



THE CENTRE FOR SOCIAL COHESION

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Welcome to the April 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.

A Degree of Influence: The Funding of Strategically Important Subjects in UK Universities

The Centre has just published a major new report, [A Degree of Influence](#), the first study to analyse the high levels of foreign funding entering British academia. The report highlights how university subjects designated as 'strategically important' by the British government are currently receiving large financial injections from foreign donors, many of whom are unelected, despotic governments notorious for regularly perpetuating wide-scale human rights abuses.

The story was broken in the [Sunday Telegraph](#) and CSC Researcher and author of the report Robin Simcox wrote an opinion [piece](#) about the report in the same paper. Simcox also discussed the report's findings for the Guardian's [Comment is free](#).

The Beth Din: Jewish Law in the UK

On the anniversary of the Archbishop of Canterbury's controversial comments on Sharia law, the CSC published [The Beth Din: Jewish Law in the UK](#) by CSC researcher Hannah Stuart. A reference guide to how Beth Din operate in the UK, the briefing analyses how Jewish courts they work within UK law to offer arbitration in civil disputes; their religious functions, including divorce; and whether they offer a parallel legal system.

The Centre in the Press

In March the UK Home Office barred Hezbollah spokesperson Dr Ibrahim el Moussaoui from entering the UK. In the previous month the CSC had [revealed](#) that el Moussaoui had been due to address a conference of police and government officials at the School of Oriental and Africa Studies (SOAS) at the University of London.

The [Sunday Telegraph](#), Jewish Chronicle and others pursued the story once the CSC wrote to the Home Secretary [pledging](#) to seek an arrest warrant should el Moussaoui enter the country. Following the government's decision CSC Director Douglas Murray wrote in the [Jewish Chronicle](#):

'What we are seeing is the normalisation of a very particular, vigorous and violent bigotry propelled by militant Islamists. Most amazing of all - we are also paying for it. It is taking place at publicly-funded institutes of higher education. It is time that we did something about this. The issue is now a long-way past being "academic".'

American commentator Barry Rubin refers to the CSC in an [article](#) entitled 'Britain gets tougher on radical Islam'. On the UK government's decision to deny Dr Ibrahim el Moussaoui entry to the UK, he said:

'That's why research groups like the Centre for Social Cohesion (CSC), which played the leading role in informing the British government and public in this case, are so important.'

Murray was also quoted in the [Daily Express](#) after a new report by the TaxPayers Alliance revealed that money donated by the British government has been spent promoting terrorism and encouraging young Palestinians to hate the West.

In his monthly [contribution](#) to the cultural and political magazine Standpoint, the Centre's director discussed the unhelpful precedent of the Northern Ireland peace process in today's discussions about Islamist terrorism. Murray said:

'By its logic, the best that the West will be able to hope for from the Palestinian people is that they can produce a Martin McGuinness or Gerry Adams. Going on the Northern Ireland precedent, we should have to wait until the moment when the bloodiest-handed terrorist that Hamas can produce takes a step forward and says he wants to negotiate. At which point we welcome him and help him to become Deputy First Minister of some kind of future Palestinian state.'

In the wake of the terrorist attacks on the Sri Lankan cricket team in Pakistan last month Murray wrote for the [Daily Express](#) discussing how growing radicalisation in Pakistan affects Britain and our allies.

Elsewhere, researcher Houriya Ahmed wrote an [article](#) in defence of the freedom to choose not to wear the hijab for First Drafts, the political magazine Prospect's blog. Researcher Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens was quoted in the [Daily Express](#) following claims that the BBC gave former al Qaeda suspect Binyam Mohamed a public platform without demanding answers about his alleged terror links.

In the wake of reports that Daud Abdullah, the Deputy General of the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), had signed the Istanbul Statement, which included a call to attack foreign navies that stop the smuggling of weapons to Hamas, CSC researcher Robin Simcox wrote an [article](#) for the Henry Jackson Society analysing the government's new counter-terrorism strategy, Contest 2.

CSC researcher Alexander Hitchens commented on this issue on the political blog [Harry's Place](#) after Daud Abdullah was effectively unchallenged by Jeremy Paxman during an interview for BBC1's Newsnight. Hitchens also wrote an [article](#) praising Hazel Blears' decision to distance the government from Abdullah and the MCB rebutting the former head of the Metropolitan Police's Muslim Contact Unit Robert Lambert's [defence](#) of Abdullah and British Islamism.

Media & Public Appearances

CSC researcher Houriya Ahmed was interviewed for a topical BBC documentary, Celebrity Lives - Sharia Style, on the implications of accommodating some parts of Sharia law to the settling of civil disputes amongst British Muslims for a topical BBC documentary. The programme can be [watched](#) on the CSC's new YouTube [page](#), which is updated regularly with CSC media appearances.

The Centre's director Douglas Murray [appeared](#) on BBC1's Question Time with Shadow Business Secretary Ken Clarke MP, Olympics Minister Tessa Jowell, Lib Dem economics spokesman Vince Cable and ITV's Fern Britton. The panel answered audience questions on the recession, binge-drinking and university fees.

Murray was a panellist at The Orwell Prize shortlist debate. Also discussing the question, 'Are political parties bankrupt? The economic emergency and the next election' were Sean Maguire (chair), Nick Cohen, David Davis MP, and Frank Field MP. Watch the debate [here](#).

Following the Centre's press release on el Moussaoui's invitation to address government officials and police at a course on political Islam at SOAS, researcher Alexander Hitchens commented on el Moussaoui's visa application on the BBC London News at 6 o'clock.

CSC researcher Robin Simcox was [interviewed](#) for a youth internet TV channel, Catch21Productions, where he discussed the roots of the political Islam and how the government have tried to combat Islamic extremism.

Campus Tour

The Centre's director continued his tour of UK campuses addressing student unions and societies on issues of Islamism, foreign policy, terrorism and international security, speaking last month at the University of Oxford, Salford University in Manchester and the University of Cardiff.

Debating in the Oxford Union Murray supported the motion 'This House would rather bomb Iran than allow Iran the bomb' alongside Frank Gaffney, president of the American think tank Center for Security Policy. Among those speaking against was Sir Richard Mottram, former Chair of the Joint Intelligence Committee and security adviser to Tony Blair. In Cardiff Murray opposed the motion 'This house would engage with Hamas as it engages with Israel,' speaking against Jenny Willott, Lib Dem MP for Cardiff Central and Julie Morgan, Labour MP for Cardiff North

Upcoming

Amongst other engagements the Centre's Director will speak at the College of Law and appear on the BBC's Daily Politics show.

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The Centre for Social Cohesion is an independent think tank

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