



OCIS NEWS

OXFORD CENTRE FOR ISLAMIC STUDIES

New Vice-Chancellor welcomed

The new Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford, Professor Andrew Hamilton, during his first visit to the Centre, welcomed its contributions to the academic life of the University.

Meeting with Fellows of the Centre, the Vice-Chancellor noted the multi-disciplinary range of their academic interests. Consideration was given to ways in which the Centre could support new areas of teaching and research within various faculties of the University.

Professor Hamilton expressed particular interest in the Centre's recent agreement with the University which now provides the context for expansion of the Centre's Scholarship Programme. This Programme, the details of which are given on the final page of this issue, awards scholarships to those accepted to read for degrees at Oxford. The Vice-Chancellor welcomed the potential of the

Programme to support promising students from Britain's diverse Muslim communities, and also overseas students from Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

The visit also provided an opportunity for the Vice-Chancellor to visit the academic, social and residential facilities now being completed in the Centre's new building.



The Vice-Chancellor and the Director

Ambassadors from the Muslim World visit the Centre

Diplomatic representatives to the United Kingdom from over twenty countries visited the Centre in December. Led by HE Mr Khalid Al-Duwaisan, Ambassador of Kuwait and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, the delegation was received by the Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire and the Director.

Countries represented in the delegation included

Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Kuwait, Iraq, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen.

Over the past two decades support from countries around the world has enabled the Centre to develop an international network of contacts with scholars and academic institutions. This has fostered the exchange of staff and enabled collaborative research to take place. The diplomatic delegation was shown the Centre's new building, currently under construction, which provides the academic, social and residential facilities for the future development of the Centre.

During a lunch given in their honour there was a presentation of the Centre's academic achievements and future plans. This was followed by an open discussion in which individual members of the delegation welcomed the progress being made on this major new initiative.

The visit concluded with the Director thanking the guests for their interest and support.



The delegation at the new building

Centre Fellow offers new course

Dr Adeel Malik, the Centre's Globe Fellow in the economies of Muslim societies, has introduced an option course in the political economy of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) for Oxford University's MPhil in Development Studies programme. The course, which involves collaboration with the Oxford Energy Institute, will also be available as an option for students reading for the MPhil in Modern Middle Eastern Studies.

This new course will make an important contribution to teaching in Development Studies and Middle Eastern Studies. It will open up new possibilities for Oxford's graduate students to conduct high-quality research on the political economy of Middle East and North Africa. The Centre is committed to developing new teaching and research opportunities with departments and faculties across the University.

Visiting Fellowship

Dr Yang Guiping, is engaged in research at the Centre as a Visiting Research Associate. Her work on the integration of Chinese Muslims will result in a comparative study of the ethnic identities, of Muslim-minority communities in China and the UK.

Dr Guiping is a Professor of Islamic Studies in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Beijing's Central University for Nationalities.

International Contacts

Azerbaijan

In November the Director attended an international conference, 'Inter-Civilizational Dialogue: Insight from Azerbaijan' in Baku. Jointly organized by the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy, the conference was held to mark the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Syria



HE Dr Sami Khiyami

HE Dr Sami Khiyami, Ambassador of Syria to the UK, led a round-table discussion on contemporary political issues during a visit to the Centre in Michaelmas Term. He was also able to visit the Centre's new building.

Belgium

At the invitation of the European Commission's European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA), the Director presented two lectures in Brussels for their 'Islam Awareness Course'. The course paid special attention to Russia, the Caucasus,

and Central Asia, and considered such topics as the beliefs, practices, and faith dynamics of the Muslim world, and on sectarianism, schools of thought, and intellectual trends in Islam.

Malaysia

As part of the Malaysian government's support for the auditorium in the Centre's new building, Dato' Kamaruddin Bin Siaraf of the Malaysian



Mr Siaraf with the Bursar

Ministry of Culture visited Oxford in Trinity Term. He was received at the Centre by the Bursar, Dr Basil Mustafa. Mr Siaraf inspected the progress of the Malaysian craftsmen engaged in completing the auditorium's traditional carved woodwork.

Saudi Arabia

The Minister of Education, HH Prince Faisal Al-Abdullah Al Saud, welcomed a delegation from the Centre during their visit to the Kingdom. This provided an opportunity to discuss cooperation between the Centre and institutions of higher learning in Saudi Arabia.

Seminar Series

'The Muslim World Today'

During Michaelmas Term the Centre held a series of seminars on the subject of 'The Muslim World Today'. Speakers considered specific facets of the modern Islamic world. They included Professor Anoush Ehteshami (University of Durham) on 'Security and Stability in the Gulf: The US, Iran, and GCC'; Professor George Joffé (University of Cambridge) on 'Reform and Change in North Africa'; Dr Rosemary Hollis (City University London) on 'Egypt, Jordan, and Peace in the Middle East'; Professor Avi Shlaim (St Antony's College, Oxford) on 'Israel and the Palestinians: A Hundred Years of Conflict'; Mr David Gardner (*Financial Times*) on 'Living with Islamists: The Implications of Change in the Middle

East'; author Mr Robert Lacey on 'Inside the Kingdom: Challenges Facing Saudi Arabia'; and Mr Alexander Evans (Yale University) on 'Pakistan's Strategic Culture'.

A special seminar was given by Professor Abdallah Schleifer (Distinguished Professor, American University in Cairo) on 'The Common Word Open Letter: A Historic Breakthrough for Interfaith Dialogue'. He reviewed the Common Word Steering Committee's recent fourth meeting, 'A Common Word between Us and You: A Global Agenda for Change', in Georgetown, USA, which brought together representatives from the Muslim and Christian faiths to advance initiatives for peace.

Ditchley: 'The USA and the Muslim World'

Royal College of
Defence Studies

Democratization and Change in the Muslim World

The Centre organized a two-day workshop on 'Islam in the Modern World' for the Royal College of Defence Studies, London. It was attended by senior officers, from the three services, representing 35 countries as well as the UK. Centre Fellows provided briefings on a number of themes relating to the social, political, and strategic challenges facing Muslims in the Islamic world and the West. These included presentations on 'Democratization and the Modern State' and 'United States and the Global Political Order'. The workshop is part of a larger course organized under the auspices of the UK Defence Academy. It is designed to give senior military officers, from the United Kingdom and overseas, opportunities to benefit from briefing and open discussion about issues concerned with global security.

Fifth Annual Summer School

The Centre will conduct its fifth annual summer school of the Young Muslim Leadership Programme. The Programme, which will be held at Wadham College, is organized jointly by the Centre and the Prince's Charities. The two-week residential course is for young British Muslim men and women who have shown leadership potential in their respective careers.

The Centre hosted its annual conference at Ditchley Park during the weekend of 13–15 November. The subject of this year's conference was 'The United States and the Muslim World'.

Participants were drawn from a wide variety of backgrounds with professional and government experience in Western and Muslim countries. The conference examined the historical and contemporary aspects of the socio-economic, political, and cultural relationship between America and the broader Islamic world.

The range of subjects considered included: the need for greater recognition of the diverse traditions and aspirations within the Muslim World; the desirability of increased realization of the common ground between the values and aspirations of the United States and the Muslim World; and the need for the empowerment of Muslim societies so that these common values can be employed to build mutually beneficial consensus. Considerable attention was given to the different perceptions and policies of the Bush and Obama administrations and the opportunities for change in a decreasingly unipolar global political system in which there is no conscious disjuncture between human-rights rhetoric and security policy. There was also discussion regarding the American culture as a global 'brand' to which people in the Islamic world are drawn, despite their perception that America dislikes or is indifferent to them.

Participants included HE Dr Abdulkarim



Participants at the Ditchley conference

Ali Al-Eryany, Political Advisor to the President of Yemen; Dr Bassem Awadallah, former Minister at the Royal Court of Jordan and Chief Executive Officer of Tomoh, Dubai; Dr Usman Bugaje, former Chair of the Foreign Relations Committee of Nigeria; Dr François Burgat, Director of the Institut Français du Proche-Orient, Damascus; Ambassador Chas Freeman, President of the Middle East Policy Council, USA; Professor Fawaz Gerges, London School of Economics; HE Mr José María Ferré de la Peña, Special Ambassador for Relations with Muslim Communities and Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Spain; Professor Stephen Walt, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University; Sir Harold Walker, former British Ambassador to Iraq and the UAE; HE Dr N. Hassan Wirajuda, former Minister for Foreign Affairs, Indonesia; and Dr James Zogby, President of the Arab-American Institute, Washington DC.

Strategy Advisory Committee meets

The Centre's Strategy Advisory Committee recently held a meeting at Clarence House, London. The purpose of the committee, which

meets periodically, is to review and assist those Centre activities which have wider benefits for British society.



The Strategy Advisory Committee

The members of the Committee are HRH Prince Turki Al-Faisal (Chairman), the Rt. Hon. Sir John Major KG CH, Lord Neill of Bladen QC, Sir Michael Peat KCVO, Lord Stevenson of Coddham CBE, the Rt. Hon. Jack Straw MP, Baroness Williams of Crosby, and the Director.

The latest issue of the *JIS* contains articles by Hania Abou Al-Shamat on nineteenth-century curricular modernization in Lebanon; Anwar Alam on the rise of Islamism in Turkey; Altan Çetin on a Mamluk historian's account of Oghuz Turks; and Baki Tezcan on the Ottoman Mevâli as 'Lords of the Law'. The issue also contains 25 book reviews of some of the most important recent publications about Islam and the Muslim world.

OCIS Scholarships

OCIS Scholarships are awarded to encourage and assist students from Britain and overseas to study for degrees at the University of Oxford which will be of benefit to the Muslim world.

For the 2009/10 year the following three undergraduate students were awarded OCIS scholarships: Yousuf Saleem Chughtai (*Noon Scholar*), Classical Archaeology and Ancient History, St Hilda's College; Adnan Waqas Sarwar, Jurisprudence, New College; Daher Aden (*Kasim Darwesh Fakhro Scholars*), Archaeology and Anthropology, St Hugh's College.

Five individuals received OCIS post-graduate scholarships for the same period. Imad Ahmed (*Kasim Darwesh Fakhro Scholar*), Islamic Studies and History, Trinity College; Layli Uddin (*Tun Mahathir Mohamed Scholar*), Modern South Asian Studies, Balliol College; and Siti Aliza Binti

Alias (*Salahuddin Abdul Jawad Scholar*), Law, Worcester College. Two *Yousef Jameel Scholars* are Abantee Harun, Social Anthropology, Wolfson College; and Rima Majed, Sociology, St Cross College. The following *Khazanah-Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies Merdeka Scholarships* were awarded: Khairul binti Abd Halim Bariyyah, Biomedical Sciences, St Hilda's College; Andrew Mun Chiang Chan, Clinical Medicine, St Cross College; and Chaw Keong Yong, Physics, St Hugh's College.

Current OCIS Scholarships recipients included: Sundas Ali (*Khalid Al-Ibrahim Scholar*), Sociology, Nuffield College; Talal Al-Azem (*Easa Saleh Al-Gurg Scholar*), Oriental Studies, St Edmund Hall; and Kamilin Haji Hamdan (*Sultan Scholar*), Engineering, Pembroke College. Sazan Meran received a *Library Bursary*, for Oriental Studies, St Cross College.