



OCIS – ECSSR Joint Conference on Security in the Arabian Gulf



The Conference in session

From 31 October – 2 November the Centre hosted an international colloquium on ‘Security in the Arabian Gulf’, the second in an annual series organised in cooperation with the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research. Conference participants and invited guests gathered in London on 30 October, for a dinner

at the Banqueting House. The dinner was hosted by ECSSR founder and Director General, HE Dr Jamal Sanad Al-Suwaidi, to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the foundation of ECSSR.

Discussions continued through the weekend in the secluded surroundings of Ditchley Park. Participants included senior academics and public figures from the Gulf region, the US, UK and Europe as well as from India, Pakistan and China.

Participants discussed the strategic importance of the Gulf, its military and economic security, the complex political and military developments in the wider region, and the continuing effort to resolve various conflicts. Particular focus was given to Syria and Iraq and the need to find ways to defeat extremist trends not just militarily, but by rebutting their political and ideological narratives. This was a key global challenge, and one in which the states of the region would need to play a leadership role, requiring a coordinated approach and a sophisticated campaign at many levels.

Knowledge Exchange Conference on The Study of Islam and Contemporary Muslim Societies

On 18 and 19 October, the Centre hosted a conference on the ‘Study of Islam and Contemporary Muslim Societies’, in partnership with the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Director of the Centre, Dr Farhan Nizami, welcomed the guests. Dr Abdullah Lheedan delivered the inaugural speech on behalf of HE Shaikh Saleh bin Abdulaziz Al-Alsheikh, Minister of Islamic Affairs. Sir Alan Munro, former British Ambassador to Saudi Arabia responded to the opening remarks. Leading scholars from across the world participated in a weekend of discussion on the history of scholarship on Islam, its current state and future direction. The conference examined the different disciplinary approaches to the study of Islam and stressed the need to preserve institutional space and funding for this important academic endeavour.

Participants included, amongst others, Professor Richard



Dr Abdullah Lheedan addressing the conference, Dr Farhan Nizami (centre) and Sir Alan Munro (left)

Martin, Emory; Dr Adel Al-Sheddi, MWL; Professor Reinhard Schulze; Professor Alison Scott-Baumann; Dr Zaid Al-Dakkan, Riyadh; Professor Rashid Naim, Georgia, and Professor Abdel Haleem, SOAS. Also in attendance were representatives from international Islamic organisations and political and civic bodies.

New Visiting Fellows

A number of appointments were made at the Centre during Michaelmas Term:

Dr Adam Ng, LLB (IIUM), BCL (Oxon), PhD (INCEIF) *Scholar in Residence in Islamic Finance*; Dr Ahmad Sukkar, MRes (London), *Imam Bukhari Visiting Research Fellow*; Dr Khaled Al-Suwaidi, BA (Texas), MA (Westminster), PhD (London), *Visiting Research Fellow*.

Library Relocation

The initial stages of the Centre's Library relocation to the Marston Road site were undertaken this summer. The OCIS Library collection comprises some 14,000 items, mainly in print format, and also some digitised copies of Arabic manuscripts. It caters for a wide range of academic disciplines from Classical Islamic Sciences to the contemporary study of all aspects of the Muslim world, Muslims in the West, and modern Muslim thinkers. The main languages represented in the collection are English, Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Malay and Turkish. Students and academics have been enjoying the new facilities for the first time this term. Other activities are scheduled to move during the course of the coming year.

New Centre Scholars at Oxford

Launched in 2009, the OCIS–Oxford Scholarships and the OCIS–Khazanah Scholarships support over 30 students from Britain and countries in Africa and Asia reading for a variety of Oxford University degrees. Scholars enjoy Centre activities and are mentored by Centre fellows throughout their studies. The Centre is pleased to announce the appointment of the following new Scholars: Ms Farheen Ahmed (BA in Law), Pembroke College, Kasim Darwesh Scholar; Ms Rumana Ali (BA in History)

St Hilda's College, Saif Al-Nahayyan Scholar; Ms Amina Khatun Ali (MChem in Chemistry) Trinity College, Kasim Darwesh Scholar; Mr Eu Gin Ng (Masters in Business Administration) St Hugh's College, Merdeka Scholar; Ms June Mary Rubis (DPhil in Geography and Environment), Oriel College, Merdeka Scholar; Ms Najiah Mohd Sadali (DPhil in Plant Sciences), Wolfson College, Merdeka Scholar; Ms Hande Yalnizoglu (MPhil in Modern Middle Eastern Studies), St Antony's College.

Encouraging Future Leaders

YMLP and Alumni Reunion



Lord Stevenson of Coddenham

From 31 August – 13 September 2014, the Centre ran its annual Young Muslim Leadership Programme at Christ Church, Oxford. The programme is supported by the Prince's Charities, the Amanah Foundation, ISESCO, and Barclays. Now in its ninth year, the programme brought together 25 young men and women from across Britain for an intensive residential course which included

lectures, discussions, workshops and team-building exercises. The programme aims to provide participants with the opportunities to explore diverse ways of making a positive contribution to British society.

To celebrate the success of the Programme and inaugurate the Alumni Association, the Centre held a reunion at the House of Lords on Thursday 23 October. The Alumni Association has over 200 members and more than 120 of them attended the reunion. The event was hosted by Lord Stevenson of Coddenham. It was an opportunity to reflect on the impact of the programme and its future. Speakers included a YMLP alumnus who works in the Royal Household and presented greetings to the alumni on behalf of HRH The Prince of Wales.

The Joy of Research Graduate Colloquium

A Graduate Colloquium was held on Tuesday 18 November, with postgraduate students presenting their research to Centre Fellows and other scholars. The following presentations were made: Selma Harb (St Hilda's College), 'Al-Razi and Islamic Medicine in the Ninth Century'; Riccardo Jaede (St Antony's College), 'New Atheism and its Muslim Other: Integrating Universalist Inclusion and Orientalist Exclusion'; Mukaddam Khaitova

(St Antony's College), 'Reflections on Mother–Child relation in a Muslim community of Margilan (Uzbekistan)'; Farania Rangkuti (St John's College), 'Learning from Monkeys'; Soufia Siddiqi (St Anne's College), 'Silent Girls, Talkative Boys: A Civic Puzzle from Two Schools in Lahore, Pakistan'; Shireen Walton (St Antony's College), 'Picturing Culture Online: Iranian Photoblogs and the Enchantments of Digital Technologies'.

Centre Seminar Series

Islamic Finance

The Centre organised a seminar series on 'Islamic Finance' in Michaelmas term. It was convened by Tan Sri Zarinah Anwar, Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Fellow, and supported by Fajr Capital. The following presentation were made:

Mr Iqbal Khan, CEO Fajr Capital, *The History and Evolution of Islamic Finance*; Mr Iqbal Asaria, Adviser to Secretary General of MCB, *Introduction to Islamic Finance: Concepts, Products and Structures*; Dr Ann Pettifor, Director, Policy Research in Macroeconomics, *How Keynesian Monetary Theory and Policy Could Embed a Koranic Model of Finance*; Lord Green of Hurstpierpoint, Former Minister of State for Trade and Investment, *The Role of Public Policy in Enabling Islamic Finance*; and Dr Alberto Brugnoli, Managing Partner ASSAIF, *Islamic Finance: Its Purpose, Current Challenges and Future Opportunities*.

Islamic Cities

In Michaelmas Term, the Centre hosted a seminar series on 'Islamic Cities'. It was convened by the Centre's Research Fellow in Medieval Islamic History, Dr George Malagaris, and focused on the art, architecture and historical perspectives of a selection of significant Islamic cities.

A number of distinguished social and art historian presented papers. These included:

Professor Ebba Koch, University of Vienna, *Mughal Agra*; Professor Sheila Blair, Boston College, *Shiraz*; Professor James Allan, University of Oxford, *Isfahan*; Professor Shirine Hamadeh, Rice University, *Istanbul*; Professor Amira Bennison, University of Cambridge, *Fes*; Professor Hugh Kennedy, SOAS and University of London, *Baghdad*; and Professor Bakhrom Abdulkhalimov, Al-Biruni Institute of Oriental Studies, *Bukhara*.

Journal of Islamic Studies

Volume 25 Number 3

The latest issue of the JIS contains articles by Sara Yıldız, on "From Cairo to Ayasuluk: Hacı Paşa's participation in interregional Muslim textual communities and the transmission of Islamic learning to western Anatolia in the late 14th century"; Ismail Fajrie Alatas on "Pilgrimage and Network Formation in two Contemporary Bā 'Alawī 'awl in Central Java"; and Muhammad Zubair Abbasi on "Islamic Law and Social Change: An Insight into the Making of Anglo-Muhammadian Law". The issue also contains 20 book reviews of some of the more important recent publications about Islam and the Muslim world.

Oxford Open Doors 2014

On the weekend of the 14 and 15 September, the Centre welcomed visitors to its new building under construction on Marston Road, as part of the Oxford Preservation Trust's Open Doors. The tours were booked to capacity and saw over 250 visitors pass through the building, all of whom were able to learn about the design and construction of the building and the role it will play. Members of staff from the Centre conducted the tours and answered questions from the enthusiastic public.

Distinguished Visitors at the Centre

HE Mr Abdullah Gül

Centre Trustee and Former President of the Republic of Turkey, HE Mr Abdullah Gül visited the Centre's new building with his wife, Mrs Hayrünnisa Gül, this winter. After entering the building through the Istanbul courtyard they were given a full tour of the building where they were able to see the progress of the works being done. They also viewed Iznik tiles in situ around the Centre. A lunch was held in their honour. The Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire welcomed the distinguished visitors on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen. The Lord Mayor, Oxford University academics and other guests also attended the lunch.



HE Mr Abdullah Gül

HH Sayyid Haitham bin Tariq

On Monday 27 October, HH Sayyid Haitham bin Tariq, Minister of Heritage and Culture of the Sultanate of Oman, was welcomed to the Centre to view the progress of the new building. He was greeted by the Director and the Bursar and given a tour of the site. His Highness signed the distinguished visitor's book in the Oman Hall, where he saw the result of Oman's support to the new building. The Oman Hall will serve as the dining hall for Centre scholars, staff, fellows, and visitors. He also viewed an exhibition about the Centre, and a lunch was held in his honour.



HH Sayyid Haitham bin Tariq Al Said

Annual Trustee Meeting Trustees Review Progress



The Centre's Trustees at Ditchley Park

Photo by Gillman & Soame

The Centre's Trustees gathered at Ditchley Park, Oxfordshire, in September 2014 to review the Centre's academic programmes and discuss future priorities. A visit to the new building enabled them to see for themselves the progress towards completion and the move of the Library. Plans for the transfer of all Centre activities to the new premises were on the agenda of their subsequent discussions.

The Trustees also noted the continued progress of the Centre's collaborations with partner academic institutions in the Muslim world, including the now well established Annual Roundtable on Islamic Finance with the Securities Commission, Malaysia and a further annual symposium, on Arabian Gulf Security, organised in cooperation with the Emirates Centre

for Strategic Studies and Research.

Trustees also noted the accelerating pace of work on the Centre's flagship Atlas Project, mapping the spread of Muslim thought in South Asia and the publication of further issues of the *Journal of Islamic Studies* and of the Centre's book series, *'Makers of Islamic Civilisation'*.

Remembering Professor Ali Mazrui

The Kenyan scholar, political thinker, and author Professor Ali Mazrui passed away on 13 October 2014 at the age of 81. Born in Mombasa in 1933, he was later to be known as a challenging and eloquent academic who focused on African and Islamic Studies, writing over 20 books, and serving posts in multiple academic institutions including his position as an Albert Schweitzer professor and as director of the Institute of Global Cultural Studies, Binghamton University, New York.

He was elected as a trustee of the Centre in 2003 and served for over 10 years. We are deeply saddened at the loss of a great man and prolific scholar.