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SECRET SAUDI FUNDING OF RADICAL ISLAMIC GROUPS IN AUSTRALIA

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Since the terrorist attacks of 9/11, it has become clear that there has been a seismic shift in the structure of global Islam, and from this situation is emerging an “age of sacred Terror”,¹ in which “a new type of terrorism threatens the world, driven by networks of fanatics determined to inflict maximum civilian and economic damage [and] yearning for martyrdom and eager to kill”.²

The structures of Islamic society that have persisted for over a millennium are now giving way under the impact of modernity and global-

isation, while also being subverted from within by forms of radical Islamic fundamentalism, exemplified by Wahhabism, the sectarian form of Islam that serves as the vanguard of “Saudi religious imperialism”.³ Although historically and numerically a minor tendency within Islam, Wahhabism’s enormous financial support from the Saudi regime allows it to overwhelm traditional forms of Islam, making it “an international Islamist discourse”.⁴ This growing dominance is given extra institutional weight by the quasi-caliphal role that

1. Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, *The Age of Sacred Terror* (New York: Random House, 2002), p.419.

2. Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p.vii. See also: Mervyn F. Bendle, “Existential Terrorism: Civil Society and its Enemies”, *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 52(1), 2006, pp.114-29; and “Militant Religion and the Crisis of Modernity,” *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion*, 14, 2003.

3. Malise Ruthven, *A Fury for God* (London: Granta, 2002), p.173.

4. John Esposito, *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam* (Oxford: University Press, 2002), p.108.

the Saudis have assumed as the custodians of the holy sites of Mecca and Medina, bestowing on them a pseudo-legitimacy that obscures the sectarian nature of Wahhabism.

WAHHABISM'S ORIGINS

Wahhabism⁵ began as a small sect in the Arabian peninsula in the 18th century under the leadership of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703–1792) who deployed the principle of *ijtihad* (“independent analysis”) to call for Islamic revival based on a rigorous monotheism, a strict orthopraxy (correct practice) and a vision of extreme doctrinal purity and social order that he believed characterised Islam in the age of the Prophet.⁶ He formed an alliance with the chief of a local tribe, Muhammad ibn Sa‘ud, that has lasted to the present day and shapes the political and religious life of Saudi Arabia.

Wahhabism advocates a puritanical and literalistic stance in all matters of religious and everyday practice, and believes that it is necessary for all hu-

manity to live in the manner believed practised by the prophet Muhammad and his followers in seventh-century Arabia. It seeks to rescue Islam from what it sees as innovations, superstitions, deviations, heresies, idolatries, and effectively every aspect of modern life. It has been observed of Wahhabism that it “is considerably different from any other form of Islam hitherto attested historically”.⁷ Indeed, it constitutes “a rupture and discontinuity with Muslim society”,⁸ an historical mutation that finds expression in Wahhabism’s extreme sectarianism, its “extremely promiscuous use of *takfir*”⁹ — the declaration of other Muslims as infidels — and its fierce determination to impose extremely restrictive and archaic rules of behaviour on all Muslims, while working to impose Islam across the globe.

SAUDI FUNDING

This Wahhabi offensive has also been described as “petro-Islam” because Saudi oil revenue ensured that the rapid spread of such Wahhabi-based

5. Recently, Wahhabis have indicated a preference for the name “Salafism”, denoting themselves as “pious predecessors” (*Salaf as-Salih*) in order to broaden the appeal of their movement and obscure its origins as a Saudi form of sectarianism. Salafism has also come to be used as a general term for fundamentalist movements like Wahhabism.

6. The best historical account of Wahhabism is Charles Allen, *God’s Terrorists: The Wahhabi Cult and the Hidden Roots of Modern Jihad* (London: Abacus, 2006).

7. David Cook, *Understanding Jihad* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), p.74.

8. Fawaz A. Gerges, *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp.242-3.

9. Cook, *Understanding Jihad*, p.74.

institutions “was one of the most visible changes in the landscape of the rapidly urbanising Muslim world”.¹⁰ Predictably, precise information on the extent of this funding is difficult to obtain, but governments in the West are increasing pressure on Saudi Arabia to oversee, regulate and disclose information about the flows of financial support.¹¹

In the US, a comprehensive investigation drawing on government sources, including the CIA’s Illicit Transactions Group, estimated that two-thirds of the \$70 billion spent by the Saudis between 1979 and 2003 on “international aid” was used to infiltrate institutions and promote Wahhabism and anti-Western and anti-Israeli propaganda.¹² Another estimate — by a former CIA director — indicates that by 2005 the Saudis had spent some \$90 billion to export Wahhabism globally.¹³ This is more

than twice the estimated rate of \$1 billion per annum spent by the Soviet Union on propaganda during the Cold War.¹⁴ Much of this Saudi funding went towards the establishment of Wahhabi-dominated religious schools, colleges, and other social and cultural infrastructure, while in non-Muslim countries alone, the Saudis financed the construction of some 2,000 schools, 1,500 mosques, and 210 Islamic centres between 1982 and 2002.¹⁵

Saudi financial power also means that it can control key Muslim publishing houses, promoting Wahhabi texts and ensuring the suppression of Sufi, Shi’a, and other Muslim works now deemed non-Islamic. Throughout the world, Saudi-backed Wahhabi groups control or dominate various major Muslim organisations.¹⁶ For example, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and its subsidiary, the Islamic

10. Giles Kepel, *Jihad: the Trail of Political Islam* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2002), p.72.

11. See for example, Cameron Stewart, “Islamists starved of funds”, *The Australian*, 16 May 2007, p.1.

12. David E. Kaplan, “The Saudi Connection: How billions in oil money spawned a global terror network”, *US News & World Report*, 12 July 2003.

13. R. James Woolsey, “Saudi Government Propaganda in the United States: Avowed Ally or Secret Enemy?”, presentation at the American Enterprise Institute, 16 February 2005. Available at <http://www.aei.org/events/filter.social.eventID.1007/transcript.asp>

14. Lee Kaplan, “The Saudi Fifth Column on Our Nation’s Campuses”, *FrontPage Magazine*, 5 April 2004. Available at <http://www.campus-watch.org/article/id/1103>

15. Dore Gold, *Hatred’s Kingdom* (Washington: Regnery, 2003), p.126.

16. See Dore Gold, “Saudi Arabia’s dubious denials of involvement in international terrorism”, *Jerusalem Viewpoints*, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, no.504, October 2003.

Development Bank and related organisations “have exported Wahhabi Islam to the rest of the Muslim world as well as to Europe and America”.¹⁷ The World Islamic League was a primary Wahhabi vehicle, exercising influence through such bodies as the European Council of Mosques and the Islamic Coordinating Council of North America.¹⁸

In the West, the Saudi-backed Wahhabi onslaught was comprehensive and often irresistible:¹⁹

“A wave of oil funding hit university after university, college after college, and research centre after research centre, as well as public libraries, museums, and other places of learning. ... The objectives were fully ideological: further the cause of Islam ... support the Palestinian cause ... and plant the seeds of the concept of an illegitimate West.”

IMPACT ON WESTERN SOCIETIES

Liberal democratic societies remain off balance. For example, “Britain is in denial. Having allowed the country to turn into a global hub of the Islamic jihad”, the British Government remains incapable of comprehending

the dangers it faces.²⁰ It implemented a strategy of appeasement designed to placate Muslims and Muslim supporters in the ruling Labour Party. This was accompanied by the intimidation of members of parliament by the Muslim Council of Britain and other Islamist groups, and the subsequent adoption by the Government of policies that attacked critics for alleged “Islamophobia”, and imposed strictly-observed guidelines addressing purported “Muslim sensitivities and appropriate non-inflammatory terminology” in dealing with any issues considered relevant by the Muslim community, including a ban on the phrase “Islamic fundamentalism”.²¹

The inevitable outcome of this policy of appeasement was the constraints within which the British security forces operated prior to the July 7, 2005, London terrorist attacks, which left terrorist recruiters free to operate, and moderate Muslims helpless to intervene.²² Despite relevant intelligence, the British security agencies failed to act on the information provided. Calls for an inquiry into these intelligence failures have been resisted.²³

17. Esposito, *Unholy War*, p.107.

18. See Evgenii Novikov, “The World Muslim League: Agent of Wahhabi Propagation in Europe”, *Terrorism Monitor*, 3(9), May 2005.

19. Walid Phares, *The War of Ideas* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p.159.

20. Melanie Phillips, *Londonistan* (London: Gibson Square, 2006), p. 273.

21. *Ibid*, p.256.

22. Sean O’Neill and Daniel McGrory, *The Suicide Factory: Abu Hamza and the Finsbury Park Mosque* (London: Harper, 2006), p.276; Ruthven, *A Fury for God*, pp.176-7.

23. “How MI5 let London bombers through”, *The Australian*, 2 May 2007, p.10; and “Cruel and ruthless misfits”, *The Australian*, 2 May 2007, p.10.

One of the most significant characteristics of these British terrorist groups was their close links to the UK higher education system, and “evidence during the past two years confirms the view that Al Qaeda has been trying to recruit British students and that there is no reason to think they have stopped doing so”.²⁴ Wahhabism and Salafism are attractive to many Muslim tertiary students (especially in the sciences, engineering and other applied areas of study) because of their “epistemological promise”, i.e., their claim to possess direct unmediated access to the one pure Qur’anic Truth. In a 2005 report, *When Students Turn to Terror: How Safe are British Universities*, 30 campuses were identified as infiltration targets for Islamist extremists.²⁵ Indeed, Al Qaeda has been revealed as “running a very sophisticated operation, similar to the ones run by the hostile intelligence agencies during the Cold War. ... The universities are in a state of denial. We’ve known that Al Qaeda has been recruiting Muslim men on British campuses since 2003, but we’ve done very little about it”.²⁶

Similarly, it has been remarked that “the most efficient jihadi thrust into the American system is the penetration of US academia by Wahhabis. ...

Arabist, Islamist, and apologist influence has covered the teaching and research in political science, international relations, history, sociology, economics, geography, and all related fields of art, literature, and subfields such as peace studies and film”.²⁷ Elite American universities have become recipients of massive Saudi funding, and Columbia University has become notorious: “When a chair is endowed by Saudi money it is filled by academics known for their Palestinian or Saudi activism more than for their scholarship”.²⁸ When a Palestinian activist was appointed to a new chair, Columbia tried to conceal where the funding came from and only disclosed the source after pressure from outside the New York State government.

Another Palestinian professor at Columbia accused America of nuclear genocide for using the atomic bomb to end World War II. At the pinnacle of scholarship in this field is the Middle East Studies Association, which played a leading role in the subversion of this area of academia, serving as “the national vehicle used by [Wahhabi] apologists”, misrepresenting the nature of Wahhabism, Salafism, and Islamism at a critical moment for American national security, and making no useful input into

24. Aban Contractor, “A problem to examine”, *The Australian*, 9 May 2007, p.46.

25. Anthony Glees, “Beacons of truth or crucibles of terror?”, *The Times Higher Education Supplement* 23 September 2005, p.8.

26. Contractor, “A problem to examine”.

27. Walid Phares, *Future Jihad* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.224.

28. Ibid.

the US Government's attempts to formulate a strategy to deal with this emerging threat, despite their presumed academic expertise.²⁹ In broader terms, this subversion of the academic curricula in these areas works its way through teaching, research, and subsequent employment to regulate the view of Islam informing every Western institution, especially education, government and the media.

WAHHABI INFLUENCE IN AUSTRALIA

Wahhabi influence in Australia and its region is expanding in a similar manner. In March 2007, it was revealed that Saudis were planning a \$2.7 billion scholarship fund for Australian universities, designed to facilitate the entry of Saudi students into Australia to undertake tertiary education in the face of restrictions on their entry into the US and UK in the post-9/11 security environment.³⁰ Coincidentally, in Newcastle some "150 university students from Saudi Arabia, Algeria, and Egypt who follow the fundamentalist

Wahabbism ideology" seized control of a major mosque, attracting accusations of "brainwashing" other Muslims.³¹ Elsewhere, "Saudi money ... has helped build mosques and schools, support some imams, provide literature and videos and other propaganda, and provide overseas speakers".³²

Since the 1970s, "it is estimated Saudi Arabia has spent \$120 million on religious works in Australia".³³ In Noble Park, in Melbourne's eastern suburbs, there was a takeover attempt of the mosque by Bosnian Wahhabi militants from the Islamic Information and Support Centre of Australia (IISCA), led by the radical Melbourne cleric Sheikh Mohammed Omran, who has alleged, for example, that the 9/11 attacks were orchestrated by the US to justify its war on Islam.³⁴ "Angry and alienated young Muslims [appeared at Noble Park], distributing inflammatory books and videos — inciting hatred against Jews, Christians and the West — and trying to recruit for their radical organisation".³⁵ At

29. Phares, *Future Jihad*, p.142, & pp.158-9. See also Martin Kramer, *Ivory Towers on Sand: The Failure of Middle Eastern Studies in America* (Washington, DC: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2001).

30. Bernard Lane, "Saudis on tertiary mission", *The Weekend Australian*, 17-18 March 2007, p.10.

31. Richard Kerbaj, "Extremist students take over mosque", *The Australian*, 20 March 2007, p.3.

32. Barney Zwartz, "The battle within", *The Age*, 3 August 2005, p.13.

33. Marian Wilkinson, "Revealed: the Saudis' paymaster in Australia", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 September 2005, p.12.

34. Marian Wilkinson, Anne Davies and Andrew Clennell, "Australian Muslims unite to condemn terror", in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 July 2005, p.3.

Melbourne's most important mosque, in Preston, the Wahhabis were successful in their takeover. Establishing a range of Wahhabi-based programs, they attracted more hardliners, driving out the non-Arab Muslims, who saw the Wahhabis as "a cancer, a terminal disease, a dead cell that stops healthy cells accessing power". The Balkan wars caused huge turmoil in the Muslim community, creating "fertile soil for political Islamic organisations to plant their seeds and foster terrorism".

The Wahhabis exploited the situation, as one leader explained: "They saw our plight as an opportunity to move into our country and indoctrinate us with their ideology. Even our religious establishment was taken in." As a moderate Muslim leader observed, "we are in a battle for hearts and minds [with Wahabbi] extremists ... tearing young people away, poisoning hearts and minds. ... Albanian and Bosnian youths are particularly active, spreading influence through videos and books in mosques whose leaders don't speak English and often don't know what is being sold."

In Sydney, the Prime Minister twice visited the Al-Faisal College, apparently unaware of the nature and extent of its director Shafiq Khan's "close

relationship with the Saudi government and its Islamic Affairs Ministry, which uses the kingdom's wealth to promote its conservative Wahhabi view of Islam": Mr Khan has been "a powerful agent of influence for Saudi Arabia. He has been promoted and paid outright by Saudi officials and has extended Saudi Arabia's enormous influence over Australia's Muslims by dispensing money and favours. With the help of Saudi donations and decrees, he has built many mosques, run Muslim youth camps, and provided scholarships to train Australian teachers in Saudi Arabia", who then return to promote Wahhabism in Muslim schools.³⁶

The Global Islamic Youth Centre promoted a soccer tournament with a video featuring an Arabic song used by Al Qaeda to promote jihad. It contains the lines "with the swords we shall exterminate the infidels and death is the desire of the pure"; the centre was headed by a "radical cleric ... who has compared Jews to pigs".³⁷ In Adelaide, the Saudis were financing the reconstruction of the Park Holme mosque, regarded as Australia's most radical prayer centre, until Australian Government concerns finally led to the withdrawal of the funding.³⁸ In Perth, a former federal Labor MP claimed the

35. Zwartz, "The battle within". All the remaining quotations in this paragraph are from this source.

36. Wilkinson, "Revealed".

37. Richard Kerbaj, "Jihad hymn in soccer video", *The Weekend Australian*, 28-29 April 2007, p.8.

38. Cameron Stewart, "Islamists starved of funds", *The Australian*, 16 May 2007, p.1.

Saudi embassy “was so eager to fund a mosque that it made a personal cheque out to him for \$250,000”, and after the mosque was opened, “he learned a succession of radical fundamentalist Imams from Malaysia and Indonesia had preached there”.³⁹

In Melbourne, the tentacles of UK-based Wahhabism had a notable impact on “Ahmed Y”, a young radical Muslim “who had sat entranced ... listening to the oratory” of the prominent UK extremist Abu Qatada, and “had given his support to Qatada that day and had stayed staunch ever since”, later becoming the leader of a major terrorist plot in his own right.⁴⁰ An Algerian, “Ahmed Y” had arrived in Australia in the 1980s and became very active in militant Islamist groups before leaving to set up his own vanguard group in 2001, composed of committed jihadis, to whom he “outlined his vision for an Islamic state like that set up by the Taliban”, and advocated dying “for jihad, doing maximum damage. Maximum damage. Damage their buildings, everything. Damage their lives”.⁴¹ “He saw himself at war with the ways of the West

and obliged to fight a violent resistance [involving] the most potent home-grown terror threat Australia had faced”, involving massive attacks on key sites in Australia’s major cities.⁴² Subsequent court evidence showed that the alleged terrorists possessed stolen army rocket-launchers and the necessary instructions and ingredients to construct large explosive devices capable of causing massive damage and death tolls. As the prosecutor told the court, “Violence was the primary tool of their jihad.”⁴³

In 2007, it was estimated that some 20 imams around Australia received Saudi payments,⁴⁴ including Sheik Mohammed Swaiti, the most senior Muslim cleric in Canberra and spiritual leader of the Abu Bakr mosque since 1994. Sheik Swaiti was allegedly being investigated by the Australian Taxation Office in relation to an undeclared annual clerical allowance of \$36,000 paid to him through the Saudi embassy, where he has been on the payroll since 1995.⁴⁵ Reportedly, Sheik Swaiti regularly praises Islamic jihadists in his sermons, while employing the Islamist strategy of *taqiyya*

39. Greg Roberts, “‘No questions’ over funding”, *The Australian*, 17 May 2007, p.7.

40. Martin Chulov, *Australian Jihad* (Sydney: Pan Macmillan, 2006), p.271.

41. *Ibid.*, p.276.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 272.

43. “Nine ‘had bomb ingredients’”, *Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), 6 March 2007. Available at <http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,23739,21334199-953,00.html>

44. Cameron Stewart, “‘Block Saudi cash’ for imams”, *The Australian*, 17 March 2007, p.7.

45. Richard Kerbaj, “Jihadists praised by cleric”, *The Weekend Australian*, 14-15 April 2006, p.2.

(concealment and dissimulation) by omitting these remarks from the English versions of his sermons. When challenged, he again used *taqiyya*, calling upon the discredited assertion of Muslim apologists that “jihad” refers only to an inner struggle of conscience and not to holy war. The Islamic Society of the ACT had to seek a restraining order against Sheik Swaiti and his followers after a senior Muslim official was bashed outside the mosque in April 2007, following a decision to remove Sheik Swaiti from his position.⁴⁶

Wahhabi influence is also present at Sydney’s Lakemba mosque, with officials fearing that the removal of the controversial presiding cleric, Sheik Taj Din al-Hilali, would open the way for Wahhabi extremists to take over the mosque, regarded as the heart of Islam in Australia.⁴⁷ At the centre of the plan was the radical cleric, Sheik Shady Al-Suleiman, who “has been vying for the senior leader’s position for several years [and] is believed to be a close follower of Wahhabism”.⁴⁸ Sheikh Shady

Al-Suleiman was born in Sydney in 1978 to a Palestinian Arab family and went overseas to acquire an Islamic education and achieved the “complete and sound memorisation of the Qur’an at Pakistan”, before continuing his Islamic and Arabic studies in Syria.⁴⁹ In May 2007 it was reported that Sheik Shady, a youth leader, told his students that it was permissible to kill children in battle, declaring in a lecture on the “Rulings on Performing Jihad”, that “if attackers or invaders want to invade a Muslim country or attack a Muslim country then it’s obligatory on every Muslim ... to fight and protect the country [and if children] are involved then you have to stop them”.⁵⁰

The conflict surrounding Sheik al-Hilali drew in other prominent Muslim leaders, including the Brisbane-based cleric, Dr Mohamad Abdulla, who has joined the calls for al-Hilali’s removal while also supporting Sheik Swaiti, thus apparently aligning himself with the Wahhabi side in both of these two high-profile controversies.⁵¹

46. Richard Kejab, “Muslims to seek restraining order on hardline cleric”, *The Australian*, 7 May 2007, p.1.

47. Irfan Yusuf, “Has Mufti Day Ended Down Under?”, *AltMuslim.com* (Parts I to III), 12 April 2007, Available at http://www.altmuslim.com/perm.php?id=1898_o_25_o_C

48. Richard Kejab, “Muslims fear extremists will seize control”, *The Australian*, 1 November 2006, p.3.

49. “Sheikh Shady Al-Suleiman”, *Sydney Islamic College*, available at: http://www.sydneyc.org.au/Sh_Shady.html

50. Richard Kejab, “Sheik teaches when it’s OK to kill children in battle”, *The Australian*, 9/5/2007, p.17.

51. Richard Kerbaj, “Defiant Hilali in fight for mufti job”, *The Weekend Australian*, 19-20 May 2007, p.3.

ISLAMIC EXTREMISM ON AUSTRALIAN CAMPUSES

Dr Abdulla has a PhD in “Islamic Science”, from Griffith University, which he completed in 1994-5 after “he began a path of spiritual self reformation in 1990, and [like Sheikh Shady] travelled frequently to various countries to learn from reputable Muslim scholars”.⁵² He is the founding director of the Griffith Islamic Research Unit (GIRU), which is part of the Key Centre for Ethics, Law, Justice and Governance at Griffith, and linked with the new \$15 million Centre of Excellence for Policing and Security Centre at Griffith University.

Despite the public assurances from the Federal Minister for Education that “the new Centre will play an important role in helping to understand the origins, motivations and dynamics of security threats such as ... terrorism”,⁵³ the first public comment of the director of the new centre (who has no expertise in terrorism) was a declaration that the centre would, “right from the outset ... distance our-

selves”⁵⁴ from the criticisms made in 2006 that terrorism studies in Australia were in crisis due to the monopoly position held by neo-Marxist, pro-Islamist, and anti-Western academics.⁵⁵ The academics who “blew the whistle” on this situation were subject to sanctions within their institutions,⁵⁶ while the new centre draws off a substantial proportion of the funding available for the study of terrorism in Australia in order to pursue research apparently designed to avoid controversy.

Another Australian university where close and potentially compromising links exist between Islamic studies and terrorism studies is Macquarie, which boasts both the Centre for Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism, and the Centre for Middle East and North African Studies. The former centre came under severe criticism after one of its academic staff claimed on an ABC *World Today* program that terrorists are just responding to injustices, are not religious fanatics, and are in fact “people of deep

52. “About GIRU”, Griffith Islamic Research Unit, available at: <http://www.griffith.edu.au/centre/kceljag/giru/>

53. Department of Education, Science, and Training, Media Release, “A Safer Australia”, 3 May 2007, available at <http://www.dest.gov.au/Ministers/Media/Bishop/2007/05/BOO2030507.asp>

54. Bernard Lane, “‘Science’ in terror plan”, *The Australian*, 9 May 2007, p.44.

55. Mervyn F. Bendle, “Don’t mention the terror”, *The Australian*, 6 September 2006, p.25; David Martin Jones, “Delusion reigns in terror studies”, *The Australian*, 15 September 2006, p.14; Mervyn F. Bendle, “Status quo defence fails”, *The Australian*, 20 September 2006, p.31.

56. Hedley Thomas, “Lecturer fears for tenure over terror stand”, *The Australian*, 4 December 2007, p.7.

concern, of deep thought about the injustice that they see being done to the people they identify with".⁵⁷

The latter centre maintains a predominantly left-wing and anti-Western perspective, and included among its recent activities:⁵⁸ "Breaking the Silence: An Evening with John Pilger", the extremely prominent leftist critic of Western policy. It also promoted an address by another prominent anti-Western journalist, Robert Fisk, who exclaimed in 2006 about "the extent of injustice in the Middle East. When I finished writing my new book, I realized how amazed I was that after the past 90 years of injustice, betrayal, slaughter, terror, torture, secret policeman and dictators *how restrained Muslims have been towards the West*".⁵⁹

Meanwhile, the president of the Australian Union of Jewish Students claimed that "Islamic extremism was a widespread problem on Australian campuses", involving not only students but academics: "We see many lecturers preaching things similar to

[wahhabism]".⁶⁰

LACK OF REGULATION

As this preliminary analysis shows, Wahhabism has emerged as the ideological vanguard of a highly militant Islamism that is swamping traditional Islam, subverting key Western institutions and serving as the basis of a major new form of irrationalist totalitarian ideology operating on a global scale.⁶¹ This carries obvious implications both for national security and academic freedom. It appears unlikely that Saudi funding will ever be effectively regulated,⁶² while there is little reason to believe that Australian universities will be able to resist pressure from the Saudis and other major benefactors to closely regulate all teaching and research that they disagree with, especially in connection with the history of Islam, the Middle East conflict, Islam's relations with the West, the status of Israel, and the war on terror, to say nothing about attitudes towards women and the Jewish people. The situation is exacerbated by the

57. Mervyn F. Bendle, "Irreparable damage posed to counter-terrorism system", *The Weekend Australian*, 16-17 September 2006, p.18.

58. Macquarie University Centre for Middle East and North African Studies website: <http://www.mq.edu.au/mec/activities.html>

59. Robert Fisk, "I don't think we Westerners care about Muslims", keynote address at Muslim Public Affairs Council Convention, 20 December 2006, available at: <http://www.democracynow.org/article.pl?sid=06/12/20/1443230&mode=thread&tid=25> (Emphasis added).

60. Brendan O'Keefe, "Campus fears over clout of Islamists", *The Australian*, 21 March 2007, p.34.

61. See Phares, *The War of Ideas*, for an indication of the scale of the challenge.

62. Greg Sheridan, "Cut off the Wahhabi cash flow", *The Australian*, 17 May 2007, p.10.

deplorable fact that the general consensus on many or all of these issues amongst relevant academics is already close to the Saudi view.

Australian universities are now driven entirely by financial priorities and demonstrate little or no interest in preserving academic freedom or in

promoting a diversity of academically-grounded views on the central issues of our age. They are also quite prepared to sacrifice staff whose views are inconvenient. The injection of \$2.7 billion of Saudi funding into such a system would be a national security and cultural disaster.