



**THE CENTRE FOR  
SOCIAL COHESION**

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## February Email Update

Welcome to the February email update from The Centre for Social Cohesion. The CSC is the first think-tank in the UK to specialise in studying radicalisation and extremism within Britain. The Centre is an independent, non-partisan think tank.

## The Centre in the Press

The Centre's report on censorship by intimidation, [\*Victims of Intimidation: Freedom of Speech within Europe's Muslim Communities\*](#), published in November last year, continued to receive international coverage. The Dutch liberal commentator Paul Cliteur discusses the report, which tells the stories of nearly 30 Europeans of Muslim who have been threatened by Muslim extremists, in an extensive opinion piece in the Dutch paper, [\*Die Trouw\*](#).

Commenting on the "precarious" position of those who have been threatened by extremists, Cliteur said that culpability lies "not only with the decisive and consistent attitude of terrorists, but also with the irresolution of governments in democratic constitutional states. And with the attitude of the liberal-progressive elite."

'Victims of Intimidation' was also the subject of a lengthy article in the US politics and culture magazine, the [\*Weekly Standard\*](#), which said:

"The effort to silence criticism of Islam has become a main event not only in Muslim lands, but increasingly in the democratic West.

"Douglas Murray, director of the Centre for Social Cohesion and the report's co-author, argues that these acts of intimidation create an impression – a false one – that Muslims in Europe oppose freedom of expression.

"The reality, as the report suggests, is that many prominent European Muslims have "suffered threats, violence and systematic intimidation from extremists" because of their public calls for reform."

CSC Researcher Alexander Hitchens wrote an [article](#) for the *Daily Telegraph* following the publication of an open letter to President Obama calling for full military withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan in return for an end to terrorism. Signatories included prominent Islamists, amongst them Yusuf al-Qaradawi, the spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, and head of the Jamaat-e-Islami, Qadhi Hussein Ahmad. Hitchens said:

"It is absolutely crucial that [the Obama administration] do not fall for this sort of intimidation, especially when it comes from some of the leading members of the most powerful and influential Islamist groups in the world."

CSC Director Douglas Murray examined UK Muslim community leaders' responses to the war in Gaza in his monthly [contribution](#) to the cultural and political magazine Standpoint. Referring to a meeting between Foreign Secretary David Milliband and a variety of Muslim spokespeople, including the directors of the counter-extremist think tank the Quilliam Foundation, Murray said:

"In the weeks since Israel launched its campaign to destroy Hamas in the Gaza Strip, Muslim 'spokespeople' in Britain have once again made it perfectly clear to the UK government that if

their opinions on foreign policy are not listened to, they can't promise the community won't make them heard in a rather more explosive way. And the government is listening.

“Our most senior statesmen and counter-terrorism officials not only listen but actually pay money to people who threaten them.”

CSC Researcher Robin Simcox's monthly [article](#) for the Henry Jackson Society discussed the Foreign Secretary David Miliband's speech in Mumbai, reflecting on his comments on the term 'War on Terror' and Kashmir.

CSC Researcher Alexander Hitchens wrote a guest [piece](#) for the liberal blog Harry's Place on the Muslim Public Affairs Committee UK (MPAC UK), after the organisation published an [article](#), 'Gaza's Murderers have Iman, Muslims Don't,' urging Muslims to “stop being “Muslim” in name...and prove you're a Muslim by partaking in Jihad.” The CSC had previously revealed that Asghar Bukhari, co-founder and spokesman for the Muslim Public Affairs Committee UK (MPAC UK), had made comments glorifying terrorism.

## Media and Public Appearances

CSC Director Douglas Murray commented on a variety of issues across the national broadcast media. He spoke on BBC World News alongside Robert Fox, defence correspondent for the *Evening Standard*, following Foreign Secretary David Miliband's [comments](#) on the usefulness of the term 'War on Terror' in the in the struggle to prevent violent extremism and terrorist violence.

Murray also spoke on Three Counties Radio commenting on social cohesion and nationalism as well as appearing on LBC Radio discussing the inauguration of President Obama and the prospects for the new US administration.

The Centre's Director was a guest on BBC1's The [Big Questions](#) in early January discussing the question, 'Is Israel justified in bombing Gaza?' Murray also addressed crowds at an Anti-Hamas rally outside the Iranian embassy during the war in Gaza.

## Campus Tour

CSC Director Douglas Murray addressed the University of Oxford Secular Society speaking to students on terrorism, Islamism and foreign policy. As part of the Centre's regular campus tour Murray was also due to chair a debate on Islam and liberalism between historian Dr Alan Sked and lecturer and activist Hamza Tzortis at the LSE on Friday 23rd January.

Two days before the event, during a week long occupation of the Old Theatre by LSE students in protest against Israel's attacks on Gaza, LSE officials withdrew Murray's invitation citing 'security reasons'. The LSE's decision not to allow Murray on campus was widely criticised in the national press and online media including [Evening Standard](#), [The Times online](#), [Daily Telegraph](#) column '[Holy Smoke](#)' and [blog](#). The story was also covered across the international media including the National Review [online](#).

## Upcoming

During February the CSC's Director will continue his tour of UK campuses, speaking to student unions and societies on issues of international security, foreign policy, terrorism and Islamism. During February he will address student audiences at the University of Cambridge and the University of York amongst others.

In February the Centre will publish 'The West and the Future of Islam: A debate between Ayaan Hirsi Ali and Ed Husain', a transcript of the debate hosted by the Centre for Social Cohesion – copies will be available to download on the Centre's website.

**The Centre for Social Cohesion is an independent think tank**

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