, available at www.ic-el.com/users/English/English/contactus2.htm

209 For example, Seyyed Safavi, and Amir de Martino, who has been described as an 'Educational Officer and Lecturer in Islamic History' at the Islamic Centre of England, and has spoke at a 2004 Islamic Human Rights Commission event on their behalf.

210 'Uproar as SOAS takes Iran cash', *Times Higher Education*

211 'Text of SOAS Director's letter to Majiles Cultural Commission', *Netnative*

212 'Dr Sayed Safavi - Staff', School of Oriental and African Studies, available at www.soas.ac.uk/staff/staff42911.php

213 'Conservative wins in Iran poll show sanctions are failing, says analysts', *Guardian*, 22 March 2008, available at www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/mar/22/iran

ist', all candidates in Iranian elections have to be approved by the government and must support Iran's theocratic system of government.[214] In October 2008, Safavi spoke publicly in London in support of the Iranian government, saying that Iran's nuclear programme was for peaceful purposes only and that civilian unrest was low in Tehran because the government was using oil revenues to help the poor.[215] Interestingly, the same article reported Safavi as being the head of the Research Institute of Strategic Studies in Tehran, described as 'directly affiliated with Khamenei's office and with the Revolutionary Guards, and advises both on foreign policy issues'.[216]

■ SOAS accepting money from governments with poor human rights records

By accepting donations from the rulers of Saudi Arabia, SOAS has associated itself with unelected, undemocratic regimes that have been associated with human rights abuses. By accepting money from the Iranian government, the university has also linked itself with a regime that is undemocratic and is responsible for large-scale human rights abuses.

The Saudi Arabian government is notorious for its abuse of human rights; for example, in the same year as SOAS received its funding from King Fahd, Amnesty International reported a dramatic increase in the number of executions carried out in Saudi Arabia, with eight people reportedly being beheaded every day.[217]

By accepting money from the Iranian government, SOAS appears to be overlooking the many human rights abuses perpetrated by that government. Only months before SOAS accepted money from Iran, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights had expressed its 'concern' at the

> high number of executions, cases of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, including sentences of stoning and public executions, the failure to meet international standards in the administration of justice and the absence of due process of law, and also at the apparent absence of respect for internationally recognized legal

214 'Iranians vote in parliamentary elections', *Guardian*, 14 March 2008, available at www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/mar/14/iran1

215 'Top Iran officials recommend preemptive strike against Israel', Haaretz, 22 October 2008, available at www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1030279.html

216 *ibid*.

217 'Groups decry rise in Saudi executions', *Los Angeles Times*, 14 May 1995, available at http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/latimes/access/21441331.html?dids=21441331:21441331&FMT=ABS&FMTS=ABS:FT&date=May+14%2C+1995&author=CRAIG+TURNER&pub=Los+Angeles+Times+(pre-1997+Fulltext)&desc=Groups+Decry+Rise+in+Saudi+Executions+Middle+East%3A+As+many+as+eight+people+have+been+beheaded+in+a+single+day.+A+drug+crackdown+appears+to+be+behind+the+dramatic+increase+in+the+kingdom.&pqatl=google

> safeguards and the use of national security laws to deny the rights of the individual.[218]

Human Rights Watch in the same year also commented that:

> Executions after unfair trials proliferated, including cases of stoning to death in public. For the first time since 1992 a follower of the Baha'i faith was executed in prison. Other religious minorities, including Sunni Muslims, Evangelical Christians, and Jews were subjected to discrimination and persecution. Prominent dissidents, including writers and editors, were subjected to arbitrary detention and independent newspapers were closed down. New laws were passed discriminating against women and aimed at restricting debate about women's rights. Torture was widespread during interrogation, and the government failed to take steps to halt violent attacks by vigilante groups which serve as enforcers for conservative clerics, known as the Partisans of the Party of God (Ansar-e Hezbollahi)…Hundreds of people were executed after trials that failed to comply with minimum international standards.[219]

For its part, SOAS has sought to explain why it has sought engagement with Iran. Simon Weightman, then-head of the department for the study of religions at SOAS, said the university had itself approached the Islamic Centre of England itself after the university had failed to attract donations from wealthy Iranian individuals and he defended the decision to seek money from Iran.[220] The *Sunday Times* quoted Weightman as saying 'There are some people who would rather we did not touch Iran with a bargepole. But if we took that attitude, we would hardly be able to study any of the countries in our remit.'[221]

■ Are donations to SOAS being used for political purposes?

The donation from Iran coincided with an event organised by SOAS, in conjunction with an 'agent' of the Iranian government, seemingly set up for a political purpose; namely to praise the ways in which Ayatollah Khomeini had 'modernised' Islamic thought.

It has already been established that the Institute for Islamic Studies, described by the *Times Higher Education* as the Iranian Ministry of culture and higher education's UK 'agent',[222] has exceptionally close ties to the Islamic Centre of England, the organisation that helped facilitate the SOAS donation and that is aligned with the Iranian government. The current representative of the Institute for Islamic Studies is Amir de Martino, a convert to Islam who, having formerly been an activist for the Italian far right, has been described as 'a third positionist

218 'Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran: Commission on Human Rights resolution 1999/13', United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, available at www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/TestFrame/c088da90320862ac80256763004f3f4e?Opendocument

219 *World Report 1999* – Iran, Human Rights Watch, 1999

220 'Iran gift sparks university row', *Sunday Times*, 24 October 1999

221 *ibid*.

222 'Uproar as SOAS takes Iran cash', *Times Higher Education*

who created bridges between Italian national revolutionaries and the Iranian authorities'.[223]

In October 1999, within weeks of announcing the Iranian donation, SOAS held a joint conference with the Institute of Islamic Studies. The event was entitled 'Ayatollah Khomeini and the Modernisation of Islamic Thought', and was organised with the purpose of 'commemorating the 100th anniversary of Ayatollah Khomeini's birth'.[224] Speaking at the event was Ayatollah Araki, the head of the Islamic Centre of England[225] and who is 'known to be the London representative' of Ayatollah Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader.[226] Araki is also a founding member of the Islamic Centre of England.[227] Therefore it appears that SOAS organised an event with the Institute for Islamic Studies, an 'agent' of the Iranian government, to coincide with a donation that came from the Iranian government, in order to allow the Iranian government's personal representative in the UK, who helped facilitate the donation, discuss the extent to which Ayatollah Khomeini had modernised Islamic thought.

When these events occur in the aftermath of financial donations by the government in question, and are then sponsored by an 'agent' of the Iranian regime, there are issues that need to be addressed; especially when that government has proved to be a widescale abuser of human rights. Professor Richard Tapper, a senior SOAS academic involved in the conference, was clearly aware of this problem, as in his opening remarks at the conference he made it clear that the event should not be used by any of the participants to further a political agenda.

Censorship

SOAS was forced to remove artwork at its recent 'Edge of Arabia' exhibition. The seemingly inoffensive art, by a Saudi artist and at an exhibition of Saudi culture, was displayed widely in the artist's homeland, and is freely available to view on the internet. However it was perceived to be critical of Islam and Muslims, and the exhibit was therefore not displayed.

In October 2008, the Brunei Gallery at SOAS hosted an exhibition entitled 'Edge of Arabia – Contemporary Art from Saudi Arabia'. SOAS described this 'pioneering exhibition' as 'set to shed new light on the largely unknown contemporary art culture of Saudi Arabia…Edge Of Arabia will feature the work of 17 Saudi contemporary artists, male and female, whose work explores the complex and

223 Michael Whine, *An Unholy Alliance – Nazi Links with Arab Totalitarianism*, The Community Security Trust, available at www.thecst.org.uk/docs/An%20unholy%20alliance%201801%20original.doc

224 'Iran gift sparks university row', *Sunday Times*

225 Spellman, *Religion and Nation*, p.54

226 'Grand Ayatollah Ali Khamenei', *Global Security*, available at www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iran/khamenei.htm

227 'Muslim students "being taught to despise unbelievers as filth"', *The Times*

diverse identities of 21st century life in the Middle East.'[228]

SOAS stressed that 'The artists have chosen not to focus on negative perceptions of the Middle East or artistic and intellectual clichés associated with the region.' However while this in itself may be true, it glosses over the fact that art perceived by one of the exhibition's sponsor to 'focus on negative perceptions' was not allowed to be displayed. Abdulnasser Gharem, a Saudi artist, wished to show 'Al Siraat', a video art and photography piece which is described by the artist as being 'about the choices you make in life, and whether or not you follow the straight path. It can also refer to the bridge that you face when you die connecting this world and the next.'[229] 'Al Siraat', which translates as 'the path' or 'the way', showed an incomplete bridge with the words 'Al Siraat' scrawled across it; the work had been displayed widely across Saudi Arabia, and was covered in a variety of Saudi newspapers and magazines. In addition, the art is widely available on the internet.

The decision as to whether to include the exhibit was subject to a vigorous discussion within the university; yet ultimately the decision was made not to display the picture, on account of offence it may cause to Muslims. The gallery instead showed what it deemed to be a less provocative work by Gharem, entitled 'Manzoa'.[230] SOAS have commented that 'the guest curators did have some concerns' about Al-Siraat, and that 'to avoid causing unnecessary offence the curators decided to replace this work with another work by the same artist'.

That 'Al Siraat' could be seen as art inoffensive enough to be displayed in Saudi Arabia – where freedom of speech and repression is severely restricted – yet too provocative for an art exhibition on a UK university campus, which should be a bastion of free speech, is remarkable. However, it is of perhaps even greater concern that such a blatant example should exist where those who contribute funds to UK universities are then able to have significant oversight over the university's actions.

■ SOAS donations as an example of good practice

Donations from the MBI Al Jaber Foundation and Mehraban Zartoshty serve as an example of how beneficial foreign funding can be for universities provided that clear safeguards are put in place and the donor receives no oversight over academic output.

The arrangements governing the donations by the MBI Al Jaber Foundation to SOAS in 2001 are an example of how foreign funding can be used to posi-

228 'Edge of Arabia - Contemporary Art from Saudi Arabia', Brunei Gallery – SOAS, available at www.soas.ac.uk/gallery/edge/edge-of-arabia.html

229 'Al Siraat', *Nafas Art Magazine*, 2008, available at http://universes-in-universe.org/eng/nafas/articles/2008/abdulnasser_gharem/photos/04

230 'Manzoa', *Nafas Art Magazine*, 2008, available at http://universes-in-universe.org/eng/nafas/articles/2008/abdulnasser_gharem/photos/07

tively enhance education without threatening an institute's academic integrity. Al Jaber donated money yet received no oversight as to how his money was to be used, nor any influence over any academic output. His donation appears to be purely a good will gesture to promote education. The relationship between the LMEI and SOAS is made fully clear in documents submitted by the LMEI to the Charity Commission. The LMEI's Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2007 say that:

> The London Middle East Institute (LMEI) is governed by a Board of Trustees and chaired by Professor Paul Webley, the Director and Principal of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), and including three representatives from the academic staff of SOAS, one each from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the University of London and the British Academy, and two members who have relevant business/professional interests. The Articles of Association for the LMEI require that the SOAS members of the Board be elected by SOAS academic members of the LMEI… The LMEI was developed from the specialist regional expertise of SOAS and continues to draw on a number of its resources. The charity is however administratively and organisationally independent. Membership oversight and representation is secured through an annual general meeting of the SOAS academic members of the LMEI and its Research Associates of whom there are 10… The LMEI's core professional employees worked closely with a large number of volunteers who staff its Advisory Council and the Editorial Board of the Middle East in London magazine. The Advisory Council meets 3 times per year, in the same week as the Board of Trustees meeting. It helps to implement recommendations made by that Board as well as advising on programmes and fund-raising initiatives. The Editorial Board continues to oversee all aspects of the production of the magazine. Over 80 individuals drawn from academia, government, the professions, business, the media and communities with Middle Eastern links were directly involved in the operations of the LMEI.[231]

This arrangement makes clear that the donor has no ability to influence the composition of the LMEI's board of trustees, and it also provies multiple levels of oversight through its independent advisory council and through SOAS itself. In addition, there is evidence that SOAS's governing body has also discussed the implications of the creation of the LMEI and ways to ensure that its creation would have no negative consequences for SOAS. During the meeting of the SOAS governing body on 12 December 2003, the possible effects that the LMEI could have on SOAS's reputation were discussed. The minutes report that the governing body were told that any such risk was

> minimised by having the Director and Principal [of SOAS] as Chair of the Board and four SOAS staff in total as members of the Board. Members noted… that the LMEI could appoint academic staff on a part-time fixed term basis but that all appointment procedures for academic staff were in line with SOAS appointment procedures.[232]

231 'London Middle East Institute: Reports and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2007', p.2, available at www.charity-commission.gov.uk/registeredcharities/ScannedAccounts%5CEnds17%5C0001103017_ac_20070731_e_c.pdf

232 'School of Oriental and African Studies Governing Body: Friday 12 December 2003 Minutes', p.8, available at www.soas.ac.uk/soasnet/governance/govbody/38664.pdf

Membership oversight and representation is secured through an annual general meeting.[233] After founding the LMEI, Al Jaber became Vice Chairman of the International Advisory Board of SOAS.[234] When the creation of the board was announced in the SOAS Annual Review 2003-2004, the then Director and Principal of SOAS Colin Bundy stated 'the School looks forward to the collective counsel of its distinguished members in the years to come'.[235] Yet despite Al Jaber's close personal involvement with both SOAS and the LMEI, there is no evidence that he has sought to influence the academic output or activities of either institution or to promote his political opinions or to influence government policies – and indeed the international advisory board gives him no direct role in the running of SOAS. The donations by Mehraban Zartoshty towards Zoroastrian studies likewise seem to have no strings attached and to aim at nothing more than funding impartial research into a much neglected subject area.

233 'The origins of the LMEI', London Middle East Institute at SOAS, available at www.lmei.soas.ac.uk/home/index.cfm?navid=3

234 'International Advisory Board', School of Oriental and African Studies, available at www.soas.ac.uk/devalumni/development/iab/

235 'School of Oriental & African Studies Annual Review 2003-04', School of Oriental and African Studies, available at www.soas.ac.uk/about/publications/annualreport/33916.pdf

London School of Economics

The London School of Economics (LSE) has received almost £15 million from two organizations closely linked to the governments of the UAE and Kuwait towards establishing two new academic centres specialising in the Persian Gulf. The LSE has not published its agreements with either organisation. The donation from the UAE has caused protests from the LSE Student Union, which urged the university authorities to return the money, citing the UAE's poor human rights record and its lack of democracy.

Donations

- **2006 – LSE receives £9 million from the Emirates Foundation**

In December 2006, the LSE established the Centre for Middle Eastern Studies, thanks to a £9 million donation from the Emirates Foundation, an organisation funded and run by the UAE government. The memorandum of understanding was signed in front of then Prime Minister Tony Blair and Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed al-Nahyan, a member of the royal family of Abu Dhabi and the current foreign minister of the United Arab Emirates. The money is supporting the endowment of a professor's chair, employing research fellows, organising seminars, releasing publications 'designed to ensure effective dissemination of the work of the Centre throughout the region' and constructing a new building and lecture theatre.

- **2007 – LSE receives £5.7 million from the Kuwait Foundation**

In June 2007, the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) gave £5.7 million to the LSE to establish the 'Kuwait Programme on Development, Governance and Globalisation in the Gulf States' in the Centre for the Study of Global Governance.[236] A press release issued by the LSE said that:

The focus will include such topics as globalisation, economic development, diversification of and challenges facing resource rich economies, trade relations between the Gulf States and major trading partners, energy trading, security and migration.[237]

- **2008 – LSE receives £2.5 million from the Turkish government and various Turkish companies**

In 2005, the LSE established a chair in Contemporary Turkish Studies, which

236 'Kuwait Foundation pledges £5.7 million for a new London School of Economics Professorship and research programme', London School of Economics, available at www.lse.ac.uk/collections/pressAndInformationOffice/newsAndEvents/archives/2007/KuwaitFoundation.htm

237 *ibid.*

was funded largely by the Turkish government and Turkish companies. Howard Davies, the LSE director, described it as 'the first of its kind in Europe', while Professor Kevin Featherstone, director of the LSE's European Institute (which includes Turkish studies), said:

> This will be a major asset for LSE… It allows us to extend the specialist focus on Turkey beyond the traditional perspective…and to contribute to the public understanding of the evolving relationship between the Islamic world and Europe.

The creation of the chair was announced by then Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip at a press conference held at the LSE on 27 October 2005.

THE EMIRATES FOUNDATION/SHEIKH MANSOUR BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN

The Emirates Foundation is owned by the government of Abu Dhabi, and was formally established on 12 April 2005.[1] Its chairman is Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who is also minister of presidential affairs and who has run it since its creation. Its deputy chairman is Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the UAE's minister for foreign affairs.[2] The foundation's 'vision and mission' is to improve 'the quality of life for all people in the UAE… Through a variety of projects that stimulate intellectual and social growth [it aims] to increase access to cultural, educational and technological resources, and foster increased participation in civic life.'[3] According to the legal decree that established the foundation, its revenue comes largely from 'donations by international and local institutions and high-income individuals from inside or outside the country' and from 'grants from the government of Abu Dhabi, returns from the Foundation's investments, made through investment funds or any other investment tools'.[4] The foundation mainly supports cultural and educational projects in the UAE and the Arab world. For example, in 2007 it launched an international prize for Arabic fiction, and also organised a symposium under the name of 'Tawteen', aimed at addressing cultural and social obstacles to meaningful careers and self-development for UAE and other Arab nationals.[5] The group has also organised leadership programmes for UAE children, launched training projects and mobilised children to clean the UAE's beaches.[6]

1 'Chairman's Message', Emirates Foundation, available at www.emiratesfoundation.ae/English/about/chairman.aspx?Men_ID=13&Men_Type=AF&ef=abt

2 'Board of Directors', Emirates Foundation, available at www.emiratesfoundation.ae/English/about/chairman.aspx?Men_ID=11&Men_Type=AF&ef=abt

3 'Vision & Mission', Emirates Foundation, available at www.emiratesfoundation.ae/English/about/chairman.aspx?Men_ID=12&Men_Name=Vision%20&%20Mission&Men_Type=AF&ef=abt

4 'Article 6, aw no. 8 for 2005 on the establishment of the Emirates Foundation', Emirates Foundation, available at www.emiratesfoundation.ae/English/about/chairman.aspx?Men_ID=66&Men_Type=AF&ef=abt

5 'The First Tawteen Symposium in Abu Dhabi', *Al-Mahara Online*, Vol. 49, available at www.shelldubai.com/almahara/may2007/news2.htm

6 'EAD to clean up Al Taweelah Beach on Saturday', Evironment Agency Abu Dhabi, 24th April 2008, available at www.ead.ae/en/?T=4&ID=3680

Areas of concern

■ Danger of bias

The arrangements made between the LSE and its donors have not been made public. This lack of transparency may increase fears that donors will seek to influence the output and activities of the LSE's academic centres.

Announcing the donation from the Emirates Foundation, the LSE sought to allay fears that the new Middle East Centre would not be independent. The press release said that research would be undertaken by 'independent academics committed to addressing the political, economic and social issues faced by Middle Eastern countries' and that 'the Middle East region as a whole would benefit from the establishment of a new social science research centre'.[238]

However, the Emirates Foundation stressed that the centre would develop 'new methods and practitioners' in order to address problems in the Middle East. Ahmed Ali Al Sayegh, the foundation's managing director, said that

> the Foundation and LSE will join hands to create a new centre for the study of the Middle East issues, values and traditions. We hope to develop new methods and practitioners to study problems and find suitable solutions.[239]

Howard Davies, the director of the LSE, suggested that the centre would also be useful in attracting more foreign funding from abroad – this time from students – saying that it would 'increase the flow of students from the region to the LSE and to other top British universities'.[240]

The LSE did not, however, mention that the Emirates Foundation is effectively an arm of the UAE government, and that the organisation was established by the crown prince of Abu Dhabi and is chaired by the UAE's minister for presidential affairs.[241]

Similarly, when the LSE announced the donation from Kuwait, the university again sought to emphasise that its academic standards would be upheld. Professor David Held, director of the Kuwait programme, was quoted as saying:

> We will continue to commission original and sustained research on all aspects of the Gulf's economies and society, to develop our networks with scholars and policy mak-

238 'Emirates Foundation and LSE set to establish a new Centre for Middle Eastern Studies', London School of Economics, available at www.lse.ac.uk/collections/pressAndInformationOffice/newsAndEvents/archives/2006/CentreForMiddleEasternStudies.htm

239 'Emirates Foundation signs agreement with LSE', *UAE Interact*, 20 December 2006, available at www.uaeinteract.com/docs/Emirates_Foundation_signs_agreement_with_LSE/23256.htm

240 'Emirates Foundation and LSE set to establish a new Centre for Middle Eastern Studies', London School of Economics

241 'Welcome to Emirates Foundation', Emirates Foundation, available at www.emiratesfoundation.ae/english/index.aspx

> ers in the Gulf societies, including exchange programmes. Linked to this we will soon be announcing major public events, including workshops and conferences. In short, we are building one of the most comprehensive programmes of research on the Gulf States.[242]

Notably, the LSE again failed to mention the close links between the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences and Kuwait's government. For example, it did not mention that the foundation's activities are funded through an official levy on the profits of Kuwaiti share-holding companies and it 'is managed and administered by a Board of Directors (BOD), chaired by H.H. the Amir of the State of Kuwait'.[243] This board of directors 'is comprised of six members appointed by H.H. for a period of three years'.[244] The organisation was established by royal decree in 1976,[245] and one of the objectives listed on its website is to 'support projects of national priority'.[246]

The advisory committee of the LSE's Kuwait programme is composed of eight members. Half of these represent the LSE and half are from the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences.[247] They include Hassan al-Ebraheem, formerly the country's education minister,[248] and Ali al-Shamlan, the director of KFAS.[249] The LSE has not published the full details of its agreement with the Kuwaiti organisation.

In response to a draft of this report, the LSE has said that:

> LSE only accepts funds on the clear understanding that the institution is founded on principles of free speech and the highest academic standards. Every donor agreement makes it clear that a donor can have no influence over the academic freedom and independence of LSE.

242 'Launch of the Kuwait Programme on Development, Governance and Globalisation in the Gulf states', London School of Economics, 28 February 2008, available at www.lse.ac.uk/collections/LSEKP/pastevents.htm

243 'About Us', Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, available at www.kfas.org/aboutkfas_inbrief.html

244 *ibid*.

245 *ibid*.

246 'Goals & Objectives', Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, available at www.kfas.org/aboutkfas_goalsandobjectives.html

247 'Advisory Committee: the Kuwait Programme on Development, Governance and Globalisation in the Gulf states', available at www.lse.ac.uk/collections/LSEKP/advisorycommittee.htm

248 'The NHDR Network Newsletter', No. 8, 25 May 2001, Human Development Reports, The United Nations Development Programme, p.9, available at http://hdr.undp.org/docs/nhdr/infonet/infonet_08.pdf

249 'Profile of Prof. Ali Abdullah Al-Shamlan', Islamic World Academy of Sciences, available at www.ias-worldwide.org/profiles/prof65.htm

Human rights

Two of the three donations to the LSE that are on public record come from non-democratic states, where political power resides almost exclusively in the hands of hereditary rulers and their families. In addition, Kuwait, Turkey and the UAE have been criticised in the past for their record on human rights.

In 2006, the LSE accepted £9 million from the Emirates Foundation, effectively an arm of the UAE government. In that year, Human Rights Watch reported that:

> The UAE has experienced rapid economic development and growth during the past several decades, but it lags in the development of its civil society: the country does not hold elections for any public office, and political participation is limited to the ruling family in each emirate. The government has not signed most international human rights and labor rights treaties. Migrant workers, comprising nearly 90 percent of the workforce in the private sector, are particularly vulnerable to serious human rights violations.[250]

The US State Department's annual report on human rights found in 2006 that:

> The [UAE] government's respect for human rights remained problematic, and significant human rights problems reported included: no citizens' right to change the government and no popularly elected representatives of any kind; flogging as judicially sanctioned punishment; arbitrary detention and incommunicado detention, both permitted by law; questionable independence of the judiciary; restrictions on civil liberties – freedom of speech and of the press (including the Internet), and assembly; restrictions on right of association; restrictions on religious freedom; domestic abuse of women, sometimes enabled by police; trafficking in women and children; legal and societal discrimination against women and noncitizens; corruption and lack of government transparency; common abuse of foreign domestic servants; and severe restrictions on and abuses of workers' rights.[251]

Announcing the donation, Howard Davies, the director of the LSE, described the UAE as 'a long time…leader in the region', adding that the UAE 'is engaging in its own fascinating transition, as this week's elections demonstrate'.[252] In the UAE's 2006 elections, fewer than 6,000 people (1 per cent of the country's citizens) were allowed to vote.[253] All of them were selected by the country's rulers. Political parties were banned.

250 'Essential background – Overview of human rights issues in United Arab Emirates 2006', Human Rights Watch, available at http://64.233.169.132/search?q=cache:pBvpXilAwcEJ:hrw.org/english/docs/2006/01/18/uae12233.htm

251 'Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – 2006: United Arab Emirates', the US Department of State, the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 6 March 2007, available at www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78865.htm

252 'Emirates Foundation signs agreement with LSE', *UAE Interact*, 20 December 2006, available at www.uaeinteract.com/docs/Emirates_Foundation_signs_agreement_with_LSE/23256.htm

253 'Poll opens for first UAE elections', *Al Jazeera*, 16 December 2006, available at http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2006/12/200852514471900747.html

As a result of the UAE's poor human rights record, the LSE student union was highly critical of the university's acceptance of the donation. The LSE student union executive committee commented that 'to accept a donation from a state with such a well-documented history of human-rights abuses is simply unacceptable'.[254] The LSE student union was also angered by the decision to name the new £2.5 million lecture theatre after Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the former leader of the UAE who died in 2004. In particular, student union members drew attention to Sheikh Zayed's role in setting up the Zayed Center for Coordination and Follow-up in the UAE, which, the Anti-Defamation League said, hosted 'recognized extremists and anti-Semites', and 'regularly published anti-Semitic and conspiracy theory literature and promulgated anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism through its speakers and official publications'.[255]

❝ Taking money from such a source is an abomination on another level ❞

The LSE student union executive committee said that

> to name a new lecture theatre after a dead dictator with suspected links to Holocaust denial and anti-Semitism is completely beyond the pale… The School should rename the lecture theatre immediately and return all donations received from the Emirates Foundation.[256]

Dan Sheldon, communications officer for the LSE student union, also said: 'We understand that the chancellors are very worried about this and that it might ruin their fundraising efforts, but we just don't believe they should be accepting such donations.' Joseph Brown, the union's anti-racism officer, said 'taking money from such a source is an abomination on another level'.

Furthermore, the LSE's acceptance of a donation from the Turkish government – money that many donors and observers believe will be used to promote a positive view of Turkey – raises important moral and ethical issues on account of Turkey's record of human rights abuses and its treatment of ethnic minorities and political dissidents. A report by Human Rights Watch on Turkey's human rights record in 2006, the year that the LSE announced the donation, reported that 'there was a sharp increase in indiscriminate and disproportionate use of lethal force by security forces in dealing with protestors, as well as during normal policing'.[257] The report also said that

> in other incidents during 2006, police shot and killed 13 persons either in error or because they were deemed not to have heeded orders to stop. Instead of conducting an inquiry into the use of lethal force resulting in these deaths, in June the government amended the Anti-Terror Law, authorizing security forces 'to use weapons directly and without delay'.

254 'Row over sheikh's £2.5m LSE donation', *The Jewish Chronicle*, 3 October 2008, available at www.thejc.com/node/6464

255 'ADL welcomes UAE decision to shut down anti-Semitic think tank', 18 August 2003, Anti-Defamation League, available at www.adl.org/PresRele/ASInt_13/4335_13.htm

256 'Row over sheikh's £2.5m LSE donation', *Jewish Chronicle*

257 *Human Rights Watch World Report 2007*, Human Rights Watch, p.425

In addition

> more than 50 individuals were indicted for statements or speeches that questioned state policy on controversial topics such as religion, ethnicity, and the role of the army. The government failed to abolish laws that restrict speech.

In 2007, the LSE accepted £5.7 million from the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences. This is an organisation funded and run by the Kuwaiti government. The foundation's website says 'KFAS is managed and administered by a Board of Directors (BOD), chaired by H.H. the Amir of the State of Kuwait',[258] Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmed Al Sabah. The US State Department's annual report on human rights in Kuwait in 2007 reported that:

> According to the constitution, the emir may dissolve the elected National Assembly by decree but must call elections within two months. While political parties are not technically illegal, the government effectively barred them in practice… The government limited citizens' right to change their government and form political parties. Security forces abused prisoners and detainees. The judiciary lacked independence. The government restricted freedoms of speech, press, assembly, association, religion, and movement for certain groups.[259]

Professor George Gaskell, deputy director of resources and planning at the LSE, described the new programme funded by Kuwait as 'important and exciting'.[260]

While these are problematic examples, there is evidence that the LSE is attempting to engage with the subject of human rights abuses; in 2008, it announced that a fundraising campaign, which earned the university an overall £105 million, had enabled it to establish research into human rights issues.[261]

■ Donations achieving a political aim

Some of the donors, as well as parts of the Turkish media, have interpreted the donations to the Contemporary Turkish Studies programme as serving a useful political role in highlighting Turkish modernity as a precursor to accession to the EU.

With regards to the Turkish donation to the LSE, several of the chair's donors have said that they believe the chair will play an important political role for

258 'About Us', Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences

259 'Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – 2007: Kuwait', the US Department of State, the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 6 March 2007, available at www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100599.htm

260 'Launch of the Kuwait Programme on Development, Governance and Globalisation in the Gulf states', London School of Economics

261 '"Thanks a hundred million" says LSE to generous supporters', London School of Economics, available at www.lse.ac.uk/collections/pressAndInformationOffice/newsAndEvents/archives/2008/fundraise.htm

Turkey. This is due not least to the fact that it sites Turkish Studies within European Studies, which is important for Turkey in light of its ambitions to join the EU. For example, in its March 2006 monthly bulletin, Turkey's Central Bank, which part-funded the new chair, said that the chair's studies 'regarding Turkey will be handled within the concept of European Studies', and that it 'will focus on political, economic and other current issues with the aim of informing Europe about contemporary Turkey'.[262] The bank seems to assume that 'informing Europe about Turkey' would automatically be to the nation's benefit. Akfen, a Turkish company that also gave money towards the chair, said that:

> Establishing Turkish chairs in leading universities abroad is one of the most important components of our country s promotion policy. Such chairs are important in forwarding our approach to foreign public opinion about current subjects as well as Turkish history and culture. One of the mentioned chairs have been established with the initiative of Turkish Republic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, under the name of Chair in Contemporary Turkish Studies at London School of Economics which is one of the most prestigious academic institutions in the world. Akfen is very glad about such a publicity-oriented project of Turkey to being supported… Akfen is proud to support such an important project contributing to Turkey s publicity.[263]

Some Turkish media have also seen the deal as benefiting Turkey. For example, an article in the *Turkish Daily News*, an English-language newspaper, entitled 'Modern Turkish Studies chair's benefit to our image', approvingly quoted Kevin Featherstone, the head of the LSE's European Institute, as saying that the 'chair will go some way toward showing the modern face of Turkey'.[264] The article also said that 'more Turkey chairs need to be established at universities around Europe' in order to achieve this goal.

262 'News from the Central Bank of Turkey', *Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey Bulletin*, Issue 1, March 2006, available at www.tcmb.gov.tr/yeni/iletisimgm/bulten-ingilizce.pdf

263 'Social Responsibilities', Akfen Holding, available at www.akfen.com.tr/en/ss.php

264 'Modern Turkish Studies chair's benefit to our image', *Turkish Daily News*, 24 June 2006, available at http://arama.hurriyet.com.tr/arsivnews.aspx?id=-581874

University of St Andrews

The University of St Andrews received a donation from a former member of the Iranian government to establish an Institute for Iranian Studies at the university. The keynote speech at its opening was given by former president Mohammad Khatami, who was leader of Iran during a time of significant human rights abuses.

Donations

- **2006 – St Andrews receives 'more than £100,000' from Sadegh Kharazi**

In 2006, St Andrews founded the Institute for Iranian Studies, following 'a generous benefaction' from Sadegh Kharazi, the former Iranian deputy foreign minister and ambassador to France. The institute offers MLitt or MPhil courses in Iranian Studies. The 'centre-piece' of the benefaction was a donation of 12,000 Persian-language books to the university library, which would 'reflect the strengths of the University of St Andrews in History, Politics and International Relations'[265] and is said to be the largest of its kind in Europe.[266]

Areas of concern

Human Rights

There are moral issues raised by accepting money and hosting former members of the Iranian regime. Under Khatami there was widespread human rights abuse and the imposition of a harsh version of Sharia law.

To coincide with the opening of the institute, St Andrews invited the former Iranian president, Mohammad Khatami, to deliver the keynote lecture, and awarded him an honorary law degree. Khatami's invitation provoked some dissent at St Andrews. The NUS requested his invitation be withdrawn unless Ahmad Batebi, a student who was then in jail in Iran for his role in a pro-democracy protest, was freed.[267] However, only a limited number of students attended the protest.

Ali Ansari, head of the department, said: 'He [Khatami] is the ideal person to

265 'Welcome to the Institute of Iranian Studies', University of St Andrews, available at www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~iranian/

266 'Khatami lecture attracts protesters', *Guardian*, 13 October 2006, available at www.guardian.co.uk/education/2006/oct/13/highereducation.iran

267 *ibid*.

open the institute given his combination of academic and political experience.'[268] The St Andrews Students' Association supported the invitation to Khatami, saying that he 'predominantly adopted a brave stance to promote liberal values in the face of great adversity'.[269]

However, according to Felice D. Gaer and Nina Shea from the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, under Khatami the following took place in Iran:

> [R]eligious minorities – including Jews, Christians, Sunni and Sufi Muslims, Bahais, dissident Shiite Muslims and Zoroastrians – faced systematic harassment, discrimination, imprisonment, torture and even execution because of their religious beliefs. During Khatami's term, Iranian officials persecuted reformers, students, labor activists and journalists for 'insulting Islam' and publishing materials deemed to deviate from Islamic standards.[270]

Peter Tatchell, the human rights campaigner, commented:

> During his eight-year tenure as President of Iran, from 1997 to 2004, thousands of Iranians were detained without trial and subjected to savage tortures by Iran's secret police. Over 200 people were executed.[271]

The donor to St Andrews, Sadegh Kharazi, had also formerly served as a high-ranking member of the Iranian government. He has twice served as deputy foreign minister, as well as being the Iranian ambassador to the UN from 1989 to 1995 and France from 2002 to 2005. He is the son of the Ayatollah Mohsen Kharazi, who sits on the Iranian Assembly of Experts, the consultative body that elects the supreme leader, and is also the nephew of the former foreign minister, Kamal Kharazi.[272] Kharazi was forced to resign upon the election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2005.

268 *ibid*.

269 *ibid*.

270 'Questions for Khatami', *Washington Post*, 7 September 2006, available at www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/09/06/AR2006090601647.html

271 'Dishonourable honour', *Guardian*, 31 October 2006, available at www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2006/oct/31/arrestkhatamidonthonourhim

272 'Iran displays a softer side', *New York Times*, 4 February 2004, available at http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9D05E7DF123BF937A35751C0A9629C8B63&sec=&spon=&pagewanted=all

University of Durham

Durham University has received large amounts of money from Sultan bin Mohammed al-Qasimi, the ruler of Sharjah. However there are major human rights concerns as Sharjah, in addition to having an unelected ruler, enforces a strict interpretation of Sharia law.

Donations

- **1999 – Durham receives £2.25 million from Sultan bin Mohammed al-Qasimi**

In 1999 Durham University received a donation of £2.25 million from Sultan bin Mohammed al-Qasimi, the ruler of Sharjah.[273] His donation was used by Durham, where the now ruler of Sharjah completed his first degree, to construct a new building for the Institute of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies (IMEIS), which opened in 2003.[274]

- **2008 – Durham receives an unspecified amount from Sultan bin Mohammed al-Qasimi**

In 2008, the Durham Islamic Finance Programme, which is run under the auspices of the IMEIS, announced the appointment of a 'Sharjah Chair', saying that the post holder was 'expected to focus on the implications of *Shariah* for commercial and financial contracts'.[275] The money for this chair was endowed by al-Qasimi.[276] Al-Qasimi has also endowed chairs in Australia[277] and Canada.[278]

Areas of concern

Human Rights

There are human rights issues surrounding Durham's acceptance of money from al-Qasimi, in regard both to his unelected rule over the emirate since 1972 and

273 'Remember us? Now cough up', Independent, 30th October 2003, available at www.independent.co.uk/news/education/higher/remember-us-now-cough-up-585187.html

274 'SGIA History', 'University of Durham', available at www.dur.ac.uk/sgia/history/

275 'Durham Islamic Finance Programme' Durham University, available at www.dur.ac.uk/sgia/research_activities/iripe/islamfinance/

276 'Fears over university funding from Islamic sources', *Sanctuary*, 17 October 2008, available at www.sanctuarynewspaper.co.uk/durham/news

277 'Ancora Imparo', 20 February 2008, University of Monash, available at www.monash.edu.au/news/monashmemo/stories/20080220/ancora-imparo.html

278 'Sultan signs cooperation agreements with Canadian universities', *Zawya*, 26 April 2008, available at www.zawya.com/Story.cfm/sidWAM20080426134019589/SecMain/pagHomepage/chnMiddle%20East%20Education%20News/objC1B1DAD8-1143-E8E5-66CC0F8C50A3D202/

SHEIKH SULTAN BIN MOHAMMED AL-QASIMI

Since 1972, Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed al-Qasimi has been ruler of Sharjah, one of the quasi-autonomous emirates that make up the United Arab Emirates (UAE). He was educated at Cairo University, the University of Exeter and the University of Durham, and he has since made large financial donations to each of these. While al-Qasimi himself has largely been considered a political moderate, Sharjah is one of the more conservative members of the UAE.

Sharjah has vast amounts of natural resources and is a centre for trade and commerce. However, it remains keen to retain its traditional Islamic traditions. The official tourism board says that 'Sharjah's culture is firmly rooted in the Islamic traditions of Arabia. Islam is more than a religion, it is an integral part of everyday life for all Muslims and some of the basic values include honesty, courtesy and hospitality'[1] and that 'modern Sharjah is built on foundations rich in history and Islamic traditions: Arabian heritage is still recognized with pride and ancient customs are still practiced in everyday life'.[2]

1 'About Sharjah', Sharjah Commerce Tourism Development Authority, available at www.sharjahtourism.ae/en/category/about-sharjah/

2 'Sharjah history', Sharjah Commerce Tourism Development Authority, available at www.sharjahtourism.ae/en/category/about-sharjah/sharjah_history/

Sharjah's imposition of highly conservative interpretations of Islamic laws.

Sultan al-Qasimi has been the ruler of the emirate since 1972. During this time, he has enjoyed virtually unlimited power within his emirate to appoint ministers and implement policy with almost no form of democratic accountability. For example, political parties are banned.

Sharjah is also the most conservative of the seven emirates that comprise the United Arab Emirates (UAE). In 2001, Sharjah passed a 'decency law' aimed at forcibly imposing conservative Islamic behaviour on all those in the emirate, including tourists, foreign workers and citizens. According to The *Gulf News*, the largest UAE newspaper, this law stipulated that 'women should not wear clothing that exposes the stomach and back, short skirts above the knee' and 'men should not wear very short shorts in public, or commercial places, like malls and public offices, or go about bare chested'.[279] The paper added that police would be 'implementing [the] Law on decency and public conduct in accordance with the directions of His Highness Dr Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed al-Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council and Ruler of Sharjah'. The US State Department also reported that 'The Code of Conduct also lists prohibited behavior, including prohibitions against…men and women being alone in public places or at suspicious

279 'Sharjah's decency law takes effect today', *Gulf News*, 26 September 2001, available at http://archive.gulfnews.com/articles/01/09/26/27418.html

times and in suspicious circumstances if they are not connected by a 'legally acceptable' relationship.'[280]

Having sexual relations outside marriage is also illegal in Sharjah, and courts regularly imprison individuals for this crime. For example, in June 2007, a woman was sentenced by Sharjah Criminal Court to three months' imprisonment and 120 lashes for having sex with a man and his wife.[281] On appeal, the sentence was reduced to three months' imprisonment and 90 lashes. Sharjah regularly imprisons and lashes women for having sexual relations outside marriage.[282] Sharjah's authorities have also taken steps against a range of other activities that they deem to be 'un-Islamic'. For example, in April 2008, Sharjah banned the computer game 'God of War', because it featured ancient Greek gods.[283] The *Gulf News* reported that 'a Sharjah Municipality official confirmed that they continue to confiscate all video games that contain language and scenes that offend the religion, values and traditions of the country'.

The University of Durham have said that:

> The passages in this report regarding the Sharjah authorities contain many inaccuracies which seem to have originated in unverified secondary sources like newspapers. For example, nothing of what the report alleges is human rights abuse or violations in the sense understood by the major human rights organisations.

However a woman being imprisoned and suffering 120 lashings for having sex is an unacceptable abuse of human rights – whether major human rights organisations are reporting it or not.

Danger of bias

There is a lack of transparency in Durham University's dealing with the ruler of Sharjah. The university has not made publicly available the full text of any of its agreements with al-Qasimi. This has caused at least one academic to publicly suggest that the university's agreement with al-Qasimi might lead to it adopting certain political positions.

In September 2002, Dr Neill Lochery, a lecturer at University College London (UCL), questioned Durham's 1999 endowment from Sharjah and raised concerns about how al-Qasimi's donation would affect the university's teaching of

280 'Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – 2001: United Arab Emirates', the US Department of State, the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 4 March 2002, available at www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2001/nea/8306.htm

281 'Man, wife and lover jailed for illicit affair', *Gulf News*, 3 June 2007, available at http://archive.gulfnews.com/articles/07/06/03/10129514.html

282 For example, see 'Woman is deported ahead of court verdict', *Gulf News*, 25 December 2005, available at http://archive.gulfnews.com/articles/05/12/25/10007260.html

283 'Sharjah crackdown against banned God of War game', *Gulf News*, 17 April 2008, available at www.gulfnews.com/Nation/Government/10206220.html

Middle Eastern studies with regards to Israel.[284] A spokesman for Durham responded by saying: 'It is true that a former PhD student from the Gulf has been a major donor [but] it is completely without foundation to suggest that academic work or appointments at Durham are influenced by anti-Israeli consideration.'[285] However, it is difficult for Durham to effectively refute Lochery's allegations so long as the university does not publish its agreements with al-Qasimi.

Durham has said that:

> The University does not publish 'agreements' with any body, but whatever we agree with partners is subject to rigorous debate and scrutiny. All our dealings with HH Dr Sheikh Sultan Al Qasimi are done in a transparent way and all our agreements are subject to public scrutiny through the University's own robust procedures, including oversight and ratification by University Senate and Council, the latter of which includes many senior non-University members.

At the same time, there are some encouraging signs that Durham academics do not feel unable to criticise the UAE – despite the university receiving large donations from Sharjah. For example, in 2008, Christopher Davidson, a lecturer at Durham's School of Government and International Affairs, published a book entitled *Dubai: The Vulnerability of Success*, which suggested that the UAE's political, economic and social system was more fragile than it appeared. The book was, in parts, so heavily critical of the UAE's policies that there were widespread reports that it had been banned – although this was strongly denied by the UAE government.[286]

284 '"Arabist mafia" claims spark row', *Times Higher Education*, 20 September 2002, available at www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storyCode=171718&sectioncode=26

285 *ibid*.

286 'UAE denies Dubai study was ever banned', *Guardian*, 15 September 2008, available at www.guardian.co.uk/books/2008/sep/15/uae.denies.banned.book

University of Exeter

Exeter University has accepted a large donation from foreign governments with poor human rights records. It has also accepted money from Prince Alwaleed, who has considerable influence over departments of other British universities such as Cambridge and Edinburgh.

Donations

- **1984 – Exeter receives £750,000 from Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed al-Maktoum**

In 1984 Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed al-Maktoum, the then-ruler of Dubai, donated £750,000 to the university library.[287]

- **1990 – Exeter receives an unspecified amount from Sultan bin Mohammed al-Qasimi**

In 1990 Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed al-Qasimi, the ruler of Sharjah, who graduated from Exeter in 1984 with a PhD in Gulf Studies, paid for a graduate centre at the university.[288]

- **1998 – Exeter receives £2.4 million from Sultan bin Mohammed al-Qasimi**

In 1998 it was reported that al-Qasimi had donated an unspecified sum to found the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies.[289] This formally came into existence in August 1999,[290] and a new building was opened for it in 2001.[291] The total donation amounted to £2.4 million.[292]

- **2003 – Exeter receives £700,000 from Prince Alwaleed of Saudi Arabia**

In 2003, Prince Alwaleed gave 1 million (then £700,000) to Exeter as part of a

287 'Academic Institutions', Dubai International Academic City, available at www.diacedu.ae/university_The-University-of-Exeter_20_1.html

288 '30th anniversary of Gulf Studies', University of Exeter, available at www.exeter.ac.uk/news/newsgulfstudies.shtml

289 'Exeter University was today celebrating a multi million-pound windfall - from the ruler of a Middle Eastern country', *Exeter Express and Echo*, 6 August 1998

290 'Gulf Studies', University of Exeter, available at http://huss.exeter.ac.uk/iais/research/gulf.php

291 '30th anniversary of Gulf Studies', University of Exeter, available at www.exeter.ac.uk/news/newsgulfstudies.shtml

292 'Remember us? Now cough up', *Independent*

campaign to 'bridge the gap between the Islamic and western worlds' after the 11 September terrorist attacks in the US.[293]

- **2006 – Exeter receives £650,000 from Sultan bin Mohammed al-Qasimi**

In 2006, al-Qasimi gave Exeter £650,000 to pay for an extension to the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies building.[294]

- **2006/07 – Exeter receives at least £500,000 from the Kurdish government and a government-linked organisation**

In 2006 Exeter began to offer courses specialising in Kurdish Studies, due to a grant from the Ibrahim Ahmed Foundation, an Iraqi Kurdish organisation. Exeter's *Express and Echo* newspaper reported that the university received a total of £500,000.[295]

- **2007 – Exeter receives a donation of £1 million from Sultan bin Mohammed al-Qasimi**

Exeter University's 2007 Annual Report announced that al-Qasimi had donated £1 million towards the Forum, a project to redevelop the centre of the Streatham campus.[296]

Areas of concern

Influence of funders

Concerns have been raised by some academics that donations to Exeter from wealthy former PhD students, such as al-Qasimi, have affected university teaching; something strongly denied by Exeter. Such concerns have been amplified by donations from Prince Alwaleed who has himself acknowledged that his contributions have been made partly for diplomatic, rather than academic, purposes.

In 2002 Dr Neill Lochery wrote an article in the *Jerusalem Post* in which he raised the issue of donations to Exeter University by rich former PhD students from the Gulf such as al-Qasimi. The article says that

> Though it is clear today that universities do not sell PhDs, some academics are so keen

293 'Exeter gets £1m gift from Saudi', *Times Higher Education*, 27 June 2003, available at www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storyCode=177703&sectioncode=26

294 'Further donation', *Exeter University News*, Issue 2, June 2006, available at www.exeter.ac.uk/news/exeter_news/staff_june06.pdf

295 'Iraqi president's wife in secret visit to uni to deliver £500,000', *Exeter Express and Echo*, 3 November 2007

296 'The University of Exeter Annual Report 2007', p.15, available at www.exeter.ac.uk/about/annual_report.pdf,

> on having rich PhDs that they even help the students translate their work into English'. In other instances, the supervisors rewrite the thesis to a degree that makes it difficult to argue it is the sole work of the original author.[297]

Tim Niblock, head of the Centre for Arab and Gulf Studies at Exeter, responded by denying any impropriety, confirming that Exeter had been funded by al-Qasimi, but saying that 'he never pushed us in any political direction whatsoever.'[298] However because Exeter has not published its agreements with al-Qasimi, there is no way to ascertain whether this is the case. If Exeter made such information publicly available the university would be in a much stronger position to refute the accusations of individuals such as Dr Lochery.

There is also evidence suggesting that Exeter may have sought to tailor its academic activities to the personal interests of its donors, and in particular to the interests of Sultan al-Qasimi, the ruler of Sharjah and one of the university's most generous benefactors. In 1985, al-Qasimi completed a history doctorate at Exeter University. The *Sydney Morning Herald* described his PhD thesis – 'The Myth of Piracy in the Gulf' – as 'an attempt to refute claims that his nineteenth-century forebears were pirates'.[299] Two years later, in 1987, al-Qasimi was briefly deposed as emir of Sharjah for four days by his brother, who accused him of neglecting and mismanaging the emirate's financial affairs. Al-Qasimi reportedly responded by saying that this was because he was too busy conducting research into 19th-century piracy, saying that 'my studies…do not leave me with enough chance to follow up the daily responsibilities of ruling the emirate'.[300] For 10 years, the question of the al-Qasimi role in piracy was neglected by Exeter University. But then, in 1997, Exeter University Press published a book entitled *The Blood-Red Arab Flag: An investigation into al-Qasimi piracy 1797–1820* by Charles E. Davies. Davies is an honorary research fellow in the Centre for Arab Gulf Studies, and his biography describes *The Blood-Red Arab Flag* as 'the fruit of an appointment in 1988 as full-time Research Fellow at Exeter's Centre for Arab Gulf Studies'.[301] In April 2000, the *Middle Eastern Studies* journal reviewed the book, writing that 'Davies almost exonerates the Sharjah branch of the Qawasim [i.e. the al-Qasimi family] of piratical activities' and adds that 'as to answering the main question which instigated his research, whether or not the al-Qasimis were pirates, the answer was a straightforward no'.[302] Perhaps it is just coincidence that Exeter University, which has received so much money from the pirate-obsessed al-Qasimi, should have published a book which 'almost exonerates' al-Qasimi's ancestors from accusations of piracy. Interestingly,

297 '"Arabist mafia" claims spark row', *Times Higher Education*'

298 *ibid*.

299 'United Arab Emirates in turmoil after Sharjah leader is toppled', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 June 1987

300 *ibid*.

301 'Charles E. Davies: Bio', University of Chicago Press, available at www.press.uchicago.edu/presssite/metadata.epl?mode=bio&bookkey=310145

302 Talal Toufic Farah, 'Review of "The Blood-Red Arab Flag: An Investigation into Al-Qasimi Piracy 1797-1820"', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 36, Issue 2, 2000, pp.196–98

however, Exeter University's website shows that yet another pirate-related thesis is currently in production at the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies.[303] This one is entitled 'Arab "Piracy" and the east India company encroachment in the Gulf 1797–1820', the cynical quotation marks around 'piracy' perhaps suggesting that another exoneration of the al-Qasimi family may already be under way. In response to a draft version of this report, the University of Exeter has said:

> We strongly refute the suggestion that the academic activities of the University of Exeter are influenced by the personal interests of external donors. We are dedicated to independent academic research and high-quality teaching.

Since the 2002 article, Exeter University has also accepted £1 million from Prince Alwaleed's Kingdom Foundation. Alwaleed's money is mainly used to enable students at Exeter to study Islam and Arabic in the Middle East. Another part of this donation was also put towards funding Exeter's 'HRH Prince Alwaleed Scholarships', six of which (to the value of £1,000 each) are available to postgraduate research students each year.[304] As has been noted earlier in this report, donations from Alwaleed have often come with strings attached.

Universities must ensure that the interests of donors do not compete with, or compromise, their commitment to quality scholarship and research. It is concerning that Exeter should have to seek to strike this delicate and difficult balance. Achieving this becomes even harder when the university simultaneously seeks to build business links with countries where its funders rule as unelected despots. For example, in 2006, Exeter University opened a Middle East office in Dubai 'as a clear signal of the University's intention to develop further its international outreach activities', which intended 'to provide a base in the Middle East to enable the University to expand its business activities in that region'.[305] The university goes on to describe the role of the office as being 'to maintain and strengthen the University's relationships with representatives of Governments within the region'.[306] Similarly, in 2007, Exeter agreed to 'co-operate' with the American University of Sharjah,[307] an institute that was itself founded by al-Qasimi in 1997.[308] It is unclear what this co-operation will extend to, but it is possible that such initiatives will make it harder for Exeter University to maintain the difficult balance between satisfying funders and conducting impartial scholarship, teaching and research.

303 'Current PhD thesis topics', Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter, available at http://huss.exeter.ac.uk/iais/postgrad/current_thesis.php

304 'The Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies Postgraduate Handbook 2008-09', p.40, available at www.huss.ex.ac.uk/iais/downloads/pg_handbook.pdf

305 'About MEO', University of Exeter Middle East Office, available at www.ex.ac.uk/meo/background.shtml

306 *ibid*.

307 'University signs MOU with the American University of Sharjah', University of Exeter Middle East Office, available at www.exeter.ac.uk/meo/UniversitysignsMOUwithTheAmericanUniversityofSharjah.htm

308 'About AUS', American University of Sharjah, available at www.aus.edu/about/

Exeter University has also received large donations from foreign governments which have allowed it to pursue routes of study previously unavailable to it. For example, in 2006 Exeter became one of the few universities to offer courses specialising in Kurdish Studies,[309] and claims to be the only British university offering Kurdish language modules as part of its undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.[310] This is thanks to 'a generous grant from the Ibrahim Ahmed Foundation', an Iraqi Kurdish organisation that is named after a Kurdish writer and nationalist who played a leading role in the creation of the Kurdish Democratic Party, one of the leading Iraqi Kurdish political parties.[311] The donation was presented to the university by Mrs Hero Ibrahim Ahmed, director of the foundation and wife of Jalal Talabani, the Kurdish president of Iraq.[312] The January 2008 issue of Exeter University's newsletter said that 'The University has been given hundreds of thousands of pounds by the Ibrahim Ahmed Foundation to support Kurdish Studies, in particular, a new Chair in Kurdish Studies'.[313] The newsletter also reported that Professor Christine Alison had been appointed to the post and said that 'the gift has confirmed Exeter's position as a world leader in Kurdish Studies'. Simultaneously a room in the Reed Hall at Exeter was officially named the Ibrahim Ahmed Room 'in recognition of their support'. In October 2007, the university began offering a Masters degree in Kurdish Studies.[314]

Exeter has not announced the exact amount that it has received from Kurdish sources towards its Centre for Kurdish Studies – although Exeter's *Express and Echo* newspaper has reported that the university received a total of £500,000.[315] Apart from the Exeter newsletter's references to 'hundreds of thousands of pounds' (cited above), the university's website only makes reference to a recent 'generous donation' from the Kurdistan Regional Government which has 'enabled us to expand our staff base and our research and teaching activities'.[316] However the website also says that the university's library has been able to expand its collection of Kurdish books due to another 'generous donation' from the Kurdish Regional Government who provided money specifically for the Kurdish Studies collection.[317]

309 'The Centre for Kurdish Studies', University of Exeter Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, available at http://huss.exeter.ac.uk/iais/research/kurdish.php

310 'Exeter University offers new MA degree in Kurdish studies', KRG, 26 October 2007, available at www.krg.org/articles/detail.asp?smap=02010200&lngnr=12&asnr=&anr=17547&rnr=73

311 'Establishment of a Centre for Kurdish Studies at the University of Exeter', Kurdistan Independence Party, available at www.psk2006.org/Lang_article.asp?Article=Article&Nawnishan=52

312 'The University of Exeter Annual Report 2007', p.15

313 'First lady of Iraq in Exeter, *University News*, p.9, available at www.exeter.ac.uk/news/exeter_news/issue5_jan08.pdf

314 'Exeter receives donation from Iraqi President and First Lady', *Exeposé*, 5 November 2007, available at http://xmedia.ex.ac.uk/newspaper/pdf/2007-11-05.pdf

315 'Iraqi president's wife in secret visit to uni to deliver £500,000', *Exeter Express and Echo*

316 'The Centre for Kurdish Studies', University of Exeter Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, available at http://huss.exeter.ac.uk/iais/research/kurdish.php

317 *ibid*.

As well as receiving money from the Ibrahim Ahmed Foundation, Exeter also appears to have had money direct from the Kurdish Regional Government in Iraq. In the 2008/09 academic year, Exeter said that 'a minimum of three PhD and three MA studentships' in the field of Kurdish Studies will be funded 'through a grant awarded to the Centre for Kurdish Studies by the Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq'.[318] The university adds that 'the studentships (for both PhD and MA) cover the cost of tuition fees (at both home and international levels) and provide a maintenance grant of up to £12,600 a year'. This means that the Kurdish Regional Government is directly providing Exeter with almost £100,000 for the 2008/09 academic year alone for the six studentships – which is presumably in addition to the grant from the Ibrahim Ahmed Foundation. The scale of all these donations is such that it is hard to see how Exeter University could sustain its Centre for Kurdish Studies without donations from the Kurdish government and from the Ibrahim Ahmed Foundation.

Human Rights

Moral and ethical issues surround Exeter's acceptance of money from the rulers of Dubai and Sharjah. The UAE is almost entirely undemocratic and routinely denies the most basic human rights to its citizens and inhabitants.

Many of the issues surrounding acceptance of donations from the UAE and Sharjah have been outlined in the section on Durham University that dealt with human rights abuses in the UAE and the country's lack of democracy. However, it is also worth examining the country's record on the issue of religious freedom, in particular. The US State Department's annual report on international religious freedom in 2006, the same year as Exeter accepted its donation from al-Qasimi, reported that in the UAE:

> The Government prohibits non-Muslims from proselytizing or distributing religious literature under penalty of criminal prosecution, imprisonment, and deportation, for engaging in behavior offensive to Islam.[319]

The report also found evidence of widespread government censorship:

> The country's sole Internet service provider, Etisalat, blocked websites containing religious information. These sites included information on the Baha'i faith, Judaism, negative critiques of Islam, and testimonies of former Muslims who converted to Christianity.

The previous year, the State Department reported that the Hindu community had suffered 'hardship' as a result of the UAE's discriminatory religious policies against Hinduism, singling out Sharjah in particular. The report said that:

318 'Funding', University of Exeter, available at http://huss.exeter.ac.uk/postgrad/funding.php

319 'International Religious Freedom Report – 2006: United Arab Emirates', the US Department of State, the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, available at www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2006/71434.htm

> In late 2004, the Sharjah municipality, on more than one occasion, dismantled temples that were built by Hindu workers in the Qusais labor compounds.[320]

There are similar worries over Sharjah's intolerance of homosexuality. The latest US State Department report on human rights says of the UAE:

> Both civil law and Shari'a criminalize homosexual activity, and Islamic religious law holds the death penalty as punishment for individuals who engage in consensual homosexual activities. During the year there were reports that the government deported and sentenced to prison individuals for being openly homosexual.[321]

Homosexual men are regularly imprisoned in Sharjah and across the UAE. For example, in 2005 UAE police arrested 26 homosexuals for being at a party in a hotel.[322] Twelve of them were subsequently imprisoned for up to six years for 'homosexuality' and 'obscene acts'.[323] In 1995, a court in Sharjah reportedly sentenced two lesbians to 120 lashes and one and two years' imprisonment respectively for taking part in 'taking part in illegitimate relationships and attempting to practice *[sic]* indecency'.[324]

Despite these serious human rights abuses, Exeter University has repeatedly granted honours to Sharjah's ruler, for example giving him an honorary doctorate in 1993. In May 2007, Exeter granted al-Qasimi a further honour by making him the founding member of the university's College of Benefactors. Professor Steve Smith, Exeter's vice-chancellor, said: 'Admittance to the College of Benefactors demonstrates our appreciation of all that His Highness has done for the University over more than two decades.'[325] Exeter's 2007 annual report described al-Qasimi as 'the University's single most important supporter'.[326]

320 'International Religious Freedom Report – 2005: United Arab Emirates', the US Department of State, the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, available at www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2005/51612.htm

321 'Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – 2007: United Arab Emirates', the US Department of State, the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 11 March 2008, available at www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100608.htm

322 'Arrested gay Arab men face hormone treatment', *Mail & Guardian Online*, 27th November 2005, available at www.mg.co.za/article/2005-11-27-arrested-gay-arab-men-face-hormone-treatment

323 'The UAE condemned for jailing gay people', International Lesbian and Gay Association, 15th February 2006, available at www.ilga.org/news_results.asp?FileCategory=1&ZoneID=2&FileID=763

324 'The new Dark Ages', *Gay Times*, October 1995, available at www.petertatchell.net/religion/dark%20ages.htm

325 'Report to Donors 2006/07', University of Exeter, p.10, available at www.exeter.ac.uk/giving/documents/ReporttoDonors5.2.08.pdf

326 'Annual Report 2007, p.15, University of Exeter, available at www.exeter.ac.uk/about/annual_report.pdf

University of Wales Lampeter

Donations

University of Wales Lampeter has received large donations from nations with poor human rights record. There has also been controversy over its connections to the European Institute of Human Sciences (EIHS).

- **Construction finished in 1998 – Wales Lampeter receives an unknown amount from Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan**

In 1998, the University completed the Sheikh Khalifa building, a purpose-built building for the Department of Theology, Religious Studies and Islamic Studies, which was opened the following year. In July 1999, the new centre was visited by the Prince of Wales.[327] It was named after Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, who had given money towards the construction of the building.

- **2000 – Wales Lampeter receives a donation of £1.8 million from Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan**

The University of Wales Lampeter has received relatively small amounts of money from several Gulf States, paying for new buildings and Islamic studies. The *Guardian* reported in November 2000 that Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, together with the rulers of Bahrain and Qatar, had given a £1.8m endowment to the university to fund Islamic Studies there.[328]

Areas of concern

University concerns over academic standards

Lampeter has been forced to dissociate itself from the EIHS after deciding that it was academically substandard. The decision occurred in the wake of negative publicity received after the EIHS's links to Muslim Brotherhood spiritual leader Yusuf al-Qaradawi were discovered. Lampeter denied that this had played a part in its decision to sever ties with the EIHS.

Until August 2005, Lampeter accredited degree-level courses run by the nearby European Institute of Human Sciences (EIHS), which offers courses exclusively

327 'Royal Diary of Engagements', *News Distribution Services*, 21st July 1999, available at http://nds.coi.gov.uk/Content/Detail.asp?ReleaseID=49863&NewsAreaID=2

328 'Disappearing worlds', *Guardian*, 14 November 2000, available at www.guardian.co.uk/education/2000/nov/14/highereducation.news

SHEIKH KHALIFA BIN ZAYED BIN SULTAN AL NAHYAN

Sheikh Khalifa is the current president of the United Arab Emirates as well as the ruler of Abu Dhabi, having succeeded his father, Sheikh Zayed, upon his death in 2004; he had previously served as the head of the Abu Dhabi Department of Defence.

Even by the standard of Gulf sheikhs, he is a man of considerable wealth, being ranked as the second richest royal by *Forbes*, with his wealth estimated to be US$23 billion.[1] Abu Dhabi itself is hugely prosperous, possessing more than 90 per cent of the UAE's reserves of crude oil and natural gas.[2]

Sheikh Khalifa has a reputation as something of a moderate, and this has been reflected in certain policies he has enacted. For example, in 1981, he established the Abu Dhabi Department of Social Services and Commercial Buildings, which was described as 'of particular importance in ensuring that citizens were able to benefit from the country's increasing wealth'.[3] Furthermore, in 1991 he established the Private Loans Authority, 'to ensure that citizens were able to build the properties that they needed, both for residential and for investment purposes'.[4]

Khalifa is also described as 'firmly committed to support of the Palestinian people, displaying this through, for example, his decision in mid-2005 to finance the construction of a new city for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip on the sites of settlements abandoned following the Israeli withdrawal' and 'committed to the promotion of stability in Iraq, through the provision of diplomatic and other support designed to help the new sovereign Government of Iraq to rebuild the country's political system and economic infrastructure'.[5]

Khalifa is also said to hold 'regular consultations with the country's citizens, so that he may become aware of, and follow up on, their needs and concerns'.[6]

1 'No.2: Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan', *Forbes*, available at www.forbes.com/2008/08/20/worlds-richest-royals-biz-richroyals08-cz_ts_0820royal_slide_3.html?thisSpeed=30000

2 'Abu Dhabi Hosts Thinkers' Fête', *The New York Sun*, 26 October 2007, available at www.nysun.com/foreign/abu-dhabi-hosts-thinkers-fte/65315/

3 'Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed, President of the UAE', UAE Embassy in London, available at www.uaeembassyuk.net/epresident.htm

4 'Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed, President of the UAE', UAE Government, available at www.government.ae/gov/en/gov/federal/president.jsp

5 'Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed, President of the UAE', UAE Embassy in London

6 'Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed, President of the UAE', UAE Government

in Arabic and Islamic Studies.[329] The university said that it had withdrawn its accreditation after reviewing the performance of the EIHS. The BBC reported a statement from the university, which read:

329 'The European Institute of Human Sciences', European Institute of Human Sciences, available at www.eihs.org.uk/eihsmain.asp

> The University of Wales Lampeter has very high academic standards and had concerns that the performance of some of the students did not always reach the demanding standards that the university requires for study at degree level.[330]

The university announced its decision to split from the EIHS soon after several newspaper articles linked the institute to Yusuf al-Qaradawi. For example, *The Times* reported that 'the institute has indirect connections with Yusuf al-Qaradawi, a Qatar-based scholar who has defended suicide bombers in Israel, praised the Iraqi insurgents as martyrs and called for the death penalty for homosexuals'.[331] These connections consisted of al-Qaradawi heading the council of scholars that formulated the curriculum for L'Institut Européen des Sciences Humaines, the parent body of the EIHS. The *Western Mail*, a Welsh newspaper, also said that 'one of the school's trustees, Ahmad al-Rawi, has declared British troops are a legitimate target for Iraqi militants'.[332] Al-Rawi is also the president of the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB),[333] the British wing of the Muslim Brotherhood.

The University of Wales said that its decision to cut its ties to EIHS was unrelated to this negative publicity.[334] The most up-to-date prospectus on the EIHS's website, however, continues to say that 'the Institute [i.e. the EIHS] is also a partner organisation of the University of Wales Lampeter, whereby the University will accredit suitable Institute courses'.[335]

■ Additional area of concern

The University of Wales Lampeter has been forced to hold internal enquiries after concerns over the academic quality of some of its Saudi PhD students, one of whom was found to have plagiarised work; the thesis of another was described as 'shoddy'. The university's dean subsequently resigned after it was discovered that he had 'steamrollered' through the thesis.

There has also been considerable controversy surrounding the academic standards of Saudi students at Lampeter. Dr Badr al-Shaloub, a student writing a thesis on capital punishment in Saudi Arabia under Lampeter University's then dean, Mashuq Ally, was awarded his PhD despite worries raised over the quality of his work and suspicions 'that sections of it had been copied'.[336] The Campaign

330 'Uni cuts tie with Islamic college', *BBC News*, 11 August 2005, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/south_west/4141492.stm

331 'College cuts ties with Islamic institute', *The Times*, 11 August 2005

332 'What are they being taught?', *Western Mail*, 24 July 2005

333 'Muslims across Europe unite against extremism', the Muslim Association of Britain, 28 March 2008, available at www.mabonline.net/press.php?id=1&art=13

334 'What are they being taught?', *Western Mail*

335 'EIHS Prospectus', European Institute of Human Sciences, available at www.eihs.org.uk/documents/Prospectus.pdf

336 'Inquiry as "shoddy" thesis wins PhD', *Times Higher Education*, 23 August 2002, available at www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storyCode=171226&sectioncode=26

for Academic Freedom and Academic Standards (Cafas) acquired documents that showed senior Lampeter academics voicing their concern at the substandard quality of al-Shaloub's thesis. Paul Badham, professor of Theology and Religious Studies at Lampeter, wrote a letter to the student's examiner, Dawoud el-Alami, suggesting that, while the thesis was 'a shoddy piece of work', rather than go to the 'hassle of trying to take back a degree already awarded' el-Alami should give the thesis his approval, as Badham did not think it 'worth bothering' to write a different internal examiner's report about it.

Badham also suggested that the text of al-Shaloub's work should be changed by Lampeter staff, in order to make the work more legible, stating that 'where easily possible we make such changes as can eliminate the worst errors'. He then requested that someone called 'Marlene' should do this 'tidily in the text with such other changes as you wish to make'. Badham did state that 'no work like [this should be] passed in the future', but confirmed that Lampeter Vice-Chancellor Keith Robbins had agreed the PhD should be approved.[337] Lampeter's internal enquiry into the case 'indicated that there had been no malpractice on the part of the candidate, and it commended the member of staff who acted as an internal examiner who…was not in any way culpable for the situation which subsequently ensued'.[338] A University of Wales report, leaked to the *Western Mail*, revealed that Ally 'knowingly acted improperly and abused his position' in order to 'steamroller' through al-Shaloub's thesis.[339]

In addition, a Saudi prince who studied at Lampeter was discovered to have plagiarised sections of his PhD from another author after being 'given sections from a book to copy into his thesis' by Ally, who was acting as the student's supervisor. Ally was forced to resign over the incident, and the student was not awarded the PhD.[340]

337 *ibid*.

338 'Academic "knowingly acted improperly"', *Western Mail*, 16 August 2005, available at www.walesonline.co.uk/news/education-news/tm_objectid=15862041&method=full-&siteid=50082&headline=academic--knowingly-acted-improperly--name_page.html

339 *ibid*.

340 'Inquiry as "shoddy" thesis wins PhD', *Times Higher Education*

City University London

Al Jaber's donation to City University enabled Israeli and Palestinian students to study together. Money donated to City University is an example of the benefits that foreign donations can bring in providing access to learning and at the same time helping to encourage dialogue.

Background

City University London has '23,835 students from 156 countries who benefit from [the] internationally renowned experience of more than one hundred years' of teaching and learning'.[341] It is ranked inside the top 50 universities in the UK, according to *The Times Good University Guide*.[342] City University has neither a department dedicated to Islamic or Middle Eastern studies nor a long history of receiving funds from foreign donors.

Donations

- **2003 – City University receives £1 million from two donors, one of whom is the Al Jaber Foundation**

In 2003, the university received £1 million from two donors, one of which was anonymous. It is known that the second donor was the MBI Al Jaber Foundation. The money is intended to fund a scholarship programme that aims to 'bring together Israeli and Palestinian students in a course of study'. Mohamed bin Issa Al Jaber, chairman of the MBI International group, called the scholarship an 'important programme…in line with our consistent and longstanding commitment to democracy and the regional peace process'.[343]

The programme began in 2003 and, according to the MBI website, aims to 'bring together some 20 Palestinian and Israeli students taking degrees in business, finance, law and other studies at the University' as well as 'a broad programme of cultural and social activities aimed to encourage dialogue and understanding'.[344] The scholarship is also advertised as available to those taking journalism within the School of Arts department.[345]

341 'About Us', City University London, available at www.city.ac.uk/aboutcity/

342 'Good University Guide 2009', *The Times*, available at http://extras.timesonline.co.uk/tol_gug/gooduniversityguide.php

343 'MBI Chairman welcomes scholarship programme for Israeli and Palestinian students', MBI Al Jaber Foundation', 4 June 2003, available at www.mbifoundation.com/mbi-foundation-news-press/article.aspx?t=MBI+International+Chairman+Welcomes+Scholarship+Programme+for+Israeli+and+Palestinian+Students

344 *ibid*.

345 'School scholarships', City University London, available at www.city.ac.uk/studentcentre/support/scholarships/School.html

Al-Maktoum Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies – University of Aberdeen

The Al-Maktoum Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies, is an independent institution which has its degrees validated by the University of Aberdeen. The Al-Maktoum Institute openly describes itself as existing to 'implement the vision' of its founder, as well as running politically motivated academic programmes such as 'Islamicjerusalem Studies' (sic) and overtly promoting Dubai, the founder's homeland.

Background

Al-Maktoum Institute describes itself as 'a research-led institution of higher education which offers postgraduate programmes of study (taught Masters and MPhil/PhD research)'.[346] The institute is named after its main benefactor, the deputy ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid al-Maktoum. The institute's home page says that the institute aims to be a

> centre of excellence in the Study of Islam and Muslims, in particular to promote intelligent debate and understanding of Islam and the role of Muslims in the contemporary world, and to be a place of knowledge and reflection on the issues facing a diverse and multicultural world in the twenty-first century.[347]

At present, the Al-Maktoum Institute runs a PhD programme and five Masters programmes in 'Islamic Studies', 'Islamicjerusalem Studies', 'Multiculturalism', 'Muslims, Globalisation and the West' and 'Islamic Education'.[348] Some 64 students from over 20 countries have enrolled at the institute in its first six years.[349]

The Al-Maktoum Institute was officially opened in 2002 as part of the University of Abertay, Dundee, at an event attended by Sheikh al-Maktoum in which he was awarded an honorary degree.[350] Previously, the institute had been part

346 'A message from the Principal', Al-Maktoum Institute, available at www.almi.abdn.ac.uk/Home_9.html

347 *ibid*.

348 *ibid*.

349 'Relevant Islamic Studies and finding out how Muslims "tick" essential says new Principal', Al-Maktoum Institute, 26 August 2008, available at www.almi.abdn.ac.uk/newsarticle.php?newsid=96

350 'A unique academic institution', *Islam Online*, available at www.islamonline.net/English/In_Depth/Jerusalem/about/01.shtml; 'Official Opening', Al-Maktoum Institute, available at www.almi.abdn.ac.uk/The-Institute/Official-Opening_64.html

of the Islamic Research Academy (ISRA) in Dundee,[351] which has been a recognised charity since 1996.[352] Both the Al-Maktoum Institute and the ISRA were established with money from al-Maktoum. The website says that:

> In recognition of the support and generosity of His Highness Shaikh Hamdan Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum who has been, and still is, a strong and devoted champion of this new and exciting academic endeavour, it was decided to name the Institute 'Al-Maktoum Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies'.[353]

However, the website also makes it clear that al-Maktoum has influenced the institute's output and activities. The home page of the Al-Maktoum Institute's website says that Sheikh al-Maktoum's 'vision for multiculturalism is at the heart of Al-Maktoum Institute',[354] and describes him as 'the deep-thinking, resourceful, compassionate and forward-looking Deputy Ruler of Dubai'.[355]

The University of Aberdeen began their involvement with the Al-Maktoum Institute in 2004/05, when it agreed to validate its degrees. When looking at the Al-Maktoum Institute's website, however, their relationship with the University of Aberdeen seems ambiguous. On its home page, the Al-Maktoum Institute says it is 'an independent institution, with its degrees validated by the University of Aberdeen'.[356] However, elsewhere on the same website it describes itself as 'a Centre within the University of Aberdeen School of Divinity, History and Philosophy which is part of the University of Aberdeen College of Arts and Social Sciences'.[357] The University of Aberdeen have attempted to clarify this ambiguity by saying that 'The Al-Maktoum Institute is a standalone institute, and is not part of the University of Aberdeen'. Furthermore, they have stated that the Al-Maktoum Institute's description of itself as a 'Centre within the University of Aberdeen' is 'incorrect'. Therefore there seems to be a breakdown in understanding between the two institutions. The Al-Maktoum Institute regards itself as actually being a part of the University of Aberdeen; something which the university is keen to stress is not the case.

Donations

- **Construction of buildings (finished in 2002) – the Al-Maktoum Institute receives 'almost' £250,000 from Al-Maktoum**

351 'ISRA: an Academy for Islamicjerusalem', Islamic Research Academy, available at www.isra.org.uk/english/index.html

352 'About ISRA', Islamic Research Academy, available at www.isra.org.uk/english/about.html

353 'Al-Maktoum Institute', Al-Maktoum Institute, available at www.almi.abdn.ac.uk/The-Institute_14.html

354 'A message from the Principal', Al-Maktoum Institute

355 'Patron', Al-Maktoum Institute, available at www.almi.abdn.ac.uk/People_13.html

356 'A message from the Principal', Al-Maktoum Institute

357 'Al-Maktoum Institute as a Centre within the University of Aberdeen', Al-Maktoum Institute, available at www.almi.abdn.ac.uk/The-Institute/University-Of-Aberdeen_83.html

The exact amount of funding received by the Al-Maktoum Institute from Sheikh Al-Maktoum has not been made public. What is on public record is that the institute's premises were refurbished using a donation of 'almost' £250,000 from the sheikh himself, and that the institute was established thanks to an additional grant from the Al-Maktoum Foundation.[358] The Al-Maktoum Foundation was founded in Scotland in March 2005 by Sheikh al-Maktoum himself, and has wide-ranging aims and objectives, such as 'improving race relations and equality of opportunity regardless of sex, sexuality, political, religious…opinions' and 'to advance the religion of Islam'.[359]

> "Shaikh Hamdan's vision is at the heart of Al-Maktoum Institute's mission, aims and objectives, and structure. Indeed the whole of the Institute's work revolves around the implementation of Shaikh Hamdan's innovative and creative vision"

❖ **Ongoing – the Al-Maktoum Institute receives £100,000 from Sheikh al-Maktoum**

In addition to his other donations to the institute, Sheikh al-Maktoum has reportedly also personally offered to fund five postgraduate scholarships per year, worth £100,000, for Dundee-based students to study at the Al-Maktoum Institute.[360] These, and some other scholarships, are provided through the Al-Maktoum Foundation.[361] Full scholarships are available for one-year MLitt programmes, and cover the full tuition fees and a monthly living allowance of £650,[362] while partial scholarships offer £2,000 to Al-Maktoum Institute students for each year of their programme.[363] Yearly bursaries of £3,000 are also available for full-time students who reside in Dundee.[364]

In response to a draft of this report, the University of Aberdeen have stressed that 'the funding mentioned is provided direct to ALMI, not to the University of Aberdeen… ALMI's finances are wholly separate from those of the University'.

358 'Dundee strengthening Scotland's links with Arab world – Foulkes', 6 May 2002, Scotland Office, available at www.scotlandoffice.gov.uk/our-communications/release.php?id=3250

359 'HH Shaikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al-Maktoum's vision: a new agenda', p.17, available at www.almaktoumfoundation.com/cmsimages/media/pdfs/Al-Maktoum%20New%20Agenda.pdf

360 'Al-Maktoum opening', British Muslims Monthly Survey, March 2002, Vol. X, No. 3, p.1, available at http://artsweb.bham.ac.uk/bmms/2002/05May02.asp

361 'MLitt in Multiculturalism', Al-Maktoum Institute, available at www.almi.abdn.ac.uk/cmsimages/media/pdfs/Multiculturalism%20web%20link.pdf

362 'Al-Maktoum Foundation Scholarships', *Advance Africa*, available at www.advance-africa.com/Al-Maktoum-Foundation-Scholarships.html

363 'Al-Maktoum Foundation Partial Scholarships', Al-Maktoum Foundation, available at www.almaktoumfoundation.com/index.php?id=35

364 'Al-Maktoum Foundation Bursaries', Al-Maktoum Foundation, available at www.almaktoumfoundation.com/index.php?id=36

Areas of concern

■ The influence of Sheikh al-Maktoum

As the Al-Maktoum Institute's principal funder, Sheikh al-Maktoum enjoys considerable influence over the teaching and courses that it offers. Rather than undertake academic research, he has used this influence to promote his 'vision' through the institute's teaching and syllabus, as well as to use the institute to promote Dubai, where he is deputy ruler.

Sheikh al-Maktoum, through the Al-Maktoum Foundation, is the main funder of the Al-Maktoum Institute. It makes clear that this institute's role is to 'implement' the 'vision' of its funder, rather than to undertake impartial research and teaching. For example, a document produced by the Al-Maktoum Foundation, entitled 'HH Shaikh Hamdan Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum's vision: a new agenda', repeatedly says that the institute is based around the sheikh's vision:

> Shaikh Hamdan's vision is at the heart of Al-Maktoum Institute's mission, aims and objectives, and structure. Indeed the whole of the Institute's work revolves around the implementation of Shaikh Hamdan's innovative and creative vision.[365]

The document also says that the institute is intended to be a 'gateway to Dubai', saying that the Al-Maktoum Institute has also been

> given the opportunity to work to pursue HH Shaikh Hamdan's Vision for the twin pillars of education and multiculturalism which has helped the Institute to play a key role in building progressive links between Scotland and Dubai. Its strategic aim is to help promote a two-way traffic for this developing relationship between the two nations. Shaikh Hamdan indicates very clearly that the Al-Maktoum Institute is The Gateway to Dubai.[366]

Therefore, the institute's own documents would seem to suggest that impartial education is of less significance than disseminating the vision of its founder and promoting business links abroad.

An integral part of the Al-Maktoum vision is the concept of 'Islamicjerusalem' (*sic*), which the A—Maktoum Institute describes as 'a new terminology for a new concept'.[367] Islamicjerusalem has been described by al-Maktoum himself as:

> A model of a common space in which people from different backgrounds can live together. Islamicjerusalem is described in the Holy Qur'an as 'surrounded with barakah':

365 'HH Shaikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al-Maktoum's vision: a new agenda', p.3

366 'Al-Maktoum Institute Prospectus', p.20, available at www.almi.abdn.ac.uk/prospectus/al%20Maktoum.pdf

367 'Islamicjerusalem', Al-Maktoum Institute, available at www.almi.abdn.ac.uk/Islamicjerusalem_12.html

> a place which radiates goodness and blessings. This understanding of Islamicjerusalem, so central to Islam and Muslims, and for a place which is so important to three great faiths, has become clear as a region in which diversity and pluralism thrive. It has been through my passion for Islamicjerusalem that our understanding of this place of hope, safety, mutual respect and peaceful co-existence has been nurtured and developed.[368]

Abd al-Fattah El-Awaisi, the founding principal and vice-chancellor of the Al-Maktoum Institute, is also quoted as saying:

> Islamicjerusalem is a new terminology for a new concept… It can be fairly and eventually characterised and defined as a unique region laden with a rich historical background, religious significances, cultural attachments, competing political and religious claims, international interests and various aspects that affect the rest of the world in both historical and contemporary contexts. It has a central frame of reference and a vital nature with three principal intertwined elements: its geographical location (land and boundaries), its people (population), and its unique and creative inclusive vision, to administrate that land and its people, as a model for multiculturalism.[369]

The Al-Maktoum Institute offers Islamicjerusalem Studies as an MLitt degree validated by the University of Aberdeen.[370] The Al-Maktoum Institute says it is 'very proud and honoured to be given this opportunity to work to pursue [Al-Maktoum's] vision for developing this new field of inquiry'.[371]

Sheikh Al-Maktoum says that his 'vision is based on Umar's Assurance of Safety',[372] which is described on the Al-Maktoum Institute as guaranteeing 'safety for [Islamicjersualem citizens'] lives and possessions; their churches and crosses; the sick and the healthy of the city; for the rest of its religious community. Their churches will not be inhabited nor destroyed.'[373] The Al-Maktoum Institute's 'Academic Press' prints posters of the Pact and offers them for sale on its website.[374]

Academic concerns

Academics at the University of Aberdeen have previously voiced concerns over the academic quality of the Al-Maktoum Institute – and while they have agreed to validate their degrees, have significantly so far refused to give accreditation to the institute.

368 'HH Shaikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al-Maktoum's vision: a new agenda', p.2

369 *ibid*.

370 'Al-Maktoum Institute Courses', University of Aberdeen, available at www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/pgcourses/display.php?Subject=AM; 'University of Aberdeen Taught Programme', University of Aberdeen, available at www.abdn.ac.uk/prospectus/pgrad/study/taught.php?code=jerusalem

371 'HH Shaikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al-Maktoum's vision: a new agenda', p.21

372 *ibid*., p.2

373 'Poster of Umar's Assurance of Safety to the People of Aelia (Islamicjerusalem)', Al-Maktoum Institute, available at www.almipress.com/book.php?id=13

374 *ibid*.

The University of Aberdeen has validated degrees from the Al-Maktoum Institute since 2004/05 meaning that, according to Aberdeen,

> the University judges that a programme developed and delivered by an institution without degree awarding powers is of an appropriate quality and standard to lead to its award. In such an agreement, the University retains ultimate responsibility for the quality and standards of awards.

However the Al-Maktoum Institute has requested that they also be accredited by the University of Aberdeen. According to the university, accreditation

> describes the process by which an institution without its own degree awarding powers is given wide authority by the University to exercise powers and responsibility for academic provision. The University exercises only limited control over the quality assurance functions, but remains ultimately responsible for the quality and standard of programmes which lead to an award of the University.

Therefore, in the university's own words, 'the process of accreditation would afford the Institute significant authority to oversee the quality assurance of its own provision whereas in a validation agreement the University remains closely responsible for the oversight of the quality assurance of the partner's [al-Maktoum Institute's] provision'. However at a meeting of the University of Aberdeen Academic Standards Committee in 2006, senior members of the University of Aberdeen's staff questioned the Al-Maktoum Institute's academic credentials and decided not to bring forward the timescale for the accreditation process that the al-Maktoum Institute had requested.

For example Dr Webb, from the university's registry, questioned whether the institute was of sufficient pedigree to have its degrees validated by Aberdeen University. According to minutes of the meeting available on the university's website, Dr Webb said that Aberdeen's accreditation approval should be given 'only in the case of mature institutions of a substantial size which have proven rigorous internal Quality Assurance procedures'. Professor Trevor Salmon, from Aberdeen's School of Social Science, Politics and International Relations, also raised doubts about the validation process, by adding that 'the College of Arts and Social Sciences and the School of Divinity, History and Philosophy had reservations regarding the length of the current Validation agreement between the Al-Maktoum Institute and the University of Aberdeen'. Professor Salmon went on to say that the College 'would wish to see Annual Reports and External Examiners' Reports covering at least four years before Accreditation should be considered' and that 'there were a number of Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement issues which would have to be addressed before Accreditation could be considered'.[375]

375 'Academic Standards Committee (Postgraduate), Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 15 December 2006 University of Aberdeen minutes, Dec 2006', available at www.abdn.ac.uk/minutes/ascpg/mins15dec06.doc

The Academic Standards Committee eventually agreed unanimously that consideration of Accreditation status for the Al-Maktoum Institute should not be brought forward, and instead should be considered in early 2008 – however in March 2009, in response to a draft of this report, Aberdeen have stated that 'The University has made no further moves towards accrediting the Al-Maktoum Institute, and has no plans to do so at present'.

The University of Aberdeen has not published its agreement with the Al-Maktoum Institute, and it is therefore unclear as to what extent the university can intervene in the institute's teaching. However the university has said that 'The agreement makes clear that the University "can undertake a review visit" at any time if there are concerns regarding the quality and standards of teaching leading to a university award'.

PART TWO

EAST ASIAN & EASTERN EUROPEAN STUDIES

Donations to Chinese Studies – Confucius Institutes

The British government has designated the study of China and the Chinese language as being of strategic importance in view of China's rising political and economic power. In response to growing interest in China, many British universities have sought to expand their teaching and research in this field. In order to do so, many universities have accepted money from the Chinese government to establish the 'Confucius Institutes' that Beijing is establishing around the world. These Institutes aim not only to improve China's global image, but also to gain influence over the academic study and teaching of Chinese and China Studies in foreign universities.

Background

The Confucius Institute website describes itself as

> a non-profit institute with the purpose of enhancing intercultural understanding in the world by sponsoring courses of Chinese language and culture, so as to promote a better understanding of the Chinese language and culture among the people of the world; develop friendly relationships between China and other countries; accelerate the development of multiculturalism at the international level; and help bring about global peace and harmony.[376]

To this end, it identifies five services that the institutes can provide:

1. Developing Chinese language courses for various social sectors;

2. Training Chinese language instructors for local institutions and providing them with Chinese language teaching resources;

3. Establishing local facilities for the holding of the HSK examination (Chinese Proficiency Test) and for the administration of procedures for the certification of Chinese language teachers;

4. Providing information and consultative services concerning Chinese education, culture, economy and society;

5. Promoting research about contemporary China.

There are currently over 260 Confucius Institutes worldwide, not only in the

376 'Confucius Institute Headquarters', Confucius Institute, available at www.confuciusinstitute.net/blogs/po/hq/posts/229

west but in nations as diverse as Afghanistan, Rwanda and Kyrgyzstan. The Chinese government plans to open another 100 Confucius Institutes by 2012,[377] and over 1,000 by 2020.[378] The first institute was founded in Seoul, South Korea, in 2004, and the first in the UK in 2005. The majority of institutes in the UK are attached to universities; however, some are also affiliated to schools (primary and secondary) and colleges. Not all the institutes have the same purpose: London's South Bank University, for example, runs a Confucius Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine. The institutes are also not just restricted to students, but also cater to the likes of businesses that are keen to expand their market into China. Confucius Institutes also co-operate with universities in 'setting up on-campus Chinese centers to support degree programs like Chinese language major and Chinese as a public course as well as research centers to fuel research work in the field of China studies',[379] which suggests their activities are not solely confined to the institutes themselves.

For the Chinese government, it is relatively cheap and highly cost-effective to establish a Confucius Institute in a British university. According to the *Guardian*, the Chinese government gives £50,000 to each British university to set up a Confucius Institute, with the guarantee of the same amount for the next two years.[380]

Impact of the Confucius Institutes

Confucius Institutes around the world operate under the oversight of the Office of Chinese Language Council International (OCLCI/Hanban) in Beijing, a branch of the Chinese government. Hanban has been described by the Confucius Institutes at Manchester University as overseeing

> the promotion of Chinese language throughout the world. OCLCI aims to enhance mutual understanding and friendship between Chinese people and the rest of the world, promoting economic and trade cooperation as well as scientific, technological and cultural exchanges.'[381]

It also has responsibility for 'the development of CIs [Confucius Institutes] across

377 Joshua Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power is Transforming the World* (Yale University Press, 2008), p.68

378 'Confucius Institute: Promoting Language, Culture and Friendliness', Chinese Embassy in the United Kingdom, available at www.chinese-embassy.org.uk/eng/zt/Features/t274357.htm

379 'Introduction to the "Confucius Institute" Project', the office of Chinese Language Council International, available at web.archive.org/web/20071012111020/http://english.hanban.edu.cn/market/HanBanE/412360.htm

380 'Not a political tool', *Guardian*, 6 November 2007, available at www.guardian.co.uk/education/2007/nov/06/highereducation.internationaleducationnews

381 'Partnership (Confucius Institute)', University of Manchester, available at www.confuciusinstitute.manchester.ac.uk/about_us/partnership/index.html

the world and provide[s] guidelines for their activities and operations'.[382] This is echoed by the Hanban website itself, which says that the institutes are:

> Aimed at promoting friendly relationship [***sic***] with other countries and enhancing the understanding of the Chinese language and culture among world Chinese learners as well as providing good learning conditions for them, the National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language is to set up 'Confucius Institute' in the world, whose major activities includes Chinese teaching in countries that have the needs and conditions.[383]

There are currently 10 Confucius Institutes attached to universities in the UK that have been set up by the Chinese government. In addition, the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN) is currently planning to establish a satellite centre in the Isle of Man.[384] Most focus on teaching Chinese and holding cultural events, although, as has been mentioned, there are exceptions such as South Bank University's Confucius Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine. Furthermore, Confucius Institute Network UK (CINUK) operates as a central point where institutes throughout the country can exchange ideas and collaborate on future projects. The presence of these 10 official Confucius Institutes in the UK at the moment is felt far beyond these universities, with institutes often running series of events in the local area. For example, the Confucius Institute in Nottingham has collaborated with Nottingham Forest FC to 'promote the Chinese language and culture to secondary and primary schools in Nottinghamshire via football', has established links with primary schools, and has run a series of language classes for local people.[385]

> "The size and impact of the Confucius Institutes is much greater than any previous attempts at cultural diplomacy by a non-developed state"

The teaching of Chinese to members of the public is an integral part of many of these institutes. For example, Xu Lin, head of China's National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (NOCFL) said that 'the establishment of Confucius Institutes is a natural response to the world's thirst'.[386] However, China's ambitions for the institutes go far beyond mere language tuition – a fact that is widely recognised by those associated with the institutes. For example, a professor of Chinese Language at Fudan University in Shanghai (which has close relations with several British universities) has said that the Institutes are 'expected to

382 'The Confucius Institute at the University of Manchester', University of Manchester, available at www.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/medialibrary/llc/files/external-relations/mar07/confucius-institute.ppt

383 'Introduction to the "Confucius Institute" Project', OCLCI

384 'Isle of Man may strengthen education links with China', *Isle of Man Today*, 30 September 2008, available at www.iomtoday.co.im/news/Isle-of-Man-may-strengthen.4542957.jp

385 '"Link China" Programme by the Confucius Institute and Nottingham Forest FC', University of Nottingham, available at www.nottinghamlearning.com/chinese/institutes/confucius_activities.php

386 'Confucius Institute: Promoting Language, Culture and Friendliness', Chinese Embassy in the United Kingdom, available at www.chinese-embassy.org.uk/eng/zt/Features/t274357.htm

upgrade Chinese learning, mainly driven by pragmatic interests, to a systematic package encompassing official cultural exchanges, civil interactions, training of teachers and dissemination of new breeds of Chinese culture'.[387]

However, both members of the Chinese government and critical analysts of Chinese politics also recognise that increasingly the institutes are a central part of China's foreign policy. For example, Anne-Marie Brady, a specialist in Chinese politics at New Zealand's Canterbury University, has said that

> exporting Chinese language and culture to non-Chinese foreigners is also a part of China's foreign propaganda work in recent years… [S]ince the late 1980s Beijing has been trying to promote the study of Chinese internationally in the belief that those who take the trouble to study Chinese will be more sympathetic to China's perspective.[388]

Similarly, Forbes magazine has labelled them 'a substantial cultural diplomacy program', constituting a 'powerful element of the 'soft power' China seeks to build as part of its development of a global role'.[389] The magazine added that 'the size and impact of the Confucius Institutes is much greater than any previous attempts at cultural diplomacy by a non-developed state'. The *Asia Times* has meanwhile described the institutes as symbolising 'a sea change in China's foreign policy toward not only the US, but also to the rest of the world'.[390] This view of the institutes has been shared by senior members of the Chinese government. During a Hanban inspection in April 2007, Li Changchun of the Standing Committee of the Politburo said the Confucius Institutes were 'an important channel to glorify Chinese culture, to help Chinese culture spread to the world', and he described them as being 'part of China's foreign propaganda strategy'.[391]

Representatives of Confucius Institutes in British universities have sought to downplay accusations that the institutes are intended to play a role in spreading Chinese political influence, and have sought to refute accusations that there is any sinister intention behind their creation. Dr George Zhang, director of the Confucius Institute at SOAS, said 'China is not trying to take over the world. We don't have those sorts of ambitions. We invented gunpowder, but we used it for fireworks, not for missiles. The economic growth is there, it's about making friends.'[392]

387 *ibid*.

388 Anne-Marie Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), p.165

389 'China's Language Diplomacy', *Forbes*, 25 July 2006, available at www.forbes.com/business/2006/07/24/confucius-diplomacy-china-cx_np_0725oxford.html

390 'The language of Chinese soft power in the US', *Asia Times*, 24 May 2007, available at www.atimes.com/atimes/China/IE24Ad01.html

391 *ibid*.

392 'Not a political tool', *Guardian*

CONFUCIANISM

Confucianism is most commonly understood as a type of philosophical moral code, which focuses on righteousness, morality and honesty. Hanban describes Confucius as a 'famous thinker, educator and philosopher in Chinese history… To name this institute after him shows the longevity and profundity of Chinese language and culture. It also embodies the development trend of the integration of Chinese language and culture into the world in the new century.'[1] Koh Hock Kiat, director of the Confucius Institute at the Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, also understands Confucianism as an 'ideology on peacefulness and respecting humans, which is adopted in our teaching'.[2] However, there is evidence that China's public championing of Confucius is largely intended for overseas consumption. For example, in 2006, the Chinese government actually closed down a private school in Shanghai which was based on Confucian principles.[3] Zhang Wen, deputy director of the education ministry's legislative affairs office, was quoted as saying: 'It's illegal to send children to full-time Sishu [traditional schools] as the law clearly spells out that Chinese children have to enter state-approved schools to receive compulsory education at the age of 6.'[4]

1 'Introduction to the 'Confucius Institute' Project', OCLCI

2 'Confucius Institute: Promoting Language, Culture and Friendliness', Chinese Embassy in the United Kingdom, available at www.chinese-embassy.org.uk/eng/zt/Features/t274357.htm

3 'Ancient Education surfaces in Shanghai', *Xinhua*, 12 July 2006, available at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2006-07/12/content_4822139.htm

4 'Traditional school gets short shrift from authorities', *China Daily*, 25 August 2008, available at www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2006-08/25/content_674003.htm

Confucius Institutes in UK universities

THE SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES

In August 2005, SOAS became the first British university to open a Confucius Institute, known as the London Confucius Institute (LCI). The agreement was made in conjunction with Hanban, Peking University in Beijing and 'with the help of the Education Section of the Chinese Embassy in London'.[393]

On the website of the LCI, the university is described as being a 'partner institution' with the Confucius Institute.[394] The institute says that it 'aims to promote Chinese language learning and teaching and the understanding of the Chinese culture in the United Kingdom [and] endeavours to facilitate research activities in the above areas and cultural and education exchanges between Britain and China'.[395] The institute also says that it is 'establishing an information centre,

393 'History: London Confucius Institute', London Confucius Institute, available at www.london-confuciusinstitute.org.uk/history.html

394 'London Confucius Institute', School of Oriental and African Studies, available at www.soas.ac.uk/lci/

395 *ibid*.

a specialised library, and other resources to support teachers and students of Chinese'. Scholarships are also being made available for those learning Chinese through LCI. Teaching and research awards are worth £500, teaching awards for school teachers worth £300, Chinese learning scholarships worth £150, and learning awards for school students worth £100. An unspecified amount of funds is also made available to 'support teachers and researchers who concentrate on a specific aspect of the teaching or learning of the Chinese language in the UK' and 'to support students of Chinese who win a Chinese language or culture competition organised by LCI or other recognised institution, to travel in China'.[396]

The LCI organises a variety of events throughout the year. In its first full year, for example, the Confucius Institute hosted an event at SOAS consisting of talks on Chinese calligraphic and musical culture and Confucianism, which was attended by Wang Yongda, the minister counsellor for education at the Chinese Embassy. There was also a full day event discussing university management and higher education reform, in which 'Chinese delegates from 25 universities across China expressed their desire to find ways to enhance various forms of cooperation with London University'.[397]

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

The first Confucius Institute in Scotland opened at Edinburgh University in March 2006 in conjunction with the Scottish government, Hanban and the University of Fudan in Shanghai, which also provided staff to the institute on a long-term secondment. The institute's first year saw it offer language and business courses, with 'a broader range of cultural and academic programmes' offered from 2007 onwards. Its key objectives are described as helping to develop effective Sino-Scottish business, cultural and academic links, offering an extensive programme of Chinese language training and organising a Scotland-wide festival of Chinese culture running in 2008.[398]

The Edinburgh Confucius Institute has put on a range of events, including hosting journalists discussing Chinese media diversification, culture festivals highlighting Chinese art, literature and cinema, and seminars on Chinese politics, society and business. The Confucius Institute has also been provided with 300 books by the Shanghai Library as part of the 'Window of Shanghai' project, which 'aims to introduce Chinese history and culture to overseas reader through donations of books to foreign libraries and related institutes'.[399]

396 'Resources', London Confucius Institute, available at www.londonconfuciusinstitute.org.uk/resources.html#language

397 Previous Events & Activities: 2006', London Confucius Institute, available at www.londonconfuciusinstitute.org.uk/pages/2006.html

398 'About us', Confucius Institute for Scotland, available at www.confuciusinstitute.ac.uk/about/index.html

399 'Window of Shanghai to Open in Edinburgh', Confucius Institute for Scotland, available at www.confuciusinstitute.ac.uk/news/article.php?article_id=79&result=

UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

The University of Manchester formally launched its Confucius Institute, in partnership with the Hanban and Beijing Normal University, in October 2006.

In a PowerPoint presentation prepared by Karen Wang, administrator of the Centre for Chinese Studies at Manchester,[400] and Wu Fangmin, a professor based at the university,[401] the institute's 'mission' at the university was described as 'promote Chinese language and Chinese cultures, develop understanding of contemporary China and enhance intercultural understanding between China and the rest of the world'. The scope of activities extended to teaching Chinese, teacher training, examination services, sponsorship of competition and 'other academic activities', organising 'cultural activities', counselling, consultancy and training and the 'provision of teaching and learning Resources'.[402]

A brochure produced by the university's Centre of Chinese Studies described the collaboration as follows:

> The Confucius Institute acts as a principal centre for the dissemination of Chinese language and culture in the Northwest of England, serving the general public and local communities. As a bridge between the Chinese and British communities, the Confucius Institute aims at promoting the understanding of Chinese culture, contemporary Chinese society, and the learning of the Chinese language among the general public.[403]

THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

The Confucius Institute for Business was launched in October 2006 at the LSE. This was the first Confucius Institute established in the UK whose primary focus was business. The LSE website says that 'the Institute aims to promote Chinese for business to the local community and foster greater understanding of business culture in China',[404] while language director Nick Byrne said that 'the initiative with LSE is slightly different to other institutes, in that it has an explicit business focus… The longer term will include promoting educational coopera-

400 'Staff in East Asian Studies', University of Manchester, available at www.llc.manchester.ac.uk/subjects/east-asian/staff/

401 *UniLife*, Volume 4, Issue 11, p.4, available at www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/medialibrary/unilife/vol4-issue11.pdf

402 'The Confucius Institute at the University of Manchester', available at www.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/medialibrary/llc/files/external-relations/mar07/confucius-institute.ppt

403 'Centre for Chinese Studies Prospectus', p.3, University of Manchester, available at www.ccs.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/aboutus/news/brochure.pdf

404 'Confucius Institute for Business London', London School of Economics, available at www.lse.ac.uk/collections/confuciusInstitute/

tion between China and the UK.'[405] The LSE has stated that the institute 'offers events, workshops and training programmes on Business Chinese, Chinese Business Culture and Business Links to China'.[406]

The launch of the institute was attended by Zhai Peixin, China's ambassador to the UK, and Chairman Jia Qinglin, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China's Central Committee, and chairman of the 10th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. According to the LSE press release, Qinglin said that the launch was 'a milestone in providing business, language and cultural opportunities for those developing Chinese and UK links'.[407] The institute is backed financially by sponsors from Hanban, HSBC, Deloitte and Touche, Standard Chartered Bank, BP, and John Swire and Sons.

UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

Sheffield's branch of the Confucius Institute opened in January 2007 in conjunction with Hanban, Beijing Language and Culture University and Nanjing University.[408] The role of the institute is described as embarking upon

> a range of China-related activities including supporting research into learning Chinese as a foreign language; promoting the teaching of the Chinese language in primary and secondary schools, providing Chinese language training for students, teachers, community and business and organising seminars on Chinese culture and society.[409]

John Prescott, then deputy prime minister, was present at the launch ceremony, where he delivered a speech in which he referred to Confucius Institutes throughout the world as being vital in promoting an 'understanding of contemporary China' and described the growth in Confucius Institutes as an 'extraordinary commitment by China to reach out to the global community – so we can share their language, their culture and create greater understanding'.[410]

Sheffield Vice-Chancellor Professor Bob Boucher said that Sheffield was

> tremendously committed to modern languages and building relationships with China. We are committed to making the Confucius Institute a thriving, strong Institute that raises awareness and educates the public about China, its culture and its language.[411]

405 'Chinese Language Institute launched at LSE', London School of Economics, available at www.lse.ac.uk/collections/pressAndInformationOffice/newsAndEvents/archives/2006/Confucius_Institute.htm

406 'Confucius Institute for Business London', London School of Economics

407 'Chinese Language Institute launched at LSE', London School of Economics

408 'Deputy Prime Minister formally opens the Institute', Sheffield Confucius Institute, available at www.shef.ac.uk/confucius/news/jan_2007.html

409 *ibid*.

410 'Opening of Sheffield Confucius Institute', Deputy Prime Minister, available at http://archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/dpm/speeches/070118_opens_confucius_institute_sheffield_university.html

411 'Deputy Prime Minister formally opens the Institute', Sheffield Confucius Institute

UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM

The University of Nottingham officially opened its Confucius Institute in September 2007, in partnership with Hanban and the University of Fudan, Shanghai. Staff from Fudan have also been placed on secondment at the Nottingham institute. According to the University of Nottingham's website, the arrangement

> will deepen and expand existing links with schools, business, government, community groups and the Chinese cultural community to promote the teaching of Chinese language and contemporary Chinese culture [and] promote academic links with Chinese universities and showcase contemporary Chinese popular art and media, including films, television programmes and the creative arts such as painting, photography, literature, music and the performing arts.

Professor Shujie Yao, director of the Confucius Institute, said the institute 'offers the ideal opportunity to promote Chinese language and culture both locally and nationally'.[412]

UNIVERSITY OF WALES LAMPETER

The first branch of the Confucius Institute in Wales was opened in October 2007 at the University of Wales Lampeter, in conjunction with Hanban and Beijing Union University. The BBC reported the institute as being 'partly funded by the Chinese government'.[413] Professor Xinzhong Yao, the director of the Lampeter Confucius Institute, said:

> I am confident that the establishment of the Confucius Institute at Lampeter will assist in the further development of the work of the Centre and will help to promote China-related teaching and research in Wales and beyond.[414]

UNIVERSITY OF CARDIFF

The Confucius Institute at Cardiff University was launched in February 2008, in partnership with Hanban and Xiamen University, at a ceremony presided over by academics from Cardiff, Xiamen University, the Welsh secretary and the minister counsellor of the Chinese Embassy in Britain. The institute is described on Cardiff University's own website as operating 'under the guidance of the Ministry of Education in China'. The website adds that, in conjunction with Xiamen University, the Confucius Institute

412 'Confucius Institute Opens at the University of Nottingham', University of Nottingham, available at www.nottingham.ac.uk/chinese/institutes/confucius_launch_press_release.php

413 'College for Chinese culture opens', *BBC News*, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/mid/6441635.stm

414 'First Confucius Institute in Wales opens', University of Wales Lampeter, available at www.lamp.ac.uk/confucius/news/opening.html

will offer courses in Chinese language and culture to members of the community, public and private sector organisations, as well as university staff and students and act as a focus for those involved in China-related research and teaching.[415]

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL LANCASHIRE

The Confucius Institute at the University of Central Lancashire was launched in September 2008, in collaboration with Hanban and the Beijing International Studies University. Present at the launch were academics, the local Labour MP, and Wang Shutong, vice consul-general of the Chinese consulate in Manchester. A press release from the university said that the institute would 'promote the teaching of Chinese language and culture by working closely with schools and colleges in the North West region and hold regular teaching conferences, workshops and cultural and sporting events' and offer Chinese culture consultancy to businesses.[416]

AREAS OF CONCERN

The Chinese government's decision to establish Confucius Institutes in 10 British universities raises several serious questions. By accepting money from the Chinese government, British universities are overlooking the country's human rights record and lack of democracy. In addition, there are concerns that universities which accept Chinese money will feel less able to criticise Chinese policy. There is also reason to believe that the Chinese government is using British universities to advance its foreign policy goals – ironically through funding a subject which the British government has designated as being 'strategically important'. Furthermore, there are fears that the Confucius Institutes portray a disproportionately positive version of China through its teaching.

■ Chinese government control over Confucius Institutes

The Chinese government- via Hanban- possesses significant control over UK Confucius Institutes. When British universities agree to set up a Confucius Institute, the parameters of the agreement are established by Hanban, which also continuously assesses the Institutes performance and activities once they are established. There is also evidence that representatives of the Chinese government sit on Confucius Institute advisory boards, while one institute has expressed its dissatisfaction at its lack of influence over which teacher is seconded to it from China.

> "When British universities agree with Hanban to set up of a Confucius Institute, the basic parameters of the agreement are laid out in advance by the Chinese government – not by the universities"

415 'About the institute', University of Cardiff, available at www.cardiff.ac.uk/learn/confuciusinstitute/about.php

416 'Confucius Institute Launched', University of Central Lancashire, available at www.uclan.ac.uk/news/confucius_institute_launched.php

Anne-Marie Brady has said that:

> China's Confucius Institutes are strategically located in various foreign universities, allowing Chinese authorities to have an element of control over the study of China and Chinese language at these Western universities that they would not normally have.[417]

Indeed, it would seem that the Chinese government, via Hanban, hopes that it will be able to control and influence Confucius Institutes at universities around the world in order to further Chinese national interests. This has been openly recognised by some British universities. For example, a PowerPoint presentation on the Confucius Institute at Manchester, produced by two Manchester University staff, states that one role of the Confucius Institute is 'to project the image of intellectual and harmonious China'.[418]

While the Confucius Institutes and the Chinese government have sought to portray the institutes as being analogous to the British Council, Goethe Institute, Cervantes Institute or Alliance Francaise – cultural arms of governments abroad – there are significant differences.[419] While the likes of the British Council openly act as an arm of the UK government in promoting British culture, they are not attached to foreign universities. Confucius Institutes, however, do not advertise their close links to the Chinese government and present themselves as being integral parts of British universities. In addition, the British Council, Goethe Institute and Alliance Francaise are not funded by unelected and undemocratic governments.

> "Accept operational guidance from the Headquarter and follow relevant teaching standard…"

When British universities agree with Hanban to set up a Confucius Institute, the basic parameters of the agreement are laid out in advance by the Chinese government – not by the universities. Hanban sets out strict 'eligibility requirements' that must be met by foreign universities before they can host a Confucius Institute. They state that 'potential partners should meet the following prerequisites', which include the need to 'accept operational guidance from the Headquarter and follow relevant teaching standard'.[420] It is an area of concern when UK universities must 'accept operational guidance' from a branch of a foreign government in order to 'follow their relevant teaching standard'. The same document also says that

417 Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, p.165

418 'The Confucius Institute at the University of Manchester', University of Manchester, available at www.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/medialibrary/llc/files/external-relations/mar07/confucius-institute.ppt

419 For example, see 'The Confucius Institute at the University of Manchester', University of Manchester, available at www.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/medialibrary/llc/files/external-relations/mar07/confucius-institute.ppt; D. A. Bell, *China's New Confucianism: Politics and Everyday Life in a Changing Society* (Princeton University Press, 2008); J. Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive* (Yale University Press, 2007); 'The language of Chinese soft power', *Asia Times*, available at www.atimes.com/atimes/China/IE24Ad01.html; 'Confucius Institute Headquarters', available at www.confuciusinstitute.net/blogs/po/hq/posts/468; 'The Soft Power of Happy Chinese', *International Herald Tribune*, 18 January 2006, available at www.iht.com/articles/2006/01/18/opinion/edvatik.phpwww.iht.com/articles/2006/01/18/opinion/edvatik.php

420 'Introduction to the "Confucius Institute" Project', OCLCI

'each branch will follow in their teaching and evaluation work a unified set of quality certification system and standard for teaching, testing and training', making clear that Hanban effectively controls the teaching carried out in British universities' Confucius Institutes. Hanban also further specifies the nature of assistance that it should be allowed to provide through the Confucius Institutes by providing 'professional training for university, secondary and elementary school Chinese teachers'; 'helping formulate Chinese teaching curriculum or teaching plan' and 'promoting Chinese teaching materials and recommending Chinese teachers'.[421]

This blueprint allows Hanban, an arm of the Chinese government, not only to provide 'operational guidance' to departments within British universities, but also to dictate which texts and educational materials are used, as well as to approve the teachers and instructors that are allowed to teach at the institutes. In addition, Hanban specifies that it will continually assess the institutes' performance and activities once they are established, in order to ensure that they meet its aims. Hanban's website states that it 'will regularly assess the [Confucius] institutes and conduct quality certification…[which] includes overall scale, performance, operational administration, teaching quality and special features, annual working report, development plan'.[422] In return, British universities will receive 'a certain amount of financial support', 'training on the operational and teaching patterns of the institute' and 'teaching mode and curriculum planning'.[423] There is the clear implication that, if the output of the institutes does not meet the standards set by the Chinese government, this funding and support could possibly be cut off.

To date, none of the 10 British universities that have accepted money from the Chinese government to set up Confucius Institutes have published the texts of their agreements with Hanban. Therefore it is unclear whether these universities have complied with Hanban's demands word for word; if universities were to publish their agreements, this would clear up any ambiguity.

There is additional evidence that at least some of the universities have allowed representatives of the Chinese government to sit on the advisory boards of these institutes – something that is not even demanded in the Hanban documents available on public record. For example, Edinburgh Confucius Institute's 14-man advisory board, which 'agrees on strategies, annual plans and the annual budget', has the Chinese consul-general and the minister counsellor of the Chinese Embassy in the UK sitting on it.[424] There is also ample evidence that senior Chinese embassy and government officials do not only openly participate in the public launch of many of the institutes, but have also continued to supervise the institutes' activities once they are opened. For example, in 2007, the Edinburgh

421 *ibid*.

422 *ibid*.

423 *ibid*.

424 'Advisory Board of the Confucius Institute for Scotland', Confucius Institute for Scotland, available at www.confuciusinstitute.ac.uk/about/advisory-board.html

Confucius Institute received a large delegation from the Chinese government, including Wu Qidi, the vice-minister of education of China, Wang Yongda, the minister counsellor, Chang Quansheng from the Education Section of the Chinese Embassy, and Guo Lixin, the deputy director-general of the Ministry of Education.[425] Similarly, on 15 September 2008, the Chinese minister for education and several other ministers visited the Nottingham Confucius Institute,[426] and on 19 November 2008 Madame Liu Yandong, state counsellor and member of the Chinese Political Bureau, opened a conference on Chinese studies there.[427]

In November 2007, the *Guardian* reported that there were issues at the Sheffield Confucius Institute regarding the extensive influence that Hanban had over teacher secondment policy. The Confucius Institute – which at that point had been formally open for nearly 11 months – was dissatisfied with the lack of influence it had over which Chinese tutor would be appointed to teach at the institute.[428] It is unclear if this issue was resolved to Sheffield's satisfaction. However, the example raises worries over Hanban, an arm of the Chinese government, retaining a significant amount of control over staff appointments at an institute that is part of an independent UK university.

> "People should have their eyes open and know what they're letting themselves in for, and be monitoring the situation carefully"

In order to limit Chinese influence over foreign universities, Jocelyn Chey, a professor of Chinese Studies, has recommended that when 'setting up an institution which would have clear direction and backing from a foreign government, then you would need to have put in place very strict controls about how you are going to preserve academic freedom'.[429] Chey further suggests that, when opening up a Confucius Institute on campus, 'people should have their eyes open and know what they're letting themselves in for, and be monitoring the situation carefully'.[430]

This report has not found any indication that any British university has set up such safeguards or that they were fully aware of the purpose of the Confucius Institutes, as envisaged by the Chinese government.

425 'Delegation Visit from the Vice-Minister of Education in China', Confucius Institute for Scotland, available at www.confuciusinstitute.ac.uk/news/article.php?article_id=1&result=

426 'Minister Counsellor Tian Xiaogang visits Confucius Institute, School of Contemporary Chinese Studies', University of Nottingham, 15 September 2008, available at www.nottingham.ac.uk/chinese/news_and_events/press.php?news_code=MINISTE416&date=19-sep-2008

427 'Chinese State Councillor Visits the University of Nottingham', University of Nottingham, 19 November 2008, available at www.nottingham.ac.uk/chinese/news_and_events/press.php?news_code=CHINESE066&date=24-nov-2008

428 'Not a propaganda tool', *Guardian*

429 Jocelyn Chey, 'Chinese "soft-power" diplomacy and the Confucius Institute' lecture, available at www.thesydneyinstitutepodcast.com/2007/11/20/JOCELYNCHEYCHINESESOFTPOWERDIPLOMACYANDTHECONFUCIUSINSTITUTE.aspx

430 *ibid*.

Research

It could be argued that as long as Confucius Institutes confined themselves to language teaching and organising cultural events, there is limited scope for the Chinese government to influence teaching or to impose its own agenda on universities' output. However, there are signs that Confucius Institutes around the world are increasingly starting to branch out into conducting research with UK universities. As the Confucius Institutes are an arm of the Chinese government, any research undertaken is unlikely to be balanced and neutral.

> ❝ Research and other academic collaboration… which support the key objectives of the Confucius Institute ❞

So far, no research projects have been undertaken by UK universities, and the primary focus of the institutes thus far has been on language tuition and events highlighting traditional Chinese culture. However, there is evidence that the institutes are beginning to focus on research; and if this follows the same ideological tack as some of their language tuition (see below), it would be more problematic for the neutral and impartial reputation that British universities currently possess.

Jocelyn Chey has commented that:

> If in the future it [the Chinese government] were to become engaged in academic research or teaching of Chinese Studies departments, then we would want to make sure that the work was very closely delineated and would want to avoid the situation where research was biased in any way towards any goals of the People's Republic of China.[431]

Indeed, recently the first solely research-based Confucius Institute opened in Japan.[432] In addition, the University of Nottingham's website says that an aim of its collaboration with China is to facilitate 'research and other academic collaboration and exchanges with relevant social sciences and humanities departments at Fudan University which support the key objectives of the Confucius Institute'.[433] It must be hoped that this is just careless wording. Otherwise, Nottingham University, which describes itself as being at the 'forefront of international research in a diverse number of areas'[434] would appear to be accepting that an institute attached to the university is undertaking research in order to 'support the key objectives of the Confucius Institute', which was set up by the Chinese government to work towards China's national objectives.

> ❝ China is less democratic than Britain or Germany. And because there are partnerships with universities in China, the independence is less clear cut ❞

431 *ibid*.

432 *ibid*.

433 'The Nottingham Confucius Institute', University of Nottingham, available at www.nottingham.ac.uk/chinese/institutes/confucius.php

434 'Interdisciplinary excellence', University of Nottingham, available at http://research.nottingham.ac.uk/researchfocus/

This is made even more problematic by the acceptance from university staff working for Confucius Institutes in the UK that they do not have complete academic independence from the Chinese government. For example, Tim Wright, an executive board member of the Confucius Institute at Sheffield University, has said that:

> China is less democratic than Britain or Germany. And because there are partnerships with universities in China, the independence is less clear cut. But the Chinese government is well aware of the danger of Confucius Institutes being perceived in this way. We are given more or less a free rein to do what we want.

However, in his attempt to offer reassurance by saying that the university has been 'given more or less a free rein', Wright seems to accept that the teaching at the university's Confucius Institute is, to some extent, constrained by the university's relationship with the Chinese government. This relationship obviously has clear repercussions for independent research.

> "At best, it will result in a dumbing down of research; at worst, it will produce propaganda"

Other academics have also argued that the close relationships between Confucius Institutes and the Chinese government, and their financial dependence on Beijing, mean that any research they produce is likely to fall short of required academic standards and may even amount to 'propaganda'. Jocelyn Chey has warned that 'in so far as it [a Confucius Institute] aims to promote academic research in Chinese Studies, it is fundamentally flawed because of its close links with the Chinese government and Party. At best, it will result in a dumbing down of research; at worst, it will produce propaganda.'[435]

■ Teaching

There is reason to believe that the teaching and curriculum used by many Confucius Institutes aims to promote a positive view of China – as approved by the Chinese government – at the expense of open, rational and neutral scholarship. As the Confucius Institutes begin to branch out into research, this problem is likely to grow and will be compounded by the lack of oversight of Confucius Institutes by the universities.

The idea of Confucius Institutes producing balanced and impartial research is even more unlikely when one considers the teaching materials that are currently used.

As explained above, the guidelines on the Hanban website state that Confucius Institutes should use teaching materials approved by the Chinese government. Given the level of censorship and state control that exist in the Chinese education sector, this inevitably raises serious concerns. There are clear indications that the teaching materials provided by Hanban specifically for use by Confu-

435 'Not a political tool', *Guardian*

cius Institutes are biased. For instance, some of the textbooks provided by the Confucius Institute are entitled *Happy China* – a theme that is clearly in keeping with the institutes' aim of projecting a 'harmonious China' that was recognised by Confucius Institute employees at Manchester University.[436] Hanban also produced *Happy China* language tuition videos for use in Confucius Institutes in English-speaking universities. These are available at www.confuciusinstitute.net, which is the online hub for Confucius Institutes worldwide. Many of these videos are clear propaganda efforts by the Chinese government to promote an overly positive – and often demonstrably false – view of China.

The evidence of political bias in the *Happy China* videos is most striking in those videos that deal with Tibet. For example, in the *Happy China* video entitled *Chinese Geography – Lhasa*[437] the narrator tells viewers that 'This ancient city [Lhasa], with a history of over 1,300 years, was liberated peacefully in 1951.' Although Lhasa was occupied bloodlessly by the Chinese army in September 1951, this occurred only after the Chinese army had invaded Tibet the previous year, defeated the Tibetan army and forced the government to accept a peace treaty, or face the forcible occupation of Lhasa. In 1984, the Tibetan government estimated that 1.2 million Tibetans had died as a result of the Chinese invasion.[438]

Similar issues arise in the *Happy China* video *Chinese Geography – The Potala Palace*,[439] in which the viewer is told that

> the Potala Palace is the residential place of the Dalai Lama, it was also the political and religious cente of Tibet in the Qing Dynasty… The Palace-city area includes the administration office, printing house, living rooms for secular and Lama officials… The White Palace is used to provide religious and political service for the Dalai Lama, and the top floor provides living quarters for him.

However, the Dalai Lama fled after a failed uprising in 1959. The building has been converted into a museum by the Chinese, and today is a popular tourist attraction.[440]

In the *Happy China* video *Huanglong – Tibetans*,[441] the presenters first have a conversation, which consists of 'Happy Daniel' asking 'isn't China a land of propriety and righteousness?' and 'Happy Han Jia' replying 'that's true', before taking

436 'The Confucius Institute at the University of Manchester', University of Manchester

437 'Chinese Geography', Confucius Institute, available at www.confuciusinstitute.net/resources/1392

438 'Chinese Population – threat to Tibetan identity', Tibetan government in exile, available at www.tibet.com/Humanrights/poptrans.html

439 *Chinese Geography – The Potala Palace*, Confucius Institute, available at www.confuciusinstitute.net/resources/1412

440 'Tourists overrun Potala Palace as Dalai Lama takes a complete rest', *Independent*, 6 July 2006, available at www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/tourists-overrun-potala-palace-as-dalai-lama-takes-a-complete-rest-406849.html

441 *Huanglong – Tibetans*, Confucius Institute, available at www.confuciusinstitute.net/resources/2557

a tour of a Tibetan village. In this village, 'Happy Daniel' mentions that 'all the Tibetan houses we've passed by are two-storey buildings'. The hosts then visit an elderly Tibetan lady, giving her gifts of barley, and are shown inside her large and luxurious home. Inside, the presenters comment on how warm the building is, highlighting the 'stove and some cooking utensils', which shows that the room 'serves both as a kitchen and drawing room'. Further comment is made as to how the home's 'interior decorations are also unique' and that 'the walls and closets here are decorated with beautiful patterns'. The viewer is then introduced to Muni Gully, a 'magical land' with stylish, very modern and spacious buildings that are 'home to some plain-living Tibetans'. This positive picture strongly contrasts with the reality of life in Tibet. For example, in 2006 Human Rights Watch reported that the Chinese government was forcibly demolishing and rebuilding Tibetans' homes, 'particularly those who live next to main roads', to make 'a good impression on growing numbers of visitors and tourists'.[442] The same report also commented that, while many of these look modern, 'few of the houses actually have modern amenities such as water or electricity. In addition, the new houses are also usually smaller than the old ones and lack courtyards, which means that residents cannot keep their livestock and must sell them. Tibetans say that doing so closes off a significant source of livelihood for them.' It also reported that the Chinese government only covered part of the cost of rebuilding each house, meaning that many of those whose homes were forcibly demolished had to take out large loans that they were often unable to repay. Human Rights Watch said that Chinese actions were 'deepening poverty rather than boosting economic development'.[443]

Despite the evidence both that China aims to use the Confucius Institutes to promote a positive, and often untrue, vision of China and that the teaching materials produced for Confucius Institutes are sometimes little more than propaganda, many British universities deny that this is the case. For example, Robert Pearce, the vice-chancellor of the University of Wales Lampeter has said that 'we have seen no evidence of the Chinese government using the university as a propaganda tool through the Confucius Institute'.[444] Professor Xinzhong Yao, director of the Confucius Institute at Lampeter, has said 'we make it very clear that we are independent of the Chinese government. We will not compromise our views on Chinese politics because we have a Confucius Institute.'[445] Such denials that the Chinese government aims to control what is taught about China are at least partly contradicted not only by the available evidence, but also by what has been said by other academics. For example, Ge Jianxiong, director of the Institute of Chinese Historical Geography at Fudan University in Shanghai, which is the Edinburgh Confucius Institute's partner university, has said that 'quite frankly, in China there are some areas, very sensitive subjects, where it is impossible to tell people the truth… [H]istory is still used as a political tool, and

442 'Tibet: China Must End Rural Reconstruction Campaign', Human Rights Watch, available at www.hrw.org/english/docs/2006/12/20/china14903.htm

443 *ibid*.

444 'Not a political tool', *Guardian*

445 *ibid*.

at the high school level, we still must follow the doctrine.'[446]

Human rights

The decision of many British universities to accept money from the Chinese government raises serious ethical and moral questions as a result of China's long-standing lack of respect for basic human rights.

Even leaving aside the Tibet issue, China is well known for its poor human rights record and its lack of any recognisable form of democracy. British universities that have accepted Confucius Institutes from China seem to have willingly overlooked these issues in favour of focusing on the money on offer from Beijing. Human Rights Watch have said recently that:

> The Chinese government continues to deny or restrict its citizens' fundamental rights, including freedom of expression, freedom of association, and freedom of religion. The government's extensive police and state security apparatus continues to impose multiple layers of controls on civil society activists, critics, and protesters. Those layers include professional and administrative measures, limitations on foreign travel and domestic movement, monitoring (covert or overt) of internet and phone communications, abduction and confinement incommunicado, and unofficial house arrests. A variety of vaguely defined crimes including 'inciting subversion,' 'leaking state secrets,' and 'disrupting social order' provide the government with wide legal remit to stifle critics.[447]

Such human rights abuses in China are well known and widely publicised. However, in many cases universities seem to have knowingly overlooked such issues in order to seize the financial advantages of working with China – often seeking to play up the Confucius Institute's supposed economic benefits not only for the university but for society as a whole. For example, at the opening of Edinburgh University's Confucius Institute, the university principal, Professor Timothy O'Shea, said: 'I hope that the Confucius Institute in Edinburgh will prove to be a valuable resource for furthering Scottish engagement in China in a range of areas – both cultural and commercial.'[448] When a Confucius Institute opened at the University of Central Lancashire, the university's vice-chancellor, Malcolm McVicar, said 'China is a hugely significant business market, hence our focus on encouraging our students' exposure to its culture and language.'[449] The University of Cardiff's website also describes its own collaboration with China as primarily an economic one, the first line of its press release being: 'China is an

446 'China's Textbook Twist and Omit History', *New York Times*, 6 December 2004, available at www.tew.org/archived/china.textbooks.html

447 'Summary of China Rights Development', Human Rights Watch, available at http://china.hrw.org/press/review/summary_of_china_rights_developments

448 'University holds the first Confucius Institute in Scotland', University of Edinburgh, available at http://websiterepository.ed.ac.uk/news/060321confucius.html

449 'Confucius Institute launched', the University of Central Lancashire, available at www.uclan.ac.uk/news/confucius_institute_launched.php

increasingly important market for Welsh business.'[450] In some cases, this may be a deliberate attempt by universities to deflect interest from the moral and ethical questions that arising from accepting money from the Chinese government.

In some cases, universities have also sought to pre-empt criticism from human rights activists by saying that the best way to tackle such abuses is to 'engage' with China. For example, in October 2006, Edinburgh University's then vice-principal, Professor Geoffrey Boulton, attempted to head-off any such criticism by saying:

> China is a society in a phase of transition which should not be shunned but engaged with. This is most likely to have a 'liberalising' effect. Shouting at them about Tibet will not bring change. If you want a man to take his coat off, you let the sun shine on him rather than have the wind blow cold over him.[451]

However there appears to be very little evidence of increased western engagement with China having much of a 'liberalising' effect at all, and according to the latest Amnesty International report, the situation seems actually to be deteriorating:

> Growing numbers of human rights activists were imprisoned, put under house arrest or surveillance, or harassed. Repression of minority groups, including Tibetans, Uighurs and Mongolians, continued. Falun Gong practitioners were at particularly high risk of torture and other ill-treatment in detention. Christians were persecuted for practising their religion outside state-sanctioned channels. Despite the reinstatement of Supreme People's Court review of death penalty cases, the death penalty remained shrouded in secrecy and continued to be used extensively. Torture of detainees and prisoners remained prevalent. Millions of people had no access to justice and were forced to seek redress through an ineffective extra-legal petition system.[452]

On 20 December 2007, senior staff from the University of Edinburgh demonstrated their interest in the type of 'engagement' with China that Boulton talked of in a visit to Beijing as guests of the Chinese government. In the Great Hall of the People, situated on Tiananmen Square, the director of Edinburgh's Confucius Institute accepted an award from the government. Meanwhile Timothy O'Shea, the university's principle, met senior Chinese politicians including Education Minister Zhou Ji, and was quoted as saying that:

> As the new China has emerged onto the world stage, with new, enlightened policies for international collaboration in education and research, it was natural for the University

450 'Uniting the two dragons', University of Cardiff, available at www.cardiff.ac.uk/news/articles/uniting-the-two-dragons.html

451 'Annual Review Articles', the University of Edinburgh Governance and Strategic Planning, available at www.planning.ed.ac.uk/Governance/Court/Pub/20061030/Paper%20C9%20-%20Annual%20Review%20papers%20for%20Court%20submission.pdf

452 'Amnesty International Report 2008: China', Amnesty International, available at http://thereport.amnesty.org/eng/Regions/Asia-Pacific/China

> of Edinburgh to respond with enthusiasm to the opportunity to enhance its historical engagement with China.[453]

For China's dissidents however, there was little evidence of such 'enlightened policies'. Little more than a week after O'Shea gave his speech, police in Beijing arrested Hu Jia, a prominent human rights activist, for 'subverting state authority' after he took part in a European parliamentary hearing in Brussels through his webcam.[454] In April 2008, Jia was sentenced to three and a half years in jail.[455]

Some individuals involved in Confucius Institutes in UK universities have openly admitted that it is unlikely that they will host much critical discussion of China's human rights record. For example, Tim Wright, professor of Chinese studies and executive board member of the Confucius Institute at Sheffield University, said that 'someone who wished to undermine China might not be welcome at the institute, but then the British Council didn't exactly put on talks about the IRA'.[456] Indeed, Chinese officials frequently seem to encourage universities with Confucius Institutes to focus on more positive aspects of China. For example, the Confucius Institute at the University of Wales Lampeter reported that its official opening was attended by Madam Jiang Xuguang, a Counsellor from the Chinese Embassy in London, who was quoted as saying that the aim of the Institutes 'is to act as centres promoting friendship with China'.[457] The university press release said that the Institute 'aims to promote good international relationships with China and to enhance the understanding of Chinese language and culture'.[458] Lampeter appears to have sought to deflect criticism of the university's decision to accept money from the Chinese government by saying that it, and other universities, had no choice but to work with China. Robert Pearce, from the University of Wales Lampeter, put this choice in apocalyptic terms, saying that 'Our future and that of our grandchildren are going to depend on Britain trading with China. If we don't build links now, Britain has a very bleak future.'[459] No one is denying that China will possess a significant position economically in the 21st century. However it is also undeniable that China is a strictly controlled totalitarian state, and allowing it to establish educational institutes in the west that propagate this totalitarian ideology is of questionable merit.

453 'The University of Edinburgh and China', University of Edinburgh, available at www.ed.ac.uk/studying/international/country/asia/china/edinburgh-china

454 'Outrage at human rights activist Hu Jia's arrest in Beijing', Reporters without Borders, available at www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=24904

455 'Chinese civil rights activist, Hu Jia, sentenced to prison', *International Herald Tribune*, 3 April 2008, available at www.iht.com/articles/ap/2008/04/03/news/China-Activist-Trial.php

456 'Not a political tool', *Guardian*

457 'First Confucius Institute in Wales opens', University of Wales Lampeter, available at www.lamp.ac.uk/confucius/news/opening.html

458 *ibid*.

459 'Not a political tool', *Guardian*

Considering the appalling human rights record that China possesses, it is worrying that many senior academics actually seem to be bizarrely flattered that their university has been given a Confucius Institute by China's undemocratic and authoritarian government – and seem to have hardly questioned why the government has given them this money. For example, Geoffrey Boulton, Edinburgh University's then-Vice Principal, said 'the Chinese have approached us because they know us through our historic links with China and through our international reputation'.[460] Scotland's then-First Minister Jack McConnell added that it was 'a real tribute to Edinburgh University that it has been chosen as the site for the Institute'.[461] The University of Wales Lampeter's description of the opening of the Confucius Institute there made it sound as if China's donation to the university was a reward for good behaviour, saying that the Confucius Institute's establishment was 'recognition of the role that the University, and in particular the Centre for Chinese Studies, has played in advancing the study of Chinese language and culture'.[462] Similarly, a press release issued by Sheffield University in September 2006 said that 'the School of East Asian Studies at the University of Sheffield has been awarded a prestigious Confucius Institute by the Chinese government for the promotion of Chinese language and culture'.[463]

Financial dependence on the Chinese government

An unintended consequence of the present funding arrangements is that British universities will possibly become financially dependent on Beijing to run CI's. Such a situation could discourage universities from considering the poor human rights record of China for fear of jeopardising the chances of China continuing to fund the Confucius Institutes.

Many smaller universities may indeed believe that they have little choice but to accept Chinese money in order to attract better-quality students and to effectively compete with larger, better-funded universities – regardless of the moral and ethical questions about accepting donations from the Chinese government. Any perception that this prevents them from criticising China's human rights record may actually become reinforced once these universities have established a Confucius Institute. The reason for this is that most universities' agreements with China generally only provide funding for a short period (typically three to five years) before requiring renewal. Naturally, this uncertainty creates considerable fear and apprehension among academics that their funding may not be renewed when the period expires. For example, Shujie Yao, head of the School of Contemporary Chinese Studies at Nottingham University, has said:

460 'Annual Review Articles', the University of Edinburgh Governance and Strategic Planning

461 'Confucius Institute for Scotland', Government of Scotland, available at www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2006/03/21102132

462 'About Us', University of Wales Lampeter, available at www.lamp.ac.uk/confucius/about_us.html

463 'University to host Confucius Institute', University of Sheffield, available at www.shef.ac.uk/mediacentre/2006/641.html

> There is some uncertainty as to how the institutes are going to be financed long-term… My worry is it will take too long to get the institute into full gear because it is hard to get teachers to come and there is a shortage of Mandarin teachers.[464]

Similarly, Xinzhong Yao, director of the Confucius Institute at Lampeter, also voiced his concerns, saying:

> The Chinese government has set aside a lot of money for Confucius Institutes. But how long will that continue? I worry about the institutes across the world. What will happen after three years? Will they continue to send teachers from China to our universities?[465]

While the *Asia Times* has suggested that the Chinese government intends for the Institutes to become self-sufficient within five years,[466] this seems unrealistic – particularly because the Institutes often run events that are free, and the fees for their languages courses are highly competitive. Tim Wright, professor of Chinese studies and executive board member of the Confucius Institute at Sheffield University, has said that 'if the expectation is that the institutes will self-fund after three years, that is totally unrealistic'.[467]

Although there is no direct evidence that the Chinese government deliberately intends that British universities should become financially dependent on Beijing to run the institutes, it seems that this may be an unintended consequence of the present funding arrangements. An important possible consequence of this is to discourage universities from criticising China and its poor human rights record – for fear of jeopardising the chances that Chinese funding of Confucius Institutes will be renewed. It is likely that many universities enter agreements with the Chinese government without considering the potential problems that could arise from their decision. For example, Anne-Marie Brady has written that 'many cash-strapped universities welcome the extra funding and resources that the Confucius Institute can offer, without realising the potential cost to freedom of speech and association'.[468]

The British-based Friends of Falun Gong, which supports the freedom of religious expression of the persecuted members of the Chinese cult, are worried that universities that take the Communist party's Yuan may become influenced by its agenda. 'You don't want to offend the paymaster', says Dr Jian Yang Luo, a spokesperson for the group, who runs a Chinese school in west London.

> If you accept resources, you have to accept influence. What Falun Gong teaches is very

464 'Not a political tool', *Guardian*

465 *ibid*.

466 'The language of Chinese soft power in the US', *Asia Times*, 24 May 2007, available at www.atimes.com/atimes/China/IE24Ad01.html

467 'Not a political tool', *Guardian*

468 Anne-Marie Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), p.165

much in the Chinese tradition. The Confucius Institutes won't mention it. In China, you have to follow government guidelines. Here, it is better, but they will still have to be careful.[469]

469 'Ancient sage in the global marketplace', *Independent*, 10 August 2006, available at www.independent.co.uk/news/education/higher/ancient-sage-in-the-global-marketplace-411182.html

Additional donations

Although the bulk of the money given to British universities by the Chinese government is delivered through the Confucius Institutes, the University of Southampton and the University of Sheffield have also received gifts from branches of the Chinese government.

Donations from the Chinese government

UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM

- **2001 – Nottingham receives a donation of textbooks from the Chinese government**

In 2001, the Chinese government donated to the University of Nottingham 'the largest single donation of Chinese text books to any university in the world outside of China'. The gift was presented by Madame Chen Zhili, then Chinese minister of education.[470]

UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

- **2003 – Sheffield receives a donation of textbooks from the Chinese government**

In November 2003, *EastAsia@Sheffield*, a newsletter produced by Sheffield University, reported that the university library had received 400 books 'on Chinese language and society, as well as up-to-date dictionaries and language teaching materials' from Hanban.[471]

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

- **2006 – Southampton receives a donation of textbooks from the Chinese government**

In February 2006, Southampton University's Centre for Contemporary China was visited by the Chinese ambassador to the UK, who presented the centre with 200 books 'on Chinese History, Culture, Art and other interesting sub-

470 'Chinese Minister to receive honorary degree and open new China Policy Institute', University of Nottingham, available at www.nottingham.ac.uk/public-affairs/press-releases/index.phtml?menu=pressreleasesarchive&code=CHI-120/03&create_date=24-nov-2003

471 'Students become TV stars, Adventure series to be shown in China', *EastAsia@Sheffield*, November 2003, No. 7, available at www.shef.ac.uk/content/1/c6/05/03/67/November2003.pdf

KIN-KWOK CHUNG EDUCATION FOUNDATION

The Kin-Kwok Chung Education Foundation was set up by Mr Kin-Kwok Chung, a Chinese businessman, who has attempted to promote foreign trade, investment and education, especially in the Hunan province.[1] It has provided financial support for a variety of scholarships, as well as an academic institute established at Nottingham University to study global finance. As part of a philanthropy campaign entitled the 'Hope Project', Chung has also helped fund Chinese primary schools.[2]

Chung is also chairman of the Maxdo Group Ltd, a real estate business, and is a member of the Hunan Provincial People's Political Consultation Conference.[3]

1 *ibid*.

2 'Summer graduation 2008 at the University of Nottingham', available at www.hero.ac.uk/media_relations/19967.cfm

3 'China gift to strengthen research and transform lives', University of Nottingham, available at www.nottingham.ac.uk/public-affairs/press-releases/index.phtml?menu=pressreleases&code=CHI-129/06&create_date=19-jul-2006

jects'.[472] *INTouch*, a University of Southampton newsletter, reported in its 12 June 2007 issue that the university would receive a total of 4,000 books from the National Library of China.[473] The Southampton University *Bulletin* further added that 'The National Library of China will donate 200 books annually, between now and 2010, together with an initial donation enabling the University to build a collection of around 4,000 in the next four years.'[474]

Donations from miscellaneous Chinese individuals and organisations

UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

- **2003 – Sheffield receives an unknown amount from Sir Sze-yuen Chung**

In April 2003, the University of Sheffield's School of East Asian Studies opened a new resource centre 'to provide facilities for postgraduate students taking one

472 'Centre for Contemporary China receives Chinese Ambassador', University of Southampton, available at www.soton.ac.uk/about/ccc/News-Archive/ambassador_visit_2006.html

473 'Enhancing Understanding of China', *InTouch*, p.4, available at www.soton.ac.uk/about/ccc/Downloads/intouch12june07.pdf

474 'University grows link with National Library of China', *Bulletin*, available at www.bulletin.soton.ac.uk/1224/china.htm

DR STANLEY HO

Dr Stanley Ho is a Hong Kong casino tycoon who, in 2008, was listed by ***Forbes*** as the 113th wealthiest man in the world.[1] He made his fortune in Macau's casino industry, and his empire also extends to greyhound racing, lotteries and horse betting.[2] He has proved to be a somewhat controversial figure in the past. Not only has he fathered 17 children and become renowned for his playboy lifestyle, he has also repeatedly had to deny allegations of his links to organised crime. According to the BBC, these allegations prevented the expansion of his empire into Canada and Australia,[3] Ho labelling Australian policy 'racist' and damaging to foreign investment.[4]

Ho was awarded an OBE in 1989 for his philanthropy.

1 The World's Billionaires #113 Stanley Ho', *Forbes*, available at www.forbes.com/lists/2008/10/billionaires08_Stanley-Ho_UMEN.html

2 'Stanley Ho', *Forbes*, available at www.forbes.com/lists/2006/10/UMEN.html

3 'A bad run for Macau's casino king', *BBC News*, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/7506995.stm

4 'Oxford takes gambling king's cash', *The Times*, available at www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/education/article1842826.ece

of the Schools [*sic*] nine Masters degrees in East Asian Business, Chinese, Japanese and Korean Studies'.[475] The centre was named after its funder, Sir Sze-yuen Chung, a Hong Kong businessman, politician and Sheffield graduate. In addition, the 2003/04 edition of *Your University*, Sheffield University's magazine for 'alumni and friends' wrote that: 'To commemorate his time at Sheffield and his on-going association with the University, Sir Sze-yuen Chung has made a generous donation to help establish a scholarship fund for Hong Kong students.'[476] The amounts donated by Chung have not been made public.

UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM – SCHOOL OF CONTEMPORARY CHINESE STUDIES (CHINA POLICY INSTITUTE)

- **2006 – Nottingham receives a £1.75 million donation from the Kin-Kwok Chung Education Foundation**

In July 2006, the China Policy Institute received £1.75 million from the Kin-Kwok Chung Education Foundation, which was set up by Mr Kin-Kwok Chung, a Chinese businessman. A press release issued by the university on 19 July 2006 said that the grant would 'help to transform the lives of talented students facing

475 'New Sir Sze-yuen Chung Resource Centre', University of Sheffield, available at www.sheffield.ac.uk/alumni/news/seas.html

476 'The Global Perspective', *Your University 2003/2004*, available at www.sheffield.ac.uk/content/1/c6/04/17/91/Your%20University%20Issue%201.pdf

economic hardship in the Hunan province of China', and that

> the University of Nottingham Ningbo China will recruit a number of students from Hunan Province, where Mr Kin-Kwok Chung was born and raised. Scholarships will be granted to those most in financial need. This programme will actively support the ambition of Mr Chung to aid educational development in his home province.[477]

The China Policy Institute is part of the larger School of Contemporary Chinese Studies, which also houses the Confucius Institute. It was set up by the University of Nottingham in 2003 'as a think tank to expand the knowledge and understanding of contemporary China in the UK, Europe and worldwide, and to analyse critical challenges faced by China in its rapid development', whose 'goal is to help build a more informed dialogue between China and the rest of the world'.[478] The institute was officially opened by Madame Chen Zhili, a councillor of the State Council of China and former education minister, who also received an honorary doctorate from the university.[479] The University of Nottingham has many close ties to China, having also been the first foreign university to be granted a licence by the Chinese government to open a campus there.[480]

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

❖ 2007 – Oxford receives a £2.5 million donation from Dr Stanley Ho

In May 2007, Oxford University announced that Dr Stanley Ho, a Chinese billionaire, had given the university money to endow a 'new University Lecturership in Chinese History, associated with a Tutorial Fellowship at Pembroke College'.[481] A press release issued by the university said that the 'creation of this new post forms part of a broader strategy to develop Chinese Studies at Oxford'. *Blueprint*, an Oxford University newsletter, reported in its 31 May 2007 issue that Dr Ho had given £2.5 million to fund the lectureship and a junior research fellowship.[482]

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477 'China gift to strengthen research and transform lives', University of Nottingham, available at www.nottingham.ac.uk/public-affairs/press-releases/index.phtml?menu=pressreleases&code=CHI-129/06&create_date=19-jul-2006

478 'About us – China Policy Institute', University of Nottingham School of Contemporary Chinese Studies, available at www.nottingham.ac.uk/cpi/about/index.php

479 'Chinese Minister to receive honorary degree and open new China Policy Institute', University of Nottingham, available at www.nottingham.ac.uk/public-affairs/press-releases/index.phtml?menu=pressreleasesarchive&code=CHI-120/03&create_date=24-nov-2003

480 'Businessman's donation boosts China research network plans', University of Nottingham, available at http://research.nottingham.ac.uk/newsreviews/newsDisplay.aspx?id=188

481 'Dr Hanley Ho donated £2.5m to Oxford University towards the study of Chinese History', University of Oxford, available at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/po/news/2006-07/may/08.shtml

482 *Blueprint*, 31 May 2007, available at www.ox.ac.uk/staff/blueprint/back_issues/document.rm?id=766

Donations to Japanese Studies

Japanese Studies – designated by the British government as a 'strategically important subject' - has also received substantial funding from Japanese organisations and companies. Many of these donations seem aimed to compensate for recent university cutbacks in Japanese teaching, and while there are areas of slight concern, the vast majority of donations from Japan appear to be extremely benign.

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Donations

- **1979 – Oxford receives a £1.5m donation from the Nissan Motor Company**

In 1979, the Nissan Motor Company gave £1.5 million to Oxford University to fund the creation of a centre for Japanese Studies.[483] The Nissan Institute of Japanese Studies was subsequently opened in 1981, based at St Antony's College, employing a political scientist, an economist and a historian to teach at the Institute.

- **1990 – Oxford receives a £3.2 million donation from the Nissan Motor Company**

In 1990, Nissan donated a further £3.2 million to fund two further lectureships in Economics and Social Anthropology.[484] This also helped fund the construction of a new building for the Institute situated in the grounds of St Antony's College. This opened in 1992 and contains offices, teaching rooms and a lecture theatre.[485] The Institute also organised a wide variety of lectures and events, most notably an annual lecture series, the Nissan Seminars in Japanese Studies, which covers a broad range of social, economic and cultural issues relating to Japan.

- **2006 – Oxford receive a £1.5m donation from the Nissan Motor Company**

In 2006, the Nissan Institute received a further donation of £1.5m from Nissan.

483 'New boost for Japanese Studies', University of Oxford, available at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/po/news/2007-08/oct/08.shtml

484 'Nissan gives £3m to St Antony's College in Oxford', *The Times*, 9 June 1990

485 'About the Nissan Institute of Japanese Studies', University of Oxford, available at http://web.archive.org/web/20070612050551/http://www.nissan.ox.ac.uk/about.htm

NISSAN MOTOR COMPANY

The Nissan Motor Company, founded in 1933, is one of the largest car manufacturers in the world. It is based in Japan and occasionally contributes money to worthy causes. The company vision is 'to enrich people's lives', with its aim to be 'valued by society' for reasons beyond it economic contribution; therefore, the company is focusing on 'fostering creativity of children and young people, promoting a better understanding of environmental protection and providing humanitarian relief'.[1]

Nissan also states that it is 'continually striving to be a corporation that society views as essential… Nissan provides support for education, environmental issues, the arts and a range of diverse other areas.'[2] As part of this, in 1981, the company helped to establish the Nissan Institute of Japanese Studies at the University of Oxford, which it describes as 'one of the principal centers for modern Japanese studies in Europe', and one that 'contributes significantly to the promotion of better mutual understanding between Japan and Europe'.[3]

1 'What can Nissan do for society', Nissan, available at www.nissan-global.com/EN/CITIZENSHIP/PROGRAM1/

2 'Social Contribution', Nissan, available at www.nissan-global.com/EN/SOCIALCONTRIBUTION/

3 'Nissan Institute of Japanese Studies', Nissan, available at www.nissan-global.com/EN/CITIZENSHIP/INSTITUTE/

A press release issued by Oxford University on 20th March, 2006 said that 'the money, to be spread over three years, will ensure the funding of the Institute's core academic posts in social anthropology, economics, politics, and modern Japanese history'.[486]

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

❖ 1984 – Cambridge receives a £650,000 donation from Keidanren

In 1984, Keidanren, the Japanese version of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), donated £650,000 to Cambridge University to allow the university to continue its Japanese Studies programme, which was threatened by government funding cuts. The *Guardian* reported that 'the cost of the endowment of a professorship was raised, from 40 of Japan's major companies. The endowment will support a new professorship in modern Japanese studies in perpetuity.'[487] In 1987, Gaishi Hiraiwa, vice chairman of Keidanren and chairman of Tokyo Electric Power Co. was given a Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire (KBE) at the British Embassy in Tokyo. Japan's Jiji news service reported that 'Hiraiwa was especially commended for establishing in 1984 a

486 'Nissan Institute of Japanese studies celebrates new funding', University of Oxford, available at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/po/news/2005-06/mar/20.shtml

487 'Japanese industry has given a £650,000 grant to Cambridge University for the continuation of Japanese studies there', *Guardian*, 16 August 1984

foundation that permitted the continuation of Cambridge University's Japanese studies course'.[488]

- **1990 – Cambridge receives an unspecified amount from Yasuda Trust and Banking Company Limited**

The university's Statutes and Ordinances 2008 edition also refers to the Yasuda Trust and Banking Company Fund, of which it says:

> The benefaction of the Yasuda Trust and Banking Company Limited, on the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of the opening of the Company's operations in London, shall form a fund for the advancement of Japanese Studies in the University. The currency of the Fund shall be from the year 1990 to the year 2001 inclusive.[489]

It goes on to say:

> The capital and the income of the Fund shall be used to provide postgraduate Scholarships and postdoctoral Fellowships in Japanese Studies tenable in the University, and to make grants to meet expenses incurred or to be incurred by the holders of these awards.

Control of the fund and the way in which it is used seem to rest almost entirely in the hands of Cambridge academics:

> The Managers of the Fund shall be the Faculty Board of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, who may delegate all or any of their functions under these regulations to a Committee consisting of the Professor of Japanese Studies (or his or her deputy) as Chairman, and such other members of the Regent House, not necessarily being members of the Faculty Board, as the Faculty Board shall determine.[490]

This is a sign of good practice on Cambridge's part, and can serve as a useful guide for future donations it may receive.

- **Unknown date – Cambridge receives £750,000 from Mr Kawashima Hiroshi, and £750,000 from Fuji Bank Limited**

Cambridge University's Statutes and Ordinances document refers to the Japanese Studies Fund, which contains at least £1.5 million from Japanese individuals, banks and other sources. The document says:

> The sum of £750,000 received from Mr Kawashima Hiroshi, the similar sum received

488 'Gaishi Hiraiwa, chairman of Tokyo Electric Power Co and vice chairman of the Federation of Economic Organisations (Keidanren), received his Knight Commander Order of the British Empire (KBE) at the British Embassy Wednesday', Jiji Press English News Service, 8 April 1987

489 'Chapter XII: Trust Emoluments, Endowed University Lectureships', p.938, *University of Cambridge Statutes and Ordinances 2008*

490 *ibid*.

> from Fuji Bank Limited, and other sums received for the support of Japanese Studies shall form a fund called the Japanese Studies Fund, the purpose of which shall be the furtherance of Japanese Studies generally in the University, in such manner as may be approved by the General Board on the recommendation of the Faculty Board of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies.[491]

This fund is used to pay for the Kawashima Lecturer in Japanese Studies and the Fuji Bank Lecturer in Modern Japanese Studies. It is not clear when these donations were received by Cambridge University.

UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM

- **1995 – Durham receives a 'generous' donation from Nihon Seiko Kabushiki-gaisha**

In 1995, Durham University received a large donation from Nihon Seiko Kabushiki-gaisha (NSK), a Japanese company, to support a professorship in Japanese Studies for four years. Durham did not disclose the exact amount of the donation, and the Department of East Asian Studies describes it only as 'generous'.[492] The following year, Toshio Arata, the president of NSK, received an honorary degree from Durham.[493] However, in 2007 the university closed its East Asian Studies department, effectively ending the teaching of Japanese studies.[494]

VARIOUS UNIVERSITIES

- **2007 – A variety of universities receive £2.5 million from the Nippon Foundation and the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation**

In 2007, the Nippon Foundation, Japan's biggest charity, and the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation (GBSF) announced that they would jointly give £2.5 million to fund Japanese studies at 12 British universities for periods of up to five years. The bulk of this donation went to fund lectureships at many of the UK's most prominent universities, including Oxford and Cambridge. A list of the lectureships is available on the GBSF website:[495]

491 *ibid*., p.801

492 'The History of Japanese Studies', University of Durham, available at web.archive.org/web/20070317222533/www.dur.ac.uk/eastasian.studies/about/history/japanese_studies/

493 'Minutes of the meeting of the University of Durham Council, 2nd July 1996', University of Durham, available at www.dur.ac.uk/committees/Council/1996-07-02m

494 'Department of East Asian Studies', University of Durham, web.archive.org/web/20080205120125/www.dur.ac.uk/eastasian.studies/

495 'General Information', Sasakawa Foundation, available at www.gbsf.org.uk/

1.	**Birkbeck College, University of London** Research Associate in Japanese Creative Industries and/or Cultural Policy – 3 years
2.	**University of Bristol, Centre for East Asian Studies** Lectureship in Contemporary Japanese Society – 5 years
3.	**University of Cambridge, Dept of East Asian Studies/Needham Institute** Research Associate in Japanese Science and Technology – 3 years
4.	**Cardiff University, Cardiff Japanese Studies Centre** Lectureship in Japanese Studies – 5 years
5.	**University of Leeds (National Institute of Japanese Studies)** Lectureship in Japanese Studies (Japanese Cultural Studies/History) – 5 years
6, 7.	**University of Sheffield (National Institute of Japanese Studies)** Lectureship in Japanese Business/Economics – 5 years Lectureship in Japanese Studies (including establishment of Global Network of Research Training in the Social Scientific Study of Contemporary Japan) – 1 year
8.	**University of Manchester, School of Languages, Linguistics and Cultures** Lectureship in Japanese Studies (Contemporary Visual Cultures) – 5 years
9.	**University of Newcastle, School of Historical Studies** Lectureship in Modern/Post war History – 5 years
10.	**University of Oxford, Dept of Sociology/School of Interdisciplinary Area Studies** Career Development Fellowship (Lecturer) in the Sociology of Japan – 5 years
11.	**Oxford Brookes University, School of Social Science and Law,** Lectureship in the Economic Anthropology of Japan – 5 years
12.	**The School of Oriental & African Studies, Dept of History** Lectureship in Contemporary Japanese Political History – 5 years
13.	**University of East Anglia, School of Political, Social and International Studies** Lectureship in Contemporary Japanese Visual Media (5 years)

Announcing the donation, the Earl of St Andrews, the chairman of the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation, said:

> Expertise in Japanese language and in the country's economy, culture, history and politics will remain essential if the British-Japanese relationship is to prosper, and British interests in relation to Japan are to be safeguarded.[496]

Yohei Sasakawa, chairman of the Nippon Foundation, was quoted as saying

496 'Funding boost for Japanese Studies', University of Bristol, available at www.bris.ac.uk/news/2007/5632.html

THE NIPPON FOUNDATION AND THE GREAT BRITAIN SASAKAWA FOUNDATION (GBSF)

In 1962, Ryoichi Sasakawa, a Japanese businessman and politician, set up the Nippon Foundation,[1] which describes itself as a 'non-profit philanthropic organization'.[2] The company highlights its boldly altruistic aims, and its 'strong sense of responsibility and mission… For the sake of humankind and the world in general, we are bringing together the world's wisdom, and using it to transform society.'[3] The foundation further describes itself as a group whose focus is on 'ships and the oceans, public welfare and volunteerism, support of the basic human needs, the arts, sports, education and network building in both Japan and abroad'.[4]

Domestically, the Nippon Foundation mainly focuses on welfare support, and 'lending social welfare organizations the strength to bridge the gaps left by governmental programs',[5] particularly in provincial areas. Internationally, it seeks to 'address issues that transcend national borders, surpassing governmental efforts to overcome them…such as education, health and food security'.[6]

The Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation (GBSF) was set up in 1985 using a £10 million donation from the Nippon Foundation.[7] It is a non-partisan, non-profit organisation that was established because of the need to 'enhance mutual appreciation and understanding' between Britain and Japan 'in each other's culture, society and achievements'.[8] There have been similar initiatives in the US, France and Scandinavia.

The GBSF places particular focus on science and technology, medicine and health, environment and social issues, Japanese studies and the Japanese language. However it also hands out grants for a variety of cultural exchange trips to 'academics, professionals, creative artists, teachers, young people, journalists and representatives of civic and non-governmental organisations', and also funds 'exhibitions, performances and creative productions by artists, musicians, film-makers, writers and theatre groups'.[9]

1 Robert Angel, 'The Japan Lobby: An Introduction', Japan Policy Research Institute Working Paper 27, December 1996, available at www.jpri.org/publications/workingpapers/wp27.html

2 'A Brief overview of the Nippon Foundation', Nippon Foundation, available at www.nippon-foundation.or.jp/eng/who/overview.html

3 *ibid*.

4 'Welcome to the Nippon Foundation', Nippon Foundation, available at www.nippon-foundation.or.jp/eng/

5 'Domestic Welfare Support', Nippon Foundation, available at www.nippon-foundation.or.jp/eng/domestic/DomesticTop2.html

6 'International Cooperative Support', Nippon Foundation, available at www.nippon-foundation.or.jp/eng/inter/InternationalTop2.html

7 'General information', Sasakawa Foundation, available at www.gbsf.org.uk/

8 *ibid*.

9 *ibid*.

that through the donations, 'the United Kingdom will again become the principal focus for research and scholarship, setting an example for other European countries to follow'.[497] The funding has received the support of the Japanese government, with the Japanese Embassy hosting an event to explain the awards in October 2007.[498]

Areas of concern

The vast majority of Japanese donations should be viewed as a positive contribution to UK universities; and bearing in mind that Japan is a democratic nation which seemingly harbours no ambitions of propagating a certain worldview or ideology, clearly any problems that do arise are not on the same scale as when dictatorial regimes fund UK universities. However, there have been concerns raised by some donations, such as the university becoming dependent on the money, and the dubious political links of certain donor organisations.

■ Financial dependence on Japanese donors

Perhaps the greatest area of concern is that universities have been forced to turn to private donors out of necessity because, once again, the government has put insufficient finance into higher education – even subjects designated 'strategically important'. The *Japan Times*, an English-language newspaper in Japan, quoted Yoshiji Nogami, Japan's ambassador to the UK, as saying that 'a lack of [British] government funding has meant that leading [universities' Japanese] departments have had to be shut down'. The ambassador added that this was a 'great shame' and 'unacceptable'.[499] Both the Japanese organisations and British academics have stressed that the donations aimed to compensate for recent university cutbacks in Japanese teaching. For example, a press release issued by Leeds University in October 2007 quoted the Earl of St Andrews as saying that:

> Any further diminution of our pool of national expertise on Japan would be highly damaging to our current and future national interest… We are losing this pool of Japan specialists at an alarming rate. These people have been instrumental in fostering and sustaining the close partnerships that the UK and Japan have enjoyed in trade and investment, cultural and scientific exchange and in a number of multilateral contexts. This pool of expertise is now under threat.[500]

Oxford University also issued a press release, which quoted Dr Ian Neary, director of the Nissan Institute, as saying:

497 *ibid*.

498 'The Nippon Foundation establishes Japanese Studies Courses at Twelve UK universities', Nippon Foundation, available at www.nippon-foundation.or.jp/eng/current/20071109JapaneseCoursesinEngland.html

499 'Japanese studies in the U.K. receive financial boost', *The Japan Times Online*, available at http://search.japantimes.co.jp/member/member.html?mode=getarticle&file=nn20071013f3.html

500 'Boost for Japanese studies in the UK', University of Leeds, available at http://campus.leeds.ac.uk/newsincludes/newsitem5085.htm

> This generous support from the Sasakawa Foundation will fill an important gap in the teaching of social sciences at Oxford by enabling us to appoint someone able to work on key issues troubling Japanese society. Japanese has become a vulnerable subject in UK universities, as it is more expensive to teach per head than more popular languages such as French and German.[501]

The lack of government spending has led to an influx of funds into Japanese studies from Japanese companies and individuals. This has led to some academics speaking out publicly, warning that this could inhibit criticism of Japan. For example, in 1991, Dr Kaoru Sugihara, head of the Japan Research Centre at SOAS, told *The Times*:

> You could end up with professors in British universities who feel unable to speak out against, or criticise, Japan. I don't mean that the Japanese funding source would steer the professors, but there would be self-censorship. Unless you have some independent funding, there will be no room for an independent mind.[502]

Donor organisations' links to far-right politics

The Nippon Foundation and the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation, both of which have made significant contributions to UK Japanese studies, had links to Ryoichi Sasakawa, a Japanese businessman and politician who, in later life, gave much of his money to charity. Sasakawa established the Nippon Foundation (originally known as the Sasakawa Foundation) in 1962.[503] The Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation was founded in 1985, using a £10 million donation from the Nippon Foundation, following a visit to London by Yohei Sasakawa himself in 1983.[504] Sasakawa himself was a controversial figure. Born in 1899, he became involved in Japanese right-wing politics in the 1930s, becoming an outspoken militarist and a prominent right-wing politician. In 1945, he was put on trial as a 'Class A War Criminal' for planning and waging war, although he was not convicted. He was also later linked to organised crime through his close friendship with Yoshio Kodama, an ultra-nationalist who was a leading figure in Japan's criminal underworld. On Sasakawa's death in 1995, the *Independent* wrote:

> In the land where most people do their utmost to pass unnoticed, Ryoichi Sasakawa stood out as a monster of egotism, greed, ruthless ambition, political deviousness and with a love of the limelight equalled in his time only by his fellow right-winger Yukio Mishima.[505]

501 'New boost for Japanese Studies', University of Oxford, available at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/po/news/2007-08/oct/08.shtml

502 'How the West was won with Japanese money', *The Times*, 1 June 1991

503 Robert Angel, 'The Japan Lobby: An Introduction', Japan Policy Research Institute Working Paper 27, December 1996, available at www.jpri.org/publications/workingpapers/wp27.html

504 'General information', Sasakawa Foundation, available at www.gbsf.org.uk/

505 'Obituary: Ryoichi Sasakawa', *Independent*, 20 July 1995

The *Guardian* more generously described him as 'philanthropist, billionaire, politician, candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize, friend of the great and good, war criminal and "don" of Japan'.[506] However, the article also noted that 'his critics claim that Sasakawa used his extensive charitable donations as a front to deflect from less savoury allegations that he was involved with yakuza criminal gangs and ultra nationalists'. *Yomiuri Shimbun*, Japan's best-selling newspaper, said that Sasakawa was widely regarded as a 'monster of modern times'.[507]

The Nippon Foundation's website attempts to put the best possible gloss on Sasakawa's life, writing that his political party 'supported Japan's entry to Manchuria' (i.e. supported the invasion of China), that he provided 'a certain amount of support for the army' (i.e. he was a militarist) and, yet more anodynely, that he 'believed that national strength, centred on the emperor, should be furthered through business, politics and the military'.[508] The website adds: 'His position as a patriot was not a thing that would change, either during the war or during the 50 years that he lived after it.'

506 'Tainted History of a Rich Good Guy', *Guardian*, 20 July 1995

507 Cited in 'Tainted History of a Rich Good Guy', *Guardian*, 20 July 1995

508 'Our Founder, Ryoichi Sasakawa', Nippon Foundation, available at www.nippon-foundation.or.jp/eng/20080624OurFounder.html

Miscellaneous donations to Asian Studies

The London School of Economics has also accepted a donation from the Korea Foundation, an arm of the South Korean government, towards its Asia Research Centre. Additionally, Oxford University has received a donation of at least £2 million from a Buddhist organisation in order to endow a chair in Buddhist Studies.

THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

- **1997 – the LSE receives an unspecified amount from a variety of Asian organisations**

The LSE established the Asia Research Centre in 1997 with 'the particular object of encouraging and coordinating inter-disciplinary social science research relating to Asia', with a view to promoting 'interchange between academic research, policy making and intellectual engagement with businesses with an interest in Asia'.[509]

The centre is not clear about the origins of its funding; however, its benefactors include the state-owned Bank of China, 'government and private sources in Taiwan' and the Korea Foundation,[510] which is funded by the Korean government.[511]

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

- **2006 – Oxford receives an unknown amount from Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai**

In October 2006, Oxford University announced that an endowed chair in Buddhist Studies would be created as part of the Oriental Studies faculty, and be affiliated with the Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies (OCBS), a Recognised Independent Centre of Oxford University.

The chair was the result of a donation by Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai (BDK), a Japa-

509 'Asia Research Centre', London School of Economics, available at www.lse.ac.uk/collections/asiaResearchCentre/Default.htm

510 'Asia Research Centre Benefactors', London School of Economics, available at www.lse.ac.uk/collections/asiaResearchCentre/benefactors.htm

511 'Seoul's warning to the US on Pyongyang', *Asia Times*, 15 July 2005, available at www.atimes.com/atimes/Korea/GG15Dg01.html

nese Buddhist group based in Tokyo, which was founded 'to transmit the Buddhist religion to as many people in the world as possible, without expounding the doctrines of any particular sector denomination'.[512] The press-release from Oxford University states that the BDK 'is a society for the promotion of Buddhism'.

While the exact amount donated is unclear, OCBS has said that £2.35 million is needed to endow a full professorship at Oxford.[513]

512 'Society for the promotion of Buddhism', The BDK, available at www.bdkamerica.org/

513 'The Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies: Background', Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies, available at www.ocbs.org/content/view/36/60/

Russian/Eastern European donations

Area and languages studies relating to the countries and peoples of the former Soviet Union are designed by the British government as being 'strategically important'. Some universities have received foreign donations towards their work in these areas – however the amounts donated are much smaller than those donated towards Arab, Islamic and East Asian Studies.

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

- **2004 – Birmingham receive an unknown amount from the East European Trust**

The Centre for Russian and East European Studies at the University of Birmingham held 'an expanded conference programme that…included a larger number of invited guest speakers than usual'[514] due to a 'kind donation from The East European Trust', a Russian bank.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

- **2006 – UCL receive an unknown amount from the Polish Educational Society**

In 2006, the Polish Educational Society, a London-based charity, gave a 'generous donation' to the School of Slavonic and Eastern European Studies (SSEES) which is part of the UCL.[515] The SSESS website recorded that the donation 'contributed to the furnishing of the fourth floor Research Area' and that it 'reflects the continuing cooperation between the PES and the School'.[516]

514 'Centre for Russian and East European Studies', University of Birmingham Centre for Russian and East European Studies, available at www.crees.bham.ac.uk/research/AnnRep2003-4/annconf.htm

515 'News from SSEES', UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies, available at www.ssees.ac.uk/news.htm

516 *ibid*.

Conclusion

What is noticeable from the research undertaken in this report is the disparity in the levels of funding from the countries studied. There are huge amounts of cash currently being donated by Arab and Islamic sources, and this has undoubtedly led to a degree of influence in the oversight of UK universities. China, however, while donating only a relatively small amount of cash, has managed to gain a disproportionate amount of influence in UK higher education via its Confucius Institutes. What is also clear is that, in terms of money donated, the likes of Japan and Russia do not appear to have the desire to influence higher education in the same way as China or certain countries in the Muslim world.

Although it might seem strange that subjects designated as 'strategically important' by the UK government should be funded by foreign sources, there is nothing wrong in principle with British universities accepting money from abroad. However, there needs to be adequate safeguards put in place to ensure that the funders' own interests and occupations do not influence universities' treatment of these subjects. This report shows that, while several British universities have accepted considerable donations from foreign sources towards their teaching of strategically important subjects, some have also put in place safeguards to ensure that this does not corrupt their teaching or academic activities.

This report has also found examples where this has not happened, and where adequate safeguards have not been put in place. There is evidence that foreign donations have substantially and demonstrably affected the academic activities of many universities, and their handling of subjects designated strategically important. There is clear evidence that at some universities the choice of teaching materials, the subject areas, the degrees offered, the recruitment of staff, the composition of advisory boards and even the selection of students are now subject to influence from donors.

These problems are heightened by the undemocratic nature of some of the governments that are donating. Certain regimes have been known to falsify history if it does not cast their government in a favourable light, and there are obviously issues raised if these regimes are then not only providing funding to UK academia, but also a certain amount of the curriculum (as is the case with Confucius Institutes). If universities have a range of safeguards that prevents the dissemination of academically skewed textbooks from abroad, then they should make them known immediately in order to allay any fears.

Foreign donations have also, on occasion, manifested themselves in a range of events put on by universities which seemingly serve as platforms for these donors to eulogise their system of government. While these speakers have every right to come to the UK and attempt to explain the merits of their system, phrases have been used by donors that make universities sound like the diplomatic arm of a foreign government. The main problem with the Confucius Institutes

is that, as they acknowledge, this is precisely what they are; and academics have not always been able to contradict the vision being presented.

Donations by some individuals have also often proved problematic. There are cases where individual donors to universities have been able to pack academic management committees with their own appointees and representatives, while an institute affiliated to a university teaches subjects according to a donor's 'vision'. In addition, there are instances of large sums having been given by anonymous donors, and the nature of the agreements made between the donor and the university has not been made public. A lack of accountability only adds to the worry that universities are in danger of having their academic neutrality threatened by private donations. It would benefit the donor, the university and the general public if it was made clearer what exactly the money donated was going to achieve in terms of practically assisting students.

These donations also have certain negative effects which are harder to quantify. There are obviously important moral and ethical questions involved in accepting foreign funding from governments with such poor human rights records; some academics have even gone as far as to say that their personal security is threatened. Yet while they have on occasion voiced their fears, the financial incentives on offer to universities are often too considerable to turn down. There is also the concern that so much funding is coming into UK universities that they are seen as easy targets by certain regimes which seek to disseminate their ideology abroad. An example of this would be Iran, which recently stated that it was in talks with the Islamic studies departments at 'several universities from Britain' in order to 'train and educate experts on Islam so as to assist in the introduction of Islam and its realities to the world in a proper academic setting'.[517] Islam has been used by the Iranian regime as an excuse to carry out serious human rights violations, and any attempt by it to disseminate its intolerant understanding of the religion in UK universities is clearly an issue that needs to be addressed.

Unfortunately these are all symptoms of a problem largely of the British government's own making. Despite Bill Rammell's claim that government funding across higher education has increased by over 23 per cent since Labour came to power in 1997,[518] UK universities are chronically underfunded, with government funding having fallen by 36 per cent in real terms in the last 20 years.[519] Therefore it should not come as a complete shock that these institutions now appear to see foreign funding as a convenient way out of their financial difficulties. This type of donation is now so common that there is no reason to think the trend will not continue. The problem is only being exacerbated by the current government 'matched funding' scheme, which actually rewards uni-

517 'Iran helping universities establish Islamic studies departments: official', *Tehran Times*, 22 October 2008, available at www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=180702

518 'Foreigners 'prop up' Universities', *BBC News*, 15 September 2008, available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/7617383.stm

519 'Remember us? Now cough up', *Independent*

versities for seeking out private donations, and appears to show little concern as to the source of some of this funding. The fact that some of the UK's finest universities should be reliant on funds from nations with questionable human rights records simply because the UK is unwilling to provide adequate financial support is extremely unfortunate.

This is an area in which students can act. They have routinely protested against alleged abusers of human rights: for example, western corporations such as Nestlé and Coca-Cola have been the subject of protests for years, and human rights causes such as third world poverty and Palestine has provoked student uproar in recent years. However, the funding of UK universities from sources where human rights are routinely abused goes virtually unchallenged by students. A recent exception to this has been the student protests at the UAE donations to the LSE. However, this is an area where there is room for significantly more student engagement, and it can only be hoped that this develops over the coming years. Student protests have certainly have proven to be effective in recent years. For example, UCL, the University of St Andrews, New Hall, Pembroke College and St Catharine's College at Cambridge, SOAS, Goldsmiths and Bangor University have all withdrawn investments from arms companies last year[520] after wide-scale student protests in the months before.[521]

Therefore while increased student awareness may be a source of hope, perhaps the biggest worry of all is that the figures cited in this report are the only ones that have been made publicly available. In reality they are only scratching the surface of the overall problem. So many donations appear to have occurred unannounced that universities should act immediately to clear up all concerns. Higher education funding is too important to let the current levels of ambiguity continue.

520 'UCL joins moves to cancel investment in arms trade', *Times Higher Education*, 8 May 2008, available at www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storyCode=401796&sectioncode=26

521 'Universities arms trade protest', *BBC News*, 26 February 2008, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/7265420.stm

Recommendations

For universities:

- Publish all past and present agreements with donors
- Make clear what donated money/sponsored projects are meant to achieve in practical terms
- Produce publicly available breakdowns of how donated money has been used
- Put in place proper safeguards to ensure that disproportionate amounts of biased literature are not donated by foreign governments
- Do not allow donors to dictate who should be on a university's advisory board
- Question the extent to which receiving donations from despotic governments bestows upon them an unwarranted legitimacy
- Stop using government policy of engaging with undemocratic regimes as justification for then accepting significant financial donation from those same regimes

For government:

- Reconsider the merits of large amounts of foreign donations being pumped into higher education by nations with poor human rights records
- Seriously consider the merits of the 'matched funding' scheme
- Do not allow the HEFCE matched funding scheme to be used to reward universities for gaining funds from undemocratic regimes and their various front groups

For student organisations:

- Hold to account those universities that accept money from despotic and totalitarian regimes, and from individuals closely linked to undemocratic rulers and governments
- Lobby universities for greater transparency regarding funding

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Biography

Robin Simcox is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Social Cohesion. He is also Section Director of the Britain in the World department at the Henry Jackson Society. He took his BA in History (International) at the University of Leeds, including a year spent at the University of Newcastle, Australia, and holds an MSc in US Foreign Policy from the Institute for the Study of the Americas, University of London.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to George Readings for his contribution to this project. Additional thanks to Oliver Sharp, Dominic Whiteman, Manuel Ramos, James Kitching and Abdul Munin, and all at the Centre for Social Cohesion.

The Centre for Social Cohesion

The Centre for Social Cohesion (CSC) is a non-partisan think-tank that studies issues related to community cohesion in the UK. Committed to the promotion of human rights, it is the first think-tank in the UK to specialise in studying radicalisation and extremism within Britain. The CSC is headquartered in London, and was founded in 2007 to promote human rights, tolerance and greater cohesion among the UK's ethnic and religious communities and within wider British society.

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