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Academic Freedom Under Attack

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Editorial: Rightwing Attacks on Academic Freedom

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In conversations with colleagues, we find that many people are very concerned about the repressive policies of the U.S. government and the generally reactionary political climate in the land, along with the potential impact on Africanist scholarship. Nearly everyone has a sad story about a colleague or student who has had visa problems, yet few seem to be aware of the direct attacks on individuals and institutions, the vitriol of such attacks, and the implied consequences for African studies centers and programs. Hence, in this issue of the Bulletin, ACAS undertakes the important task of bringing well-documented reports and commentaries to the attention of our colleagues.

Area studies are under sustained attack, especially those areas that have worked *not* to be close allies of the intelligence and security systems. The argument that African Studies is intellectually insubstantial (that our work consists of impressions, experiences, and story-telling, not serious scholarship) makes us more vulnerable to efforts to demonstrate utility by service to the state. A poignant observation here: the government systematically disregards area specialists' analyses of what was/is likely to happen in Iraq before, during, and after invasion. (We have heard that the State Department commissioned a major study in multiple volumes that then sat unread by those making decisions).

The directors of the African Studies Title VI National Resource Centers, at their meeting during the 2001 annual meetings of the African Studies Association, voted to reaffirm their previously stated position to oppose the application for and acceptance of military and intelligence funding of area and language programs, projects, and research in African studies. This is a position they have held since the early 1980s. The African Studies Association has taken a similar stance. This separation ensures that U.S. students and faculty researchers can maintain close ties with African researchers and affiliation with and access to African institutions without question or bias. Such separation can produce the knowledge and understanding of Africa that serves the broad interests of the people of the United States, as well as our partners in Africa.

In this issue of the Bulletin, David Wiley (Professor of Sociology and Director of the African Studies Center at Michigan State University) traces the history of opposition to NSEP, the National Security Education Program that was established by the National Security Education Act of 1991. The Act created the National Security Education Board, the National Security Education Program and a trust fund in the U.S. Treasury to provide resources for scholarships, fellowships and grants. It describes itself as "guided by a mission that seeks to lead in development of the national capacity to educate U.S. citizens, understand foreign cultures, strengthen U.S. economic competitiveness and enhance international cooperation and security." (http://www.iie.org/programs/nsep/nsephome.htm).

We reproduce statements from three scholars of Middle Eastern studies — Moustafa Bayoumi (who teaches English at Brooklyn College), Zachary Lockman (Professor of modern Middle East history at New York University and a contributing editor of *Middle East Report*), and Joel Beinin (Professor of Middle East History at Stanford University and a former president of the Middle East Studies Association). To indicate the full scope of the attack on area studies, we also include an excerpt from a talk by Bruce Cumings (Norman & Edna Freehling Prof.essor of History, University of Chicago), member of the Advisory Board of *Critical Asian Studies* (formerly the *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*), and an article describing attacks on Latin American studies from the *New York Times*. We also reproduce Justin Pope's article from the *Philadelphia Inquirer* on the rightwing pressures on foundations to limit grants, which has drawn fire from several universities — but not enough to stop the new practices.

Bayoumi looks at what has happened to the immigrant population since September 11th: the roundups, Special Registration (a Justice Department initiative that turned Islam into a racial category), the visa problems, and the expulsions; he also questions the International Studies in Higher Education Act of 2003, which reauthorizes five years of funding for international area studies centers (Title VI centers), and the anti-terrorism clauses that the Ford and Rockefeller foundations recently added to their grant agreements. Joel Beinin looks at the appropriation

connections and to move from noting them to developing and presenting an analytic framework that highlights the importance and consequences of those links.

We recognize that the academic study of Africa/ns is becoming increasingly embedded in the State and international organizations (from the World Bank to NGOs), while colleagues, students and Africa/n scholars are increasingly directly oppressed by these very same states/organizations. This trend — one might call it "embedded Africanists" — is complex and merits discussion. It is very contradictory to be sure, reflecting changes at a global level.

On a related point: Naming and blaming individuals may misdirect attention and skew the analysis to personalities, but at this point don't we have to insist that people bear responsibility for their public (and funding) actions? If one testifies in Congress against colleagues and institutions rejecting NSEP and the new military/intelligence directives, and is open on one's campus in the call to accept military/ intelligence money, do we hide this from colleagues, students and Africa/n scholars?

It would be great to actually trace the circles of dissemination of the vicious and personal attacks – for example, where did the initial commentary appear (newspaper/radio/web)? Who then quoted or reprinted or summarized it and where? Was it in turn reproduced in yet other commentaries? Zachary Lockman does some of that in his article "Behind the Battles Over US Middle East Studies." We recall the apartheid era when that was a major South African (dis)information strategy. A dentist from Kansas City would visit South Africa and in an interview say that things were not as bad as he had expected and that indeed, good people were trying to improve things. That relatively rosy view of apartheid South Africa would appear initially in the South African regional press, then in a small local U.S. newspaper, then in a larger regional paper, and occasionally then in a major newspaper or wire service report.

It is important to document the link between the repression of higher education (and frequently, systematic anti-intellectualism) by African leaders insecure in their tenure and the parallel attacks on academic freedom by a U.S. government also seeking to still its critics.

We need to track systematically the visa experiences of Africans seeking to come to the U.S. and Africans already in the U.S., for example, graduate students reluctant to undertake field work in Africa because of their concern that they may not be able to come back to complete their degrees.

There is much more to be done: ACAS is hosting a roundtable on these issues at the 2004 meeting of the ASA. Originally, *African Issues*, an official publication of ASA, was to carry these articles but the ASA Board withdrew the offer they had extended to me to edit a special issue of the journal on the attacks on Title VI funding of area studies. ASA members may wish to question this decision and ask why the ASA has backed away from this controversy instead of leading the defence of Africanist scholarship and African scholars. The explanation I was given by the President of ASA is that ASA is in a difficult position at the moment vis a vis the Title VI legislation and anyway the timing precluded ASA being able to publish it. "The last issue of ISSUES will come out in the fall, around annual meeting time. That is always a difficult time for the staff because getting ready for the annual meeting is hectic, to put it mildly, and especially so because we are one staff position short."

I would like to thank all of our authors for their contributions and for the willingness of the journals cited to give permission to reprint articles.

Scholars of Africa and Middle East under Right-Wing Attack

David Wiley

In fall 2003, the U.S. House of Representatives approved by voice vote the creation of an advisory board to monitor whether Title VI area and international studies centers serve "national needs related to homeland security" and to assess whether they provide sufficient airtime to champions of American foreign policy. This provision of HR 3077, that reauthorizes the Higher Education Act which provides funding for language and area studies at U.S. universities, was part of the right-wing mobilization that has grown in effectiveness during the Bush administration combined with the post-9/11 suspicion of all those who might be sympathetic to "foreign points of view." The Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions considered, but did not pass, these House provisions although several senators voiced their concern about Title VI centers. In 2005, the new Congress could well consider this proposal again.

The proposal for the International Advisory Board in HR 3077, with powers to investigate at will and to hire contract agents outside of the federal contracting guidelines, is an ominous harbinger of new attacks on academic freedom and on those who differ with current U.S. foreign policy and definitions of patriotism. In the name of promoting "diverse perspectives" in academia, the International Advisory Board would be authorized to "study, monitor, apprise, and evaluate a sample of activities" supported by Title VI, creating a federally funded forum for continuing the right-wing attacks on controversial Middle East and Africanist scholars.

The new advisory board would create an oversight body of a U.S. Department of Education programs that would include two appointees "from federal agencies that have national security responsibility." This year with a total appropriation of approximately $95 million, the Department of Education funded120 foreign language, area studies and international studies National Resource Centers for graduate student fellowships, language instruction, outreach to school and the public, and academic and public programs, in addition to several other programs for research, international business, language, and undergraduate international studies. These Title VI centers are the core of the national support for the less commonly taught languages. In 2002 these centers offered more than 200 less commonly taught languages in contrast to the 70+ offered by U.S. government agencies (Defense Language Institute, Foreign Service Institute, etc.). Currently, the 120 centers include only nine African and 17 Middle East National Resource Centers.

The attack on the diverse opinions – including views that differ from the U.S. government – that are supposed to be protected in the academy is not new. The heritage of such assaults dates back to the attacks on supposed Bolsheviks during the inter-war and Depression era and the attacks of the McCarthy period and the Cold War years. This was continued immediately after 9/11 with the dozens of faculty being listed publicly by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni as potentially traitorous.[1]

Historically, this is the second major attack during the last 55 years on Title VI programs, the U.S. Department of Education's funding of language and area studies in 120 National Resource Centers at more than 50 U.S. research universities. The first was Richard Nixon's attempt to zero out the budget for these centers, which, in his era, had produced a minority of scholars who voiced strong criticism of U.S. foreign policy on Vietnam, some of whom formed the Concerned Asian Scholars to provide broad perspective on Asia and U.S. interests there.

The very possibility of the Title VI International Advisory Board sounds old alarms anew. Even though the Senate did not adopt this bill, the House has sent a signal to the U.S. Department of Education that it is being scrutinized for funding centers and their faculties if they do not provide adequate representation for the deeply conservative ideologues of the right and for scholars who defend U.S. foreign policy.

The main critics of the Title VI centers have been three pro-Zionist members of right-wing think tanks. First is Stanley Kurtz, Research Fellow at the Hoover Institution and a columnist for the *National Review Online*. In June 2003, Kurtz testified before the House Subcommittee on Select Education, Committee on Education and the Workforce about the "systematic abuse of the subsidies" of Title VI programs by "biased" academics. Kurtz caricatures

the area studies programs and accuses them of "extreme and monolithic" perspectives and of "stifling free debate." The Middle Easternists, he alleges, are uniformly captives of the "ruling intellectual paradigm" which he identifies as Edward Said's *Orientalism*. (See Alisa Solomon, "Targeting Middle East studies, zealots' 'homeland security' creates campus insecurity" *The Village Voice*, February 25 - March 2, 2004.)

The second leader of the attack is Martin Kramer, former director of the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies at Tel Aviv University, editor of the website *Sandstorm*, and author of *Ivory Towers on Sand: The Failure of Middle East Studies in America*, published by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. Closely allied is the third leader of the attack, Daniel Pipes of the Middle East Forum, now appointed to the Board of the U.S. Institute for Peace and whose website *Campus Watch* posted "dossiers" on professors who Pipes says have "unacceptable views" on Islam, Palestinian rights, Israel, and U.S. policy on the Middle East. Students were urged to send in reports on teachers who made any "dubious remarks."

While Kurtz and Kramer have focused their attacks primarily on scholars of the Middle East, scholars of Africa have been their second target, for, in their words, "boycott[ing] and undermin[ing] the National Security Education Program." ("Boycott Exposure," 4/1/2004, www.nationalreview.com/kurtz/kurtz20040 4010914.asp) Their argument, propounded in dramatic terms using the attack of September 11th as the backdrop, is that Africanist opponents of the NSEP program are trying to intimidate their colleagues who would choose to contribute to the U.S. national defense. Addressing this charge requires some historical perspective on the stance of the Africanist community.

The Africanist Policies on Military and Intelligence Funding of Area Studies

In the early 1980s, several directors of major U.S. African studies centers in research universities were approached by the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) of the U.S. Department of Defense asking those centers to affiliate with the DIA. In exchange for undefined and allegedly minimal duties, those centers were promised a large amount of funding that, at the time, would have quintupled their budgets.

Because those centers and members of their faculty frequently have been accused of having links to U.S. military and intelligence agencies in their research in Africa - and because of the extensive engagement of the U.S. security agencies in Africa during the Cold War, the directors involved at Michigan State University, Indiana University, Boston University, and University of Wisconsin decided to meet with other heads of African studies programs to make a corporate decision about their response. This reflected a long history of collegiality among centers and programs of African language and area studies conducted in both the U.S. and in Africa. (Subsequently, the Michigan State African Studies faculty voted overwhelmingly not to apply for or accept military or intelligence funding.)

After careful consultation and extended discussion, the directors decided not to accept Defense Intelligence Agency funding — or any other military or intelligence funding.

The basis of their decision was a belief that there was widespread suspicion about U.S. scholars and their possible "dual roles" as both scholars and sources of U.S. intelligence penetration of the continent. A number of African specialists reported incidents of being questioned by African officials or of being denied access to information in Africa because of these suspicions. And others reported on extra-ordinary cooperation and partnership with colleagues in Africa based on trust and assurance of no intelligence links. This then gave those scholars, they believed, unusual access to sensitive government and private documents and interviews that made their research richer and deeper.

The questions from Africans about the role of U.S. scholars were raised because of the active role of U.S. military and intelligence in Africa. This has taken many forms:

- CIA participation in assassinating or attempting to assassinate or remove heads of state in Congo (Zaire), Angola, Ghana, Uganda, and elsewhere;
- Supporting the militarization of dictatorial regimes in Sudan, Somalia, and Zaire (Congo);
- Supporting the Portuguese opposition to African democracy in Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea-Bissau with various forms of military assistance;
- Supporting civil war in Angola against the MPLA, the first independent, post-Portuguese government;
- Delaying the end of white rule in Rhodesia and apartheid in South Africa in supporting broader Cold War aims in Africa; and

- A very large U.S. military program in Africa beginning in the 1990s, including more arms exports to the continent from the U.S. than from any other nation.

While the U.S. government was pursuing these policies, several U.S. scholars of Africa were known to have served simultaneously as university faculty and as intelligence workers. And some U.S. university faculty were known to have assisted, usually unwittingly, in CIA recruitment of African graduate students studying in the U.S.

In this context, many Africa specialists believe that their own research access and, thereby, the quality of research and information publicly available to the U.S. government is markedly improved by keeping a clear boundary between research for scholarly and development purposes and research for military and intelligence purposes. Because of this history, most Africa specialists have preferred to argue that they and their students, programs, and research should not mix military and intelligence funding with other resources.

Nationally, Africa specialists and their programs have received far less funding than those from other world regions who accept these funds. However, this also has enabled Africa scholars to say to African and other colleagues that they incorporate no military or intelligence purposes, funding, or programs in their African studies. (For other reasons, traditionally, Africa has been the lowest priority for U.S. Department of Education Title VI funding, varying from 9-11% of the total.)

Ironically, some partisans who support taking military funds are suspicious of the Africa specialists for not following the lead of some scholars in Asian, Russian, East European, Latin American, and other area studies who accept these funds. These partisans believe that "those who are not with us must be against us" and cannot see the patriotic stance that the Africa specialists believe they have created - ensuring broad research access to people and documents in Africa because much of the research is conducted in partnership with Africa scholars and institutions and serves common interests. As a result, the Africa specialists believe that they put books and articles on U.S. library shelves based on the deeper understandings that result from this partnership and collegiality.

The National Security Education Program

Many scholars have suggested that the NSEP Trust Fund and its programs of undergraduate and graduate fellowships and grants to U.S. universities should be administered by the U.S. Department of Education (US/ED), which has a history of deferring decisions about area and language studies priorities to the academic community. (Statements from several area studies associations concerning NSEP are reported in Attachment B.)

We were told that the NSEP program was required to be administered by the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) because the funds were derived from the DOD intelligence budget and because it was necessary to keep a focus of the program on U.S. national security priorities.

The NSEP programs were built by the DOD, utilizing intelligence funds to create an endowment, and administered by the DOD. Established under Title VIII of the Intelligence Authorization Act and by directives of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Command, Control, Communications and Intelligence, its staff has been drawn largely from the Defense Intelligence Agency, though now affiliated with the National Defense University. To quote their literature, "Program policies and direction are provided by the Secretary of Defense in consultation with the 13-member National Security Education Board" and "The National Security Education Program shall be under the authority, direction, and control of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Command, Control, Communications and Intelligence."

NSEP interjects narrower and shorter-range national security goals (even though "national security is broadly defined) into the academic research process in area studies. For instance, recently for Africa, the NSEP "priorities" for fellowships and research were Congo (Brazzaville), Congo (Kinshasa), Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda for no discernible reasons. And its "primary languages" for Africa (Arabic, Lingala, and Swahili) did not match the country priorities. There is little apparent rationale in the choices of primary and secondary fields of study. The shortsightedness of this policy was revealed in the initial NSEP choices of African language priorities, Xhosa and Hausa, which, we were told, reflected the indigenous languages of the presidents of South Africa and Nigeria. Even U.S. intelligence interests are broader than that. The NSEP administrators argue that the program, in fact,

is broad and ecumenical because in practice it is not limited by its announced priorities.

The DIA/DOD staff of NSEP have sought to cloak its intelligence and military connections by administering student programs through the Institute for International Education (IIE) and the Academy for Educational Development (AED), by using a series of academic advisory committees, by not revealing the identities and study locations of its IIE and AED awardees, and, recently, by changing its email addresses from ...@mil.org to ...@ndu.edu (National Defense University).

Some proponents of NSEP within African studies have argued that the relaxed service requirement of NSEP, allowing service in non-military and non-intelligence agencies, made the program acceptable. Others argued that having an NSEP fellowship or grant did not endanger the safety of the fellows and that, therefore, the money should be accepted. These arguments do not address the fundamental issues raised in the Africanist community during the past two decades, however.

The Historical Record of Africanist Opinion about U.S. Military and Intelligence Funding

The right-wing charges of dissension and intimidation on the issue of the NSEP within the Africanist scholarly community are belied by the record of the repeated open and democratic actions taking on the issue. The full text of statements are reported in Attachment A, following this brief summary.

During the 1980s and 1990s, the **directors of African Studies Title VI centers** periodically reviewed their policy about not accepting military funding. In 2001, under challenge from the right, the directors passed a resolution on "Military and Intelligence Money in African Studies" in which they "reaffirm[ed] our previously stated position to oppose the application for and acceptance of military and intelligence funding of area and language programs, projects, and research in African studies." They continued to note that, "We believe that the long-term interests of the people of the United States are best served by this separation between academic and military and defense establishments. Indeed, in the climate of the post-Cold War years in Africa and the security concerns after September 11, 2001, we believe that it is a patriotic policy to make this separation."

The Association of African Studies Programs has supported the Title VI African Studies directors in motions passed in the 1980s and reaffirmed in 2002. On March 31, 1993, they adopted a position "reaffirm[ing] our conviction that scholars and programs conducting research in Africa, teaching about Africa, and conducting exchange programs with Africa should not accept research, fellowship, travel, programmatic, and other funding from military and intelligence agencies or their contractual representatives - for work in the United States or abroad." At meetings of the AASP in most years since the mid 1990s and most recently in April 2002, members have been asked if they wanted to revisit, amend, or reconsider this resolution, and the membership declined to reopen the issue, allowing the 1993 resolution to stand.

The Board of Directors of the **African Studies Association**, which had supported the stance of the Title VI directors and the AASP, formalized this position at a meeting at Rutgers University in April 2002, "...voted to support the language and sentiment of the Title VI African Studies Center Directors on November 17, 2001."

Attachment A

Resolution by the Directors of Title VI Africa National Resource Centers, 2001

We, the directors of the African Studies Title VI National Resource Centers, at our meeting during the 2001 annual meetings of the African Studies Association, vote to reaffirm our previously stated position to oppose the application for and acceptance of military and intelligence funding of area and language programs, projects, and research in African studies. We note, too, that the African Studies Association has taken a similar stance.

We believe that the long-term interests of the people of the United States are best served by this separation between academic and military and defense establishments. Indeed, in the climate of the post-Cold War years in Africa and the security concerns after September 11, 2001, we believe that it is a patriotic policy to make this separation.

This separation ensures that U.S. students and faculty researchers can maintain close ties with African researchers and affiliation with and access to African institutions without question or bias. Such separation, we believe, can produce the knowledge and understanding of Africa that serves the broad interests of the people of the United States, as well as

our partners in Africa. We continue to welcome, in our classes, language training, and programs where we promote knowledge about Africa, all students and visitors from all private and public organizations and all agencies of the U.S. government.

Passed unanimously November 17, 2001 at their bi-annual meeting at the African Studies Association, Houston, Texas

Resolution by the Association of African Studies Programs

We, the members of the Association of African Studies Programs (AASP) at our 1993 Spring Annual Meeting, unanimously join the African Studies Association, Middle East Studies Association, the Latin American Studies Association, the South Asian Council of the SSRC, the Association of Concerned Africa Scholars, the Association of Asian Studies, the Boards of the Social Science Research Council and American Council of Learned Societies, and other scholars in seeking to separate foreign language and area studies in the United States from military, intelligence, and other security agency priorities and programs. We believe that long-term interests of the peoples of the United States are best served by this separation.

Specifically, we reaffirm our conviction that scholars and programs conducting research in Africa, teaching about Africa, and conducting exchange programs with Africa should not accept research, fellowship, travel, programmatic, and other funding from military and intelligence agencies or their contractual representatives - for work in the United States or abroad. We are concerned especially about the Department of Defense (DOD) National Security Education Act (NSEA, "the Boren Act") and the new Central Intelligence and National Security Agencies Critical Language Consortium. We call on our colleagues to abstain from these and similar funding initiatives and consortia of security agencies. These military and intelligence programs violate the integrity of the scholarly process and will hinder our relationships with African colleagues and collaborators, embarrass African universities and governments, and, thereby, decrease U.S. access to scholarly information in African studies.

We also believe that the broader interests of the people of the United States are served best by Africanist scholarship and programs oriented to goals, issues, and regional foci which are determined openly using academic and broader public priorities, not in secret or for the narrower priorities of military, foreign policy, and intelligence agencies.

We are not opposed to U.S. government funding of African studies. Indeed, African studies by far is the poorest of the world area studies and urgently needs an increase of funding for activities in the U.S. and in Africa. Therefore, we urge the U.S. government to increase its funding for African studies and linkages through agencies and institutions outside the security agencies.

Passed unanimously by all members in attendance, March 31, 1993,
Washington, DC

Attachment B

The responses to NSEP by some major U.S. area studies and academic associations

In February 1992, the presidents of ASA, LASA, and MESA wrote to Sen. Boren, stating that,

"...we are gravely concerned...at the presence of the Director of the CIA in the oversight of the program...For scholars of our regions, these provisions represent a significant problem, if not outright risk. Linking university based research to U.S. national security agencies, even indirectly, will restrict our already narrow research opportunities; it will endanger the physical safety of scholar and our students studying abroad; and it will jeopardize the cooperation and safety of those we study and collaborate with in these regions."

The association presidents further observed that the end result of the NSEP will be

"to restrict the flow of information from the region to the U.S.; to erode our basic research capacity on Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East; and to limit on-site training opportunities in languages, cultures, politics, and economics."

1. *Middle East Studies Association*

The MESA Board passed a resolution in October 1992 stating,

"The Board of Directors of MESA...deplores the location of responsibility in the U.S. defense and intelligence community for a major foreign area research, education, and training program of students and specialists. This connection can only increase the existing difficulties of gaining foreign governmental

permission to carry out research and to develop overseas instructional programs. It can also create dangers for students and scholars by fostering the perception of involvement in military and intelligence activities, and may limit academic freedom."

2. *South Asian Studies Council*

The *South Asia Council* of the *Association for Asian Studies* and the *Joint Committee on South Asia of the SSRC* and the *American Council of Learned Societies* has urged that the funds be transferred to the US/ED and called on institutions not to accept the funds.

"Past experience, in South Asia as elsewhere, amply demonstrates the perils of connections, however tenuous, between scholars and U.S. national security agencies. Possible consequences range from mistrust and lack of cooperation to physical violence against U.S. scholars and their colleagues abroad."

3. *Association for Asian Studies* (AAS)

Writing to Sen. Boren in March 1993, Tetsuo Najita, AAS President, in a letter approved by the AAS Board, urged that the NSEP be taken out of the DOD.

"There is no question that continued close identification (of NSEP) with the defense-intelligence community will seriously limit the scope of the NSEP and preclude it achieving its full role in international education. In many of the most critical and neglected areas of Asia, access to field-work and study, and productive relationships with colleagues, will be seriously curtailed by the defense-intelligence identification. In the post-Cold War world, the problems posed by the linkages with the defense-intelligence community will probably increase, fostered by heightened nationalism...Many nations will be inaccessible to NSEP students and scholars, often those most important to repairing our international knowledge and competence."

Endnote

[1] "The American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA), a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, was launched in 1995 by former National Endowment for the Humanities chairman Lynne V. Cheney, former Governor Richard D. Lamm of Colorado, Senator Joseph I. Lieberman of Connecticut, distinguished social scientist David Riesman, Nobel Laureate Saul Bellow and others. With public confidence in American institutions of higher education at only 25 percent, ACTA set out to mobilize concerned alumni, trustees, and education leaders across the country on behalf of academic freedom, excellence, and accountability at our colleges and universities. Since its founding, ACTA has worked successfully to support programs and policies that encourage high academic standards, strong curricula, and the free exchange of ideas. It opposes practices that threaten intellectual freedom or undermine academic standards, and believes that the mission of higher education is teaching, learning, and the pursuit of truth." (http://www.goacta.org/about_acta/history.html) Editor's note

A Bloody Stupid War*

Moustafa Bayoumi

When a war breaks out people say, "It's too stupid; it can't last long." But though a war may well be "too stupid," that doesn't prevent its lasting. Stupidity has a knack of getting its way; as we should see if we were not always so much wrapped up in ourselves.
— Albert Camus, The Plague

The Council on American Islamic Relations has stated that US government actions against Muslims have affected the lives of over 60,000 people.[1] All the major Muslim charities have had their assets seized or are under investigation, and money transfers from the US to the Middle East and Africa have become extraordinarily burdensome. Muslims in the US have threatened to sue Western Union for discriminatory practices; in several documented instances, the company refused to wire money for people with Muslim-sounding names, reportedly out of fear of prosecution under the USA PATRIOT Act. According to the New York magazine City Limits, American Express had been arbitrarily cancelling the accounts of American Muslims for the same reason.[2]

Neither questions of loyalty nor intimations of internment are absent from contemporary discussions surrounding the "war on terror." In February 2004, New York Congressman Peter King claimed that "85 percent of the mosques have extremist leadership in this country," and that "most Muslims, the overwhelming majority of Muslims, are loyal Americans, but they seem unwilling to come forward [to cooperate with law enforcement]." King, who is writing a pulp novel where Muslim extremists and warrior remnants of the Irish Republican Army plan a united attack on American soil, made his comments after hearing Muslims criticize the imbalance in US foreign policy.[3] Similarly, less than a year after the September 11, 2001 attacks, Peter Kirsanow, a civil rights commissioner appointed by George W. Bush, inflamed opinion in a community he had been contracted to defend when he stated that "if there's another terrorist attack and if it's from a certain ethnic community or certain ethnicities that the terrorists are from, you can forget about civil rights in this country." Kirsanow added that such an attack could lead to internment camps, quipping: "Not too many people will be crying in their beer if there are more detentions, more stops, more profiling. There will be a groundswell of public opinion to banish civil rights."[4] The quasi-official provenance of such ideas, and the frequency with which they circulate, is troubling indeed. As the Israeli historian Tom Segev wrote of talk of "transfer" of Palestinians, "There are ideas that should have black flags over them."[5]

Thus far, two and a half years into the war on terror, only two American citizens have lost their liberty and been denied the right to defend themselves. A replica of the recognized error of World War II internment is difficult — though not impossible — to imagine. Yet this is not to say that citizenship rights have been bravely respected. If, during the years of Japanese internment, the government abandoned defense of the rights of American citizens, today the US feels empowered to abandon the rights of everyone else.

Collapsing Citizenship

Consider the immigrant population. After the September 11 attacks, over 5,000 immigrants were rounded up by early law enforcement sweeps in a systematic effort of selective prosecution. At least one person is still in custody, after having been detained for more than two years without charge.[6] Although the charges against them were minor civil violations, they were brutalized in detention — beaten frequently, deprived of sleep and medical care, forced to eat pork — to the point that even the Justice Department's internal auditor published a 200-page report criticizing the inhumane treatment.[7]

Next came Special Registration, a Justice Department initiative that juridically turned Islam into a racial category. Special Registration requires all visa-holding men from 25 Muslim countries (and North Korea) to undergo an onerous ordeal of fingerprinting, interviewing and photographing upon entry and exit. Complying with the program has meant that over 13,800 men with visa problems are now preparing for perhaps the largest mass deportation in American history, even though large numbers of them have lived in the US for years, had applied lawfully for adjustment of status and have American-born children. Their lives and their families' lives have been ripped asunder by the fallout of September 11. The sweeps and programs of the government have effected a removal of Muslim men from the US

based firstly on the sole fact that they came, at some point in their lives, from Muslim countries.[8]

In requiring that "citizens" and "nationals" of those countries suffer its burdens, Special Registration collapsed citizenship, ethnicity and religion into race. Under the Special Registration guidelines, immigration officers are charged with the authority to register whomever they have "reason to believe" should be specially registered. This "reason to believe" extends to non-immigrant aliens who the inspecting officer has "reason to believe are nationals or citizens of a country designated by the Attorney General."[9] In a September 2002 memorandum to regional directors and patrol agents, the Immigration and Naturalization Service clarified that this discretion included cases such as "a non-immigrant alien who is a dual national and is applying for admission as a national of a country that is not subject to special registration, but the alien's other nationality would subject him or her to special registration." Numerous reports have indicated that INS agents have used place of birth as the trigger for determining "reason to believe" that an immigrant should be registered. In other words, an immigrant born in one of the listed countries, regardless of his citizenship, would be subject to Special Registration.
Soon after Special Registration began, registration of dual nationals became commonplace, and it sparked a minor international incident. Canada issued a rare travel advisory for its citizens visiting the US, since the US was discriminating between types of Canadian nationality.[10] The US offered Canada assurances that dual citizenship would not "automatically" trigger special registration and Canada withdrew its advisory. Canadian citizens who are nationals from the listed countries, however, continue to complain that birthplace triggers registration automatically.[11] One case, the traumatic story of Maher Arar, is particularly noteworthy. This Canadian citizen landed in the US in transit on his way home to Canada, whereupon the US detained him and shipped him to Syria, his birthplace, where he endured months of torture, presumably at the request of US officials.[12] Canadians are still livid over the Arar case, which proved to them that — US assurances notwithstanding — citizenship does not matter. Only descent counts.

Nowhere from Anywhere

One must look closely at the aggregate effects of these programs, combined with the geographic spaces where they occur, in order to discern what is going on. We should consider Special Registration through the emptiness of the airport interrogation room, see the weightlessness of the Navy brig holding Hamdi and Padilla, examine the bureaucratic moonscape of the Bagram Air Force Base in Afghanistan, and peer through the chain link cages at the occupied tip of an embargoed Caribbean island. None of these places exist in any meaningful sense of the word. They are empty spaces, because they have become administrative dumping grounds for superfluous bodies in the government's prosecution of its war. Outside of time and space, yet regulated like a prison, these are not the ends of the earth but more like floating penal colonies for the uncondemned (for even the condemned get a hearing where they are condemned). In these places, there is no means of challenging one's fate. Rights have evaporated like a kettle whistling itself dry.

Japanese internment and the "war on terror" teach us that citizenship and place are inextricably linked, and when the place is nowhere, the person has been expelled not just from a nation but in a sense from humanity itself. We are perhaps accustomed to thinking about citizenship largely as a marker of identity, as proof of belonging that manifests itself in demands for inclusion in the narrative of history, say, or in the literary canon. There is no doubt of the importance of such enterprises, but something is lost if we consider citizenship as an entry permit into the nation. Citizenship is not just an identity marker. It is a legal condition — and not just any legal condition. Citizenship, in Hannah Arendt's memorable phrase, is the "right to have rights." For better or worse, our human rights are premised on us having a nation, territory, a place to make laws and lives, and citizenship is the mechanism by which we can claim being grounded in the world.

Yet again and again, the government declares that citizenship is essentially worthless. In the case of Japanese internment, the consequence was a loss of home and geography. The desert locations of internment, nowhere from anywhere, were not chosen capriciously but were dictated by the logic of a policy of expulsion. The camp is the necessary consequence of the loss of citizenship and the nation because displacement is a necessary consequence of the loss of citizenship. Similarly, Palestinians are a people without rights because they are a people without land, for occupied land too is displaced land, displaced from the functioning of law and the concept of human rights.

When one considers the Japanese internment camps of World War II or Camp Delta on Guantánamo Bay, one cannot escape the disastrous fact that the US government has derogated the guarantees of citizen-

ship with unabashed contempt, and it has effected this policy through a removal of geography from the human world. No one understood this better than Arendt, who in The Origins of Totalitarianism connected the idea of human rights, land and citizenship with extraordinary acumen:

The fundamental deprivation of human rights is manifested first and above all in the deprivation of a place in the world... We became aware of the existence of a right to have rights (and that means to live in a framework where one is judged by one's actions and opinion) and a right to belong to some kind of organized community, only when millions of people emerged who had lost and could not regain these rights because of the new global political situation. The trouble is that this calamity arose not from any lack of civilization, backwardness or mere tyranny, but on the contrary, that it could not be repaired, because there was no longer any "uncivilized" spot on earth, because whether we like it or not we have really started to live in One World. Only with a completely organized humanity could the loss of home and political status become identical with expulsion from humanity altogether.[13]

Out of Sync

Other recent initiatives stress the uncomfortable fact of the purposeful stupidity in the war on terror. The International Studies in Higher Education Act of 2003, passed by the House of Representatives in October and currently in the Senate, reauthorizes five years of funding for international area studies centers (known as Title VI centers). But the funds come with strings attached. The bill requires international studies programs in US universities to undergo political monitoring by a committee appointed by Congress and demands, among others things, that Title VI centers provide government recruiters (including intelligence agencies) with full access to their students, and that the Secretary of Education initiate a study to scrutinize "foreign language heritage communities" in the US in the interest of national security. The bill, at bottom, seeks to dumb down scholarship by policing it for adequate patriotism. Meanwhile, it promotes the conversion of as much Title VI-produced knowledge as possible directly into intelligence.

Behind this act are right-wing pundits, namely Stanley Kurtz, Daniel Pipes, Martin Kramer and David Horowitz, who energetically seek to silence views on Israel that oppose their own. As with the precedent of the McCarthy hearings prompting anti-Communist purges at universities, one can imagine a growing sense of intimidation developing as Middle East scholarship is put under the direct gaze of lawmakers. More than intimidation, however, the mechanisms behind this attack lower the level of political analysis to a Manichean simplicity: "Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists." Partisan knowledge that props up the US and Israel lies on one side of the divide. Everything else is rubbish. The International Studies in Higher Education Act attempts not only to legislate away dissent, but to induce scholars of the Middle East to internalize this particular regime of stupidity.

Similarly, the Ford and Rockefeller foundations recently added to their grant agreements anti-terrorism clauses that are so maddeningly imprecise that universities could lose foundation support simply for sponsoring a lecture on the life of Nelson Mandela or showing a film about the 1960s US radical organization the Weathermen. Ford's grant agreements now state that the foundation will withdraw funding if university expenditures promote "violence, terrorism, bigotry or the destruction of any state," while the Rockefeller foundation demands that grantees not "directly or indirectly engage in, promote or support other organizations or individuals who engage in or promote terrorist activity." Predictably, objections over foundation support for Palestinian organizations precipitated the Ford foundation's rewrite of its grant agreements. Nine elite universities — including Harvard, Yale, Princeton and Columbia — have protested the clauses by writing letters of objection to the foundations, claiming the new language would "run up against the basic principles of protected speech on our campuses."[14] Sadly, even our legendary foundations don't seem immune to the produced stupidity of the "war on terror."

Mid-Air Suspension

Despite the madness of floating geographies and blind knowledge, there is cause for optimism, if only for the simple fact that we can refuse to be made stupid. There is a standing imperative for all those who can to expose the inanity of waging war on nouns and the cupidity of pauperizing one of the potentially richest nations on earth. Now, so completely out of the earshot of power, ideas and conscience have the opportunity to emancipate themselves from the status quo. Ideas and conscience must become more directly oppositional and political, not only out of respect for wisdom or a moral obligation, but because the imperial projects of the twenty-first century simply will not work. It is time for the US and Israeli governments to recognize that,

regardless of descent or faith, all peoples harbor within them that persistent itch to determine their own destiny. Increasingly, the flowers and candy American soldiers were told to expect on the streets of Iraq are improvised explosive devices and rocket-propelled grenades. The US imperial hand is stretched beyond its reach, and large areas of the world are poised to explode as the hand curls into a fist. These are dangerous times. World missions based on the belief that brute power "is" and everything else "is not" do not merely offend our notions of knowledge. They injure our sense of being human.

* Excerpted from MERIP no. 231; for the full text see www.merip.org

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Thought Control for Middle East Studies*

Joel Beinin

A band of neoconservative pundits with close ties to Israel have mounted a campaign against American scholars who study the Middle East. Martin Kramer, an Israeli-American and former director of the Dayan Center for Middle East Studies at Tel-Aviv University, has led the way in blaming these scholars for failing to warn the American public about the dangers of radical Islam, claiming they bear some of the responsibility for what befell us on September 11. In 2003, proponents of this position took their complaints to Congress. The Senate is expected to review them soon, as it discusses the Higher Education Reauthorization bill.

The neocons initially urged Congress to reduce the appropriation for Title VI of the Higher Education Act. Since 1958 this legislation has provided federal funding to universities to support study of less commonly taught languages, such as Arabic, Turkish, and Persian. Now they want to set up a political review board to discourage universities and scholars from tolerating bad thoughts.

Last year 118 international area studies centers, including 17 Middle East centers, received about $95 million for graduate fellowships, language training, and community outreach. The Middle East studies centers train the great majority of Americans who are competent in difficult Middle Eastern languages. No other institutions are now able to do this job on the required scale. Lack of Arabic speaking agents hindered the FBI from understanding some of the pre-September 11 clues that might have prevented the attacks. Fortunately for our safety, Congress rejected the neocon proposal to reduce support for foreign language study.

Having failed in their first effort, the neo-conservatives are now attempting to assert political control over teaching, research, and public programs

of the international area studies centers. In June 2003, Stanley Kurtz, a contributing editor of *National Review Online* and a fellow of the Hoover Institution, a conservative think tank located on the campus of Stanford University, testified before the House Committee on Education and the Workforce. His testimony summarized the arguments of Martin Kramer's attack on American Middle East studies. Kurtz asserted that "Title VI-funded programs in Middle Eastern Studies (and other area studies) tend to purvey extreme and one-sided criticisms of American foreign policy." He urged legislators to take action to ensure "balance." Kurtz, Kramer, and other neocons such as Daniel Pipes of the Middle East Forum who have written on this subject are concerned that Middle East scholars often say things American politicians don't want to hear--including criticism of U.S. Middle East policy and criticism of Israel's policies toward the Palestinians. Some might conclude that perhaps scholars who study the modern Middle East know something worth listening to. But the neocons already know what they want to hear. They have not been able to win in the marketplace of ideas. Critical and inconvenient thoughts continue to be expressed. So the neocons want the government to help crush wayward ideas.

Representative Peter Hoekstra (R-Michigan) obliged by introducing the International Studies in Higher Education Act, designated H.R. 3077. The bill passed the House of Representatives, after a suspension of the rules, by a voice vote in October 2003. The bill was then referred to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, which is now taking up the issue.

H.R. 3077 calls for establishing an International Higher Education Advisory Board with broad investigative powers "to study, monitor, apprise, and evaluate" activities of area studies centers supported by Title VI. The board is charged with ensuring that government-funded academic programs "reflect diverse perspectives and represent the full range of views" on international affairs. "Diverse perspectives," in this context, is code for limiting criticism of U.S. Middle East policy and of Israel.

Under the proposed legislation, three advisory board members would be appointed by the Secretary of Education; two of them from government agencies with national security responsibilities. The leaders of the House of Representatives and the Senate each would appoint two more.

This proposal represents a dangerous threat to academic freedom. The advisory board could investigate scholars and area studies centers, applying whatever criteria it pleases. The criteria almost certainly would be political. The whole point of the legislation is to impose political restraints on activities of Middle East centers.

The legislation, if passed, could actually diminish our national security. No first-rank university would accept direct government intrusion into the educational process. Such institutions would likely refuse to accept Title VI funding if it were subject to political oversight. The already dangerously low number of Americans competent in Middle Eastern languages would then be reduced.

Neocons believe it is better for the government to control teaching and research rather than to allow established policy to be questioned. But we are more likely to understand "why they hate us," and what we can do about it when old ideas can be challenged without fear. Freedom, including academic freedom, is the best way to make Americans safe.

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Behind the Battles Over US Middle East Studies

Zachary Lockman

An ideological campaign to reshape the academic study of the Middle East in the United States has begun to bear fruit on Capitol Hill. In late 2003, the House of Representatives passed legislation which would, for the first time, mandate that university-based Middle East studies centers "foster debate on American foreign policy from diverse perspectives" if they receive federal funding under Title VI of the Higher Education Act. The new legislation, which the Senate could consider in 2004, came after conservative allegations about abuse of Title VI funding by "extreme" and "one-sided" critics of US foreign policy supposedly ensconced at area studies centers across the country. In June 2003, the Select Education Subcommittee of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce convened brief hearings on "International Programs in Higher Education and Questions of Bias." There, the conservative writer Stanley Kurtz repeated charges he had levelled in the *National Review*: Title VI centers for the study of the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and elsewhere are infested by anti-American acolytes of the late Palestinian-American scholar and cultural critic Edward Said.[1] The resulting bill, HR 3077, provides for the creation of a new International Higher Education Advisory Board with the power to "monitor, apprise and evaluate a sample of activities supported under [Title VI] in order to provide recommendations to the Secretary and the Congress for the improvement of programs under the title and to ensure programs meet the purposes of the title." Four of the board's seven members would be appointed by Congress and at least two of the remaining three members would represent government agencies concerned with national security.

The fate of this particular bill is uncertain, and the Senate's crowded docket may not permit its discussion before the current session of Congress ends. But the provision in HR 3077 for an advisory board, which could be revived in subsequent draft legislation, raises the specter of an unprecedented degree of partisan political intrusion into university-based area studies. Should this advisory board come into being, Middle East studies centers seem likely to be the prime targets of its investigations.

Kurtz's criticisms of area studies before Congress bore a remarkable resemblance to a well-publicized indictment of Middle East studies, *Ivory Towers on Sand: The Failure of Middle East Studies in America*, penned by Martin Kramer. Kramer's slim volume, published by the pro-Israel Washington Institute for Near East Policy just after the September 11, 2001 attacks in New York and Washington, depicts academic Middle East studies as a cesspool of error, fuzzy thinking and anti-Americanism. Due to stifling political correctness, the book asserts, the output of scholars in the field is no longer of much use to the state or to the cause of national security.

Shortly after it appeared, *Ivory Towers* was favorably blurbed in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and the *Washington Post*, and prominently featured in the *New York Times*. It was also the inspiration for a spate of critical articles on the Middle East Studies Association (MESA), the main North American professional association of Middle East specialists, in such magazines as the *National Review*, *Commentary* and the *New Republic*. Echoing Kramer, commentators from the right attacked MESA because its annual meetings allegedly feature too many scholarly panels on topics they deem esoteric and irrelevant, and not enough panels on al-Qaeda, Palestinian suicide bombings and "anti-American incitement." As the motivating spirit of HR 3077 is found in the pages of *Ivory Towers*, and indeed Kramer specifically recommends (in the book and in subsequent columns) enhanced federal oversight of Title VI programs, the arguments of the book are worth examining in some detail.

Causing Eyes to Roll

"America's academics," Kramer writes, "have failed to predict or explain the major evolutions of Middle Eastern politics and society over the past two decades. Time and again, academics have been taken by surprise by their subjects; time and again, their paradigms have been swept away by events. Repeated failures have depleted the credibility of scholarship among the influential public. In Washington, the mere mention of academic Middle Eastern studies often causes eyes to roll." To explain how this came about, Kramer offers his interpretation of the development of Middle East studies in

America, portrayed as a fall from (relative) grace largely attributable to the pernicious influence of one bad doctrine, chiefly propagated by Edward Said through his 1979 book, *Orientalism*.

As Kramer tells the story, despite promising beginnings, things were already going poorly for Middle East studies soon after the US assumed a superpower's role in the region during World War II. Too many scholars were in the grip of overly optimistic notions like modernization theory, which posited that the entire world, including the Middle East, could and would be remade in the self-image of 1950s America. In the 1970s, the Lebanese civil war and then the Iranian revolution shattered this illusion, revealing the field's intellectual bankruptcy and leaving it without a dominant paradigm. Even worse, scholarly standards were appallingly low, which allowed "tenured incompetents" to secure scarce academic positions, breeding resentment among new graduates and graduate students. Government and foundation funding dropped, exacerbating the sense of crisis in the field.

For Kramer, this crisis accounts for the success of Said's *Orientalism*, and the transformation it almost single-handedly wrought in Middle East studies. Despite that book's grave flaws, it served perfectly as a weapon in the hands of insurgents pushing a radical political and theoretical agenda. Attacking established scholars and providing an alternative theory and politics, *Orientalism* helped the academic left — and especially the Arabs and Muslims among them — achieve intellectual and institutional hegemony in US Middle East studies. Kramer attributes what he sees as the abject failure of most scholars to resist the onslaught of Said's ideas to a loss of self-confidence, stemming from the failure of the models in which they had earlier put so much faith.

The damage *Orientalism* wreaked on US Middle East studies is considerable, in Kramer's assessment: "*Orientalism* made it acceptable, even expected, for scholars to spell out their own political commitments as a preface to anything they wrote or did. More than that, it enshrined an acceptable hierarchy of political commitments, with Palestine at the top, followed by the Arab nation and the Islamic world. They were the long-suffering victims of Western racism, American imperialism and Israeli Zionism — the three legs of the orientalist stool." Said's *Orientalism* also allegedly licensed political and ethnic tests for admission to the field: one has to be a leftist or, even better, an Arab or Muslim, whose numbers in the MESA membership rolls have increased dramatically. Despite their pretensions to intellectual superiority, however, the disciples of S aid who seized control of important faculty chairs in the 1980s have failed to do any better than their discredited predecessors in predicting or explaining the dynamics of Middle Eastern politics, precisely because their predictions are driven by their radical politics and trendy post-modernist theorizing, not by careful observation of the real world.

For example, Kramer argues, the Saidian left utterly failed to anticipate or account for the rise of Islamism; all they could manage were denunciations of purported American bias against Islam and Muslims. In the 1990s, liberals like John Esposito of Georgetown University, who understood that Said's radical message and tone were off-putting for the American mainstream, developed an upbeat, softened image of Islam and Islamism, downplaying their violent and threatening dimensions. Esposito and others seized on a string of would-be "Muslim Luthers" who could be touted as the forerunners of an imminent Islamic "reformation," all the while failing to notice the ways in which authoritarian Arab states were successfully promoting secularization and blocking the Islamist challenge. Similarly, because they were convinced that the Arab regimes were fragile and lacked legitimacy and social roots, liberal and leftist scholars grossly underestimated those regimes' durability. All the scholarly attention and foundation funding devoted to the study of "civil society" in the Arab world were thus based on vain illusions.

Most of Kramer's jibes in *Ivory Towers* are aimed at university-based academics interested in theory, such as the "post-orientalist fashion designers" (as he puts it) who teach about the Middle East and Islam at New York University. But he also derides the Social Science Research Council for its alleged failure — even refusal — to use the government funding it received to support policy-relevant research, and MESA for its rejection of the terms of the National Security Education Program, which originally required recipients of its scholarship aid to undertake a period of government service. The "new mandarins" who have assumed leadership of the field have lost the confidence of official Washington because of their haughty disdain for policymakers and their squandering of public funds on empty theorizing and worthless research projects. "In the centers of policy, defense and intelligence," Kramer avows, "consensus held that little could be learned from academics — not because they knew nothing, but because they deliberately withheld their knowledge from government, or organized it on the basis of arcane priorities or conflicting loyalties."

Think Tanks Ascendant

The self-inflicted crisis of academic Middle East studies is further manifested, Kramer argues, in the growing recourse that government and the media have to Middle East experts based at think tanks rather than at universities. The "intolerant climate" in academia — poisoned by blind obeisance to the ideas of Edward Said and his left-wing emulators — led many talented people to gravitate to the think tanks, where their work "often surpassed university-based research in clarity, style, thoroughness and cogency."

It would seem that Kramer's ideal model of the proper relationship between the world of scholarship and the world of policymaking, wherein scholars produce research that is directly relevant to the immediate needs of the state, comes from his own past and current institutional affiliations. After receiving his doctorate from Princeton University, Kramer moved to Israel, where he served as a research associate at Tel Aviv University's Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, and then as the center's associate director (1987-1995) and director (1995-2001). According to his website, he returned to the Dayan Center from the US in December 2003. The Dayan Center, which describes itself as "an interdisciplinary research center devoted to the study of the modern history and contemporary affairs of the Middle East," is named after the famous Israeli general and politician, but it incorporated and superceded an older institution, the Shiloah Institute, named after Reuven Shiloah, the founder of Israel's intelligence and security apparatus. Both the old and new names reflect the Center's ongoing role as not merely an scholarly institution (though there have certainly been some serious scholars associated with it), but also as a key site where senior Israeli military, foreign policy and intelligence officials can interact with academics working on policy-relevant issues.

While in the US, Kramer has held fellowships at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP), a think tank founded in 1985 which has sent a succession of associates — a well-known example being former US Ambassador to Israel Martin Indyk — straight into the ranks of government. In the same year that *Ivory Towers* appeared, Kramer assumed the post of editor of *Middle East Quarterly*, published by the Philadelphia-based Middle East Forum, a small think tank directed by Daniel Pipes, another hawkish commentator. Pipes established the Middle East Forum to "define and promote American interests" in the Middle East. Those interests are defined on the Forum's website as "strong ties with Israel, Turkey and other democracies as they emerge," human rights, "a stable supply and a low price of oil," and "the peaceful settlement of regional and international disputes."

Kramer is clearly correct to point to the greatly increased importance of think tanks in advising government and shaping public opinion about the Middle East. The leap to prominence of WINEP in the 1980s ended the status of the Middle East as a relative backwater for the Washington think tank industry, even for those institutions with the lengthiest pedigrees. Particularly following the September 11 attacks and continuing through the Iraq war, the large think tanks have significantly stepped up their Middle East-related activity. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, founded in 1910 to advance international cooperation, regularly hosts Middle East scholars as research fellows and produces an electronic newsletter called the *Arab Reform Bulletin*. The Council on Foreign Relations, established in 1921 as a sort of elite dinner club, publishes frequent Middle East-related articles in its influential journal *Foreign Affairs* and in July 2002 produced a widely read report on US public diplomacy in the Islamic world. The liberal Brookings Institution, established in 1927 with Carnegie and Rockefeller family funding, opened the Haim Saban Center for Middle East Policy, under the direction of Indyk, in May 2002. The conservative American Enterprise Institute, founded in 1943 to promote "limited government," "free enterprise" and a "strong foreign policy and national defense," arguably has been the most influential of the older think tanks upon the second Bush administration in matters related to the Middle East.

Other players include private contractors like the huge RAND Corporation, which entered the field after World War II to produce or fund research for the military and intelligence and other government agencies concerned with foreign policy. Still more competitors for the ear of power are based at what one observer calls "advocacy" think tanks, like the Center for Strategic and International Studies (1962), the Heritage Foundation (1973) and the Cato Institute (1977), which combine "policy research with aggressive marketing techniques."[2]

But there can be little doubt that WINEP, a member of the "advocacy" generation, has been the most successful advocate among the smaller group of Washington outfits that concern themselves solely with the Middle East. In its annual survey of media citations of think tanks, the liberal media watchdog Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting counted WINEP

among its top twenty for three years running in 2000, 2001 and 2002. In each of these years, WINEP was the only institution listed that focuses on a single global region outside the US. The Middle East Institute, founded in 1946, publishes a journal and organizes conferences but exercises relatively little political clout. Organizations established more recently, like the Middle East Policy Council, also do not have a powerful audience inside the government. However, the influence of research and the merit of that research are not necessarily one and the same thing — *Ivory Towers on Sand* being a case in point.

Selective Indictment

Some of the criticisms of US Middle East studies that Kramer sets forth in *Ivory Towers* are not entirely off-base. For example, Kramer depicts modernization theory as flawed, though he ignores the Cold War context that produced it and explains its popularity in psychological terms, as the product of Americans' missionary zeal and naïve optimism. Some of the prognoses offered by scholars in the early and mid-1990s about the moderation and fading away of Islamism were indeed overly broad and facile, though it is worth noting that in some countries (Turkey, for example) Islamist parties did in fact evolve in a democratic and moderate direction. Kramer is correct to note that both mainstream and political economy-oriented Middle East scholars generally failed to anticipate the rise of Islamist movements in the 1970s, though his book ignores the sophisticated analyses subsequently advanced by scholars, for example in *Political Islam*, edited by Joel Beinin and Joe Stork, *Islam, Politics and Social Movements*, edited by Edmund Burke III and Ira Lapidus, or Sami Zubaida's *Islam, the People and the State*.

Kramer also poses legitimate questions about whether large donations to Middle East studies programs come with strings attached, visible or invisible, that might affect faculty appointments, curriculum and programming. Several US universities have in fact accepted donations from wealthy Arabs, including members of some of the ruling families of the oil-rich Gulf states, to fund chairs or programs in Arab or Islamic studies. But it is not clear that these donations have exercised any untoward influence on scholarship or teaching at those institutions, and in any case American universities have also accepted, without much controversy, large donations for Jewish and Israel studies programs from people (Jews and non-Jews) strongly supportive of Israel.

Overall, Kramer's approach is deeply flawed as a history of Middle East studies as a scholarly field. Kramer blames Edward Said and *Orientalism* for everything that he believes has gone wrong with Middle East studies from the late 1970s onward, ignoring both the extensive critiques of modernization theory and Orientalism that preceded the publication of that book and the complex and often critical ways in which Said's intervention was received and developed. As *Ivory Towers* tells the story, every scholar in Middle East studies either slavishly embraced every pronouncement that fell from Said's lips, or else cringed in silent terror. But, for the most part, scholars in the field did not simply swallow Said's take on Orientalism hook, line and sinker but engaged with it critically, accepting what seemed useful and rejecting, recasting or developing other aspects. Kramer's psychologizing account of why so many scholars and students in Middle East studies were receptive to critiques of the field's hitherto dominant paradigms is shallow and tendentious.

Kramer claims in *Ivory Towers* that US Middle East scholars have repeatedly made predictions that did not come true. His accusations are sometimes on target, though he is rather selective. He does not, for example, take his colleague Daniel Pipes to task for inaccurately predicting in the early 1980s that Islamist activism would decline as oil prices fell. Nor, in his writings since the Iraq war, has he faulted Fouad Ajami of Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies — who is a favorite of the Bush administration — for claiming that all Iraqis would enthusiastically welcome US occupation. More broadly, Kramer's fixation on accurate prediction as the chief (or even sole) gauge of good scholarship is itself highly questionable. Most scholars do not in fact seek to predict the future or think they can do so; they try to interpret the past, discern and explain contemporary trends, and, at most, tentatively suggest what might happen in the future if present trends continue, which they very often do not. Of course, governments want accurate predictions in order to shape and implement effective policies, but Kramer's insistence that the primary goal of scholarship should be the satisfaction of that desire tells us a great deal about his conception of intellectual life and of the proper relationship between scholars and the state.

Just as many of the Israeli scholars associated with the Dayan Center have seen themselves as producing knowledge that will serve the security and foreign policy needs of Israel, so American scholars of the Middle East should, Kramer suggests, shape their

research agendas to provide the kinds of knowledge the US government will find most useful. His book demonstrates no interest whatsoever in the uses to which such knowledge might be put or in the question of the responsibility of intellectuals to maintain their independence, or indeed in what scholarship and intellectual life should really be about. His real complaint is that US Middle East studies has failed to produce knowledge useful to the state. Yet by ignoring larger political and institutional contexts, Kramer cannot understand or explain why so many scholars have grown less than enthusiastic about producing the kind of knowledge about the Middle East the government wants -- or conversely, why it is that the government and the media now routinely turn to analysts based in think tanks, along with former military and intelligence personnel, for policy-relevant knowledge.

Untenable Stance

But there is a larger issue at stake here. At the very heart of Kramer's approach is a dubious distinction between the trendy, arcane "theorizing" of the scholarship he condemns as at best irrelevant and at worst pernicious, on the one hand, and on the other the purportedly hard-headed, clear-sighted, theory-free observation of, and research on, the "real Middle East" in which he and scholars like him see themselves as engaging. Kramer is not wrong to suggest that there has been some fashionable theory-mongering in academia, including Middle East studies. But in *Ivory Towers* he goes well beyond this by now banal observation, and beyond a rejection of post-structuralism, to imply that all theories, paradigms and models are distorting and useless, because they get in the way of the direct, unmediated, accurate access to reality that he seems to believe he and those who think like him possess.

This is an extraordinarily naïve and unsophisticated understanding of how knowledge is produced, one that few scholars in the humanities and social sciences have taken seriously for a long time. Even among historians, once the most positivist of scholars, few would today argue that the facts "speak for themselves" in any simple sense. Almost all would acknowledge that deciding what should be construed as significant facts for the specific project of historical reconstruction in which they are engaged, choosing which are more relevant and important to the question at hand and which less so, and crafting a story in one particular way rather than another all involve making judgments that are rooted in some sense of how the world works — in short, in some theory or model or paradigm or vision, whether implicit or explicit, whether consciously acknowledged or not. Kramer's inability or refusal to grasp this suggests a grave lack of self-awareness, coupled with an alarming disinterest in some of the most important scholarly debates over the past four decades or so.

It is moreover a stance that Kramer does not maintain in practice. His assertions throughout the book are in fact based on a certain framework of interpretation, even as he insists that they are merely the product of his acute powers of observation, analysis and prediction. It is, for example, striking that at the very end of *Ivory Towers* Kramer explicitly lays out a political and moral judgment rooted in his own (theoretical) vision of the world: his insistence that a healthy, reconstructed Middle East studies must accept that the US "plays an essentially beneficent role in the world." He does not bother to tell readers why they should accept this vision of the US role in the world as true, nor does he even acknowledge that it may be something other than self-evidently true. The assertion nonetheless undermines his avowed epistemological stance and graphically demonstrates that it is untenable.

In Search of Heroes

"What will it take to heal Middle Eastern studies," Kramer asks in his conclusion, "if they can be healed at all?" Here Kramer explicitly counterposes the theorizing in which too many academics have indulged to the empirical study of "the Middle East itself," while also advocating renewed attention to "the very rich patrimony of scholarly orientalism." "Orientalism had heroes," Kramer continues. "Middle Eastern studies have none, and they never will, unless and until scholars of the Middle East restore some continuity with the great tradition," a continuity ruptured by the foolish social science models of the 1950s and 1960s and then by the destruction wrought by Said and his post-modernist devotees. In the longer run, despite the resistance of the radical mandarins, "breakthroughs will come from individual scholars, often laboring on the margins. As the dominant paradigms grow ever more elaborate, inefficient and insufficient, they will begin to shift. There will be more confessions [of failure] by senior scholars, and more defections by their young protégés."

To hasten this shift, Kramer suggests that the federal government reform the process it uses to decide which Title VI-funded national resource centers, including centers for Middle East studies, receive funding, by including government officials in the

review process and encouraging more attention to public outreach activities. More broadly, Congress should hold hearings "on the contribution of Middle Eastern studies to American public policy," with testimony not only from academics but from government officials, directors of think tanks and others as well. While such steps might help, Kramer concludes, ultimately the field will have to heal itself by overcoming its irrelevance and its intolerance of intellectual and political diversity. Its new leaders will have to forge a different kind of relationship with "the world beyond the campus," based on the aforementioned principle that "the United States plays an essentially beneficent role in the world." Such lines are the basis of worries within and outside academic Middle East studies that HR 3077, the bill which resulted from the June 2003 hearing Kramer called for, is an attempt to stifle critical voices and diminish the autonomy of American institutions of higher education and long-established principles of academic freedom.

Good Cop, Bad Cop

These worries are heightened by other activities of Kramer's employer, the Middle East Forum, activities that can be seen as complementary to the intellectually simplistic critique of US Middle East studies in *Ivory Towers*. One might even go so far as to portray Kramer and Forum director Daniel Pipes as, respectively, the "good cop" and "bad cop" of the far right end of the Middle East studies spectrum.

A year after the September 11 attacks, the Middle East Forum launched a new initiative directly targeting academic Middle East studies. This is a website called Campus Watch, ostensibly established to "review and critique Middle East studies in North America, with an aim to improving them." Campus Watch initiated its campaign by attacking eight professors of Middle East or Islamic studies from institutions around the country for what Pipes deemed unacceptable views about Islam, Islamism, Palestinian rights or US policy in the region; the website also cited 14 universities for similar sins. Campus Watch also invited college students and others to monitor their professors and send in classroom statements which they deemed anti-Israel or anti-American, helping Campus Watch compile "dossiers" on suspect faculty and academic institutions.

The website prompted a storm of protest: over 100 professors from around the country sent messages denouncing Campus Watch for its crude attempt to silence debate about the Middle East and the airing of critical views by insinuating that the scholars under attack had been apologists for terrorism or were somehow unpatriotic. To show solidarity with their beleaguered fellow scholars, many of the protesters demanded that they too be added to Campus Watch's blacklist.[3] Campus Watch thereupon compounded the damage it had already done by listing the names of those who had written to protest its smear campaign under a heading which stated that they had done so "in defense of apologists for Palestinian violence and militant Islam."

This was of course an egregious falsehood, because those who had written Campus Watch in protest did not for a minute accept Campus Watch's original allegation that the first eight scholars it had attacked were apologists for terrorism. They had written to denounce Campus Watch for launching what they saw as a vicious attack, by means of distortion and innuendo, on respectable scholars and to uphold academic freedom, the right of free speech and the importance to a democratic society of open discussion of issues of public concern.

The protests and considerable media interest (and criticism) apparently led Campus Watch to remove the web pages attacking the eight scholars as well as pages containing dossiers on individual professors. Throughout the flap, defenders of Campus Watch ridiculed critics who used the word "McCarthyism" to describe the website's self-appointed mission to expose "the mixing of politics with scholarship." But, speaking at right-wing activist David Horowitz's Restoration Weekend in November 2003, Pipes hinted that Campus Watch has its own trouble keeping them separate: "I flatter myself perhaps in thinking that the rather subdued academic response to the war in Iraq in March and April may have been, in part, due to our work."

Slippery Slope?

Martin Kramer, Pipes' partner in the campaign to reorient the politics of US Middle East and area studies in a rightward direction, mocks Middle East scholars suspicious of the advisory board that Senate passage and presidential signature of HR 3077 would create, if the bill is not amended. If they do not like outside scrutiny of their activities, he remarks, they can "get off the federal dole" and eschew Title VI monies entirely. The advisory board will not intimidate professors who disapprove of US Middle East policy, adds Kramer, because the "full range of views" the board is designed to protect "necessarily includes every view and excludes none." Of course, one needs to accept the major premise of *Ivory Towers* — university students are not currently

exposed to a "full range of views" — to consider such a board necessary. Moreover, in light of other hostility expressed toward academic Middle East studies since the September 11 attacks, the concerns of Middle East scholars are not so surprising.

Some right-wing critics have gone beyond Kramer's proposals for "reform" of the Title VI program and called for federal funding of Middle East studies to be reduced or cut off. Others have urged that the secretary of education use his control over Title VI funding to mandate "balance" and "diversity" in teaching about the Middle East, and particularly about the Arab-Israeli conflict. In the present context, "balance" and "diversity" seem to be code words for pressuring colleges and universities to muzzle critics of US and Israeli policies and promote viewpoints more congenial to those of the Bush administration and the Sharon government. This was made explicit in proposals put forward by a number of members of Congress. In April 2003, for example, Sen. Rick Santorum (R-PA) announced plans to introduce legislation that would cut off federal funding to American colleges and universities that were deemed to be permitting faculty, students and student organizations to openly criticize Israel, since Santorum seems to regard all such criticism as inherently anti-Semitic. Meanwhile, Santorum's colleague Sen. Sam Brownback (R-KS) proposed the creation of a federal commission to investigate alleged anti-Semitism on campus — again defined rather broadly to include virtually all criticism of Israeli policies.

"Diversity" as defined by Kramer and his fellow conservative Stanley Kurtz, the main champion of HR 3077, ideally means inclusion of "supporters of US policy" on the faculties that are supposedly now turning American students against their own country. But Kramer and Kurtz realize the government cannot force the alleged legions of leftist professors to abandon their control of departmental hiring as they once abandoned the barricades. So, as Kurtz put it at a WINEP forum on HR 3077, the bill offers "gentle" incentives for academics to mend their wayward ways. The proposed advisory board, he hopes, will recommend funding increases for Title VI centers whose graduates go on to government service and whose outreach programs present "many viewpoints of foreign policy." Given that the "diversity" of Title VI centers' output is in the eye of the beholder, and given the clear predilection of the board's proponents for anti-intellectual ways of thinking, the composition and activities of the advisory board would likely become the bone of endless contention. Should HR 3077 or something like it pass into law, the ideological battles within and about Middle East studies in the United States will have entered a new phase — but they will be far from over.

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Endnotes

[1] See Stanley Kurtz, "Studying Title VI," *National Review Online*, June 16, 2003, at http://www.nationalreview.com/kurtz/kurtz061603.asp and Stanley Kurtz, "Reforming the Campus," *National Review Online*, October 14, 2003, at http://www.nationalreview.com/kurtz/kurtz20031014 0905.asp.

[2] The term "think tank" seems to go back to World War II and originally referred to a "secure room or environment where defense scientists and military planners could meet to discuss strategy." See Donald E. Abelson, "Think Tanks and US Foreign Policy: An Historical Perspective," *US Foreign Policy Agenda*, November 2002, at: http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itps/1102/ijpe/ijpe1102.htm. By the end of the twentieth century, there were an estimated 2,000 organizations engaged in policy analysis based in the US, a substantial proportion of them focused on foreign policy and international relations. The 1970s also witnessed the establishment of "a new generation of professional graduate schools of public policy," many of whose graduates went on to work for policy-oriented think tanks rather than in colleges and universities. See Lisa Anderson, "The Scholar and the Practitioner: Perspectives on Social Science and Public Policy," Leonard Hastings Schoff Memorial Lecture, Fall 2000, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University (unpublished), p. 21.

[3] I should note that I was one of those who wrote Campus Watch in protest and asked that my name be added to its blacklist, in solidarity with the scholars under attack.

Further Info

For background on WINEP and its role in policymaking debates, see Joel Beinin, "Pro-Israel Hawks and the Second Gulf War," *Middle East Report Online*, April 6, 2003.

For more on right-leaning Middle East scholars and commentators, see Robert Blecher, "'Free People

Will Set the Course of History': Intellectuals, Democracy and American Empire," *Middle East Report Online*,March 2003.

Also see Adam Sabra, "What Is Wrong with *What Went Wrong?*" *Middle East Report Online*, August 2003.

The Task Force on Middle East Anthropology's Action Alert on HR 3077 is available online.

Some Thoughts Subsequent to September 11th

Bruce Cumings

National Security and the Social Sciences

My last observation will strike many readers as crude, but I think the current crisis aptly demonstrates the turn from actually-existing reality that has activated the social sciences (and in a different way, the humanities) for at least the past two decades. I don't know what game theory or the rational choice paradigm can teach us either about the tragedy that befell us on September 11th, or the new war we have embarked upon. What mix of costs and benefits, signals and "noise", "states" (of being, brought into being, etc.), incentives and deterrents, dependent and independent variables, transparencies and moral hazards, would have dissuaded the 19 suicide bombers from their task, or will predict the consequences of the current war in Afghanistan? Meanwhile the most reviled form of inquiry for self-described "cutting edge" social scientists in the past two decades, one usually caricatured as "area studies" or "ethnography" or a similar epithet, a prejudice that has led to the abject national decline of the sub-disciplines of comparative politics, political sociology and economic history, today produces articles and papers that we read with a devouring energy, because in them we have found a person who actually knows something about Afghanistan, or can read Pashto.

Almost daily the papers report the government crying out for speakers of Pashto, Uzbek, Arabic, and other presumably esoteric languages, yet the interest is once again not in the intrinsic merits of studying and knowing these things, but how the knowers of the esoteric and the exotic can be used by intelligence agencies — agencies that are themselves hostage to whatever may be in the minds of the top policymakers making the key decisions as administrations come and go in Washington. The most likely beneficiary of the sudden new interest in South Asia and the Middle East is the National Security Education Program, which in its requirement of government service (and preferably national security service) is a major step backward from the early cold war years when massive Ford Foundation funding created one "area center" after another. That national program was premised on the cold war need for knowing the enemy, true, but it placed the intelligence and national security function where it belonged, namely, as one possible career alternative for students, with most beneficiaries becoming scholars of the "areas" and languages they studied rather than intelligence operatives. I have been critical of leaders in that early period for the compromises they made with the government and the Central Intelligence Agency, but they look like seers and geniuses in the current political atmosphere.

Certainly one useful and even critical role for the Social Science Research Council today would be once again to spell out the requirements of a national program that would simultaneously begin to create the expertise that will be needed in a 21st century that is beginning to look like a very long and difficult one, and that would protect the academic and intellectual integrity of the project. In this way social scientists can well serve the American people — and American democracy — in our current crisis.

Bruce Cumings is Professor of History at the University of Chicago. Excerpted from his article "Some Thoughts Subsequent to September 11th" written for the Social Science Research Council. In the days following September 11, the SSRC asked social scientists from around the world to contribute essays to a website called "After September 11." The Council's website (www.ssrc.org) provides a link to Lisa Anderson's Presidential Address to the Middle East Studies Association (Anderson is also chair of the SSRC Board of Directors). Another link is to a bibliography of articles on the subject of H.R. 3077, Title VI, and Middle East Studies.

U.S. Denies Cuban Scholars Entry to Attend a Meeting

Nina Bernstein
The New York Times, October 1, 2004

The Bush administration has denied entry to all 61 Cuban scholars scheduled to participate in the Latin American Studies Association's international congress in Las Vegas next week, deeming them "detrimental to the interests of the United States."

The last-minute move, which comes on the heels of new restrictions on travel by Americans to Cuba, is provoking anger and dismay among leading American academics, who called it an unprecedented effort to sever scholarly exchanges that have been conducted since 1979.

Darla Jordan, a spokeswoman for the State Department, said that the decision reflected the stricter policies toward Cuba announced last year by President Bush as a strategy to hasten the end of Fidel Castro's government. Citing 68 members of the opposition in Cuba who remain in prison there after being arrested in 2003, she said, "We will not have business as usual with the regime that so outrageously violates the human rights of the peaceful opposition."

But organizers of the conference, to be held next Thursday through Saturday, said they learned of the denial only on Tuesday, after months of assurances by State Department officials that the visas were on track. Those rejected include poets, sociologists, art historians and economists, among them a professor who was a visiting scholar at Harvard last fall and others who have frequently lectured at leading American universities.

"This is attacking one of the fundamental principles of academic life in the United States, which is freedom of inquiry, " said Marysa Navarro, a historian at Dartmouth who is president of the association, the world's largest academic organization for individuals and institutions that study Latin America. "I asked when was the decision made, and I was told that it was very recent and it was very high up, so it was either the secretary of state or the White House."

"It's an election year," she added, "and I think we're being held hostage to satisfy that sector of the U.S. electorate which is against any kind of relations with Cuba."

The Bush administration has undertaken tough measures against Cuba in the pre-election season that administration officials say are intended to help establish Cuba as a democratic free-market state. But critics say the measures are chiefly devised to strengthen the incumbent's backing among Cuban-Americans in Florida, a swing state.

"Restricting access of Cuban academics to the United States is consistent with the overall tightening of our policy," Ms. Jordan said, noting that Cuban academic institutions are state run. "Our policy is not about restricting academic exchanges or freedom of expression. It is the Castro regime that does that through its restrictive issuance of passports and exit permits only to those academics on whom it can rely to promote its agenda of repression and misrepresentation about Cuba and the United States."

But this characterization of the invited Cuban academics was angrily rejected by John Coatsworth, director of the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies at Harvard. "I can tell you with a certainty that that's a lie," Professor Coatsworth said, noting that among the scholars denied visas are five contributing authors to a book on the Cuban economy in the early 20th century, which the center is publishing next month.

He said that one, Omar Everleny Pérez Villanueva, who was a visiting scholar at Harvard last fall, even wrote his dissertation on the benefits of direct foreign investment in Cuba.

"They are honest, they're courageous, they do superb work," Professor Coatsworth said. "These are the kind of people who let the Soviet Union become Russia. This policy of restricting people-to-people contacts only benefits those who would benefit from violent change instead of a peaceful transition."

Professor Navarro said that the United States had not imposed blanket restrictions on scholars from other countries where political dissidents are jailed. Among the presenters at the conference are four scholars

from China who apparently had no difficulty with visas, she said.

Though 75 percent of the association's 5,000 members live in the United States, its international congress, held every 18 months, draws participants from all over the world. Forty-five sessions out of 600 will have to be cancelled, organizers said, including panels on contemporary Cuban poetry, gender in Cuban literature, and Cuban agriculture.

The message it confirms to the rest of the world, said Kristin Ruggiero, a historian who directs the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, "is that the borders are closing."

Foundations' Limits on Grants Draw Fire From Universities

Justin Pope
Philadelphia Inquirer, May 06, 2004

When evidence surfaced last year that grants from a prominent charitable foundation had funded a Palestinian group accused of anti-Israel activities, Jewish leaders called for new restrictions to prevent grant money from being used to support terrorism.

But now, some top universities are protesting language the Ford Foundation has added to its grant conditions, saying the changes could threaten academic freedom by inhibiting campus presentations of partisan lectures or films.

In a letter sent to the New York-based foundation last week, the provosts of nine prominent schools — including the University of Pennsylvania, Harvard, Yale, Princeton and MIT — said they were not in a position to regulate everything said by students and faculty members who benefit from Ford grants.

"Whatever university administrators may think of the merits of the political views expressed, these fall under the protection of freedom of academic speech," they wrote.

Several schools, including the University of Michigan, have privately raised similar concerns, though the Ford Foundation said more than two dozen universities had signed the new grant agreements without comment.

A similar protest was lodged with the smaller Rockefeller Foundation, which implemented similar changes in its policy. The two foundations donated a combined $50 million to U.S. higher education last year.

The controversy began last fall when the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, a news service, reported that Ford money had supported several groups that engaged in anti-Israel activities at a 2001 U.N. conference.

In November, after meeting with Jewish leaders, Ford announced it would cut funding for a group called the Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and would add language to grant agreements prohibiting recipients from promoting violence, terrorism, bigotry, or calls for the destruction of any nation-state.

Jewish groups reiterated this week that they considered the foundations' steps reasonable. They also emphasized that, as private entities, the foundations may attach any strings they wish to their contributions.

"My first reaction was that this was a bit of a scare tactic, that if universities are in fact sponsoring or promoting film festivals which in some way celebrate violence or bigotry, then perhaps they've begun to lose their moral compass," said David Harris, executive director of the American Jewish Committee.

Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, called it a perversion" to suggest that support for terrorism fell under academic freedom.

Other schools to sign the provosts' letter were Stanford, Cornell, Columbia, and the University of Chicago.

Alex Wilde, a spokesman for the Ford Foundation, said his organization was committed to academic freedom and planned to discuss the concerns with the schools.

A Rockefeller spokesman said he believed that the language in its policy was reasonable. It was added, he said, as part of a regular review to make sure the Rockefeller funds are used appropriately, as well as in response to federal rules that govern dealings with organizations that support terrorism.

http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/news/nation/8598978.htm?template=contentModules/printstory.jsp

Counterterrorism at Miami Airport?

A Personal Experience by Ali A. Mazrui

There was a time during the Roman Empire when Christians were thrown to the lions for sport. Modern day religious persecution is rarely so callous. But are there global war-games unfolding at the expense of the Muslim world in this day and age?

Muslims under direct military occupation include Iraq, Palestine and Afghanistan. Muslims militarily struggling for self-determination include Chechnya and Kashmir. Muslims on the radar screen for possible military intervention by Western powers include Iran, Syria and Somalia. Muslims being harassed under new anti-terrorist legislation already include Tanzania, Kenya, potentially South Africa and a host of other countries under pressure from the Bush administration.

Muslims under other methods of oppression include the appalling suffering of the Muslims of Gujerat in India. In comparative number of victims, Muslims of the world are more sinned against than sinning.

Muslims who are harassed at American and international airports are beginning to multiply. On August 3, 2003, on arrival from overseas, I was detained at Miami airport for seven hours under repeated interrogation. Detaining a 70-year-old man as a potential terrorist is a case-study of the new paranoia at airports.

I was interrogated by (a) immigration; (b) customs; and (c) Homeland Security and the Joint Terrorism Task Force in that order. They all focused on security. Paradoxically, the last interrogators were the most apologetic and the most courteous. But they still questioned me behind closed doors. Of course, I was truthful about all the Muslim organizations I belonged to, including the Muslim American Congress, the old American Muslim Council and the Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy [CSID].

In fairness to the Joint Terrorism Task Force, they subsequently booked me a hotel room for the night in Miami and paid for it. They arranged for me to be taken to the airport hotel. And they paid for my dinner that night (giving me $25 for it). The Homeland Security interrogators were the most friendly. Yet I felt that I would not have been kept for so long if they had not been interested in interrogating me personally. I was kept waiting until they arrived.

After living in the United States for more than a quarter of a century, did I arouse suspicion on August 3, 2003 because of where I was coming from? Was I coming back from Afghanistan? Had I visited Baghdad? Perhaps I was coming back from Indonesia?

NEGATIVE to all of those! I was coming back from Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbean. My primary mission in Trinidad had almost nothing to do with Islam. I had been a keynote speaker to mark Emancipation Day — commemorating the end of slavery in the nineteenth century.

The questions I was asked at Miami on my return included whether I believed in Jihad and what did I understand by jihad? What denomination of Islam did I belong to? Since I was a Sunni, why was I not a Shi'a? I reacted: "If you were a Catholic, and I asked you why were not you a Protestant, how would you deal with that?"

Since I was coming from Trinidad and Tobago, had I seen Yaseen Abubakar, the Islamic militant who had held the whole cabinet of Trinidad hostage in the Parliament building nearly fifteen years earlier? That was a much more sophisticated question.

I replied at Miami Airport that I had not met Abubakar, but I had tried to see him in Trinidad. After all, I was teaching a course at Cornell on "Islam in the Black Experience." I had also taught "Islam in

World Affairs" at Binghamton. It was my business to study the Abubakars of this world!

The Miami airport officials allowed me one phone call. I called my home in Binghamton and raised the alarm. My wife mobilized my three adult sons and their families. She also mobilized some colleagues at Binghamton University. Their phone calls of alarm to the relevant authorities might have speeded up my release. My ordeal at Miami airport ended amicably, with a few embarrassed smiles. However, I am not complacent. I am afraid it could happen again, the Lord preserve us. But we shall not be intimidated. Amen.

Ali A. Mazrui is Director, Institute of Global Cultural Studies and Albert Schweitzer Professor in the Humanities Binghamton University State University of New York at Binghamton, New York, and Chancellor, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya.

Fear of Flying

Asma Abdel Halim

I used to look forward to taking an Arabic book on domestic and international flights. The long overseas flights were a good chance to catch up on my reading of hard-to-get Arabic literature. Not only were those books good companions, they were usually a conversation starter with the person sitting next to me. Some people would want to know what language I was reading, others might wonder why I was reading a book from the back (Arabic goes from right to left); and we would continue to have friendly conversations from then on.

Alas! I have been "terrorized" out of this pleasure. Arabic scripture has become so familiar to many people since 9/11, the sight of it arouses suspicion rather than curiosity. People no longer seem interested in the unique feature of reading a book from the back, rather some of them may have that look of whether someone with an Arabic book should be allowed on the airplane.

It is not just the looks of fellow passengers that prompted me to give up my pleasurable reading in waiting areas and in the flight. It is my own fears of what could happen if I were "caught" with such publications. Stories such as that of Abdalla Higazy who was detained when a New York City hotel employee fabricated a story about finding a pilot's radio in his room after September 11th are especially frightening. The fabrication was uncovered when the pilot who owned the device showed up to collect it. What caught my attention in that story was how the person who fabricated the story made Higazy look dangerous; he claimed that he found the radio on top of a copy of the Qura'n. This last part of the fabrication was repeated so often in the media that I felt a copy of the Qura'n could be seen as an explosive device. This caused the disappearance of another book that used to be a constant companion in my travels. A small copy of the Qura'n that my mother thought was the best guardian wherever I might be. Not any more: that copy could be the only suspicious part of my luggage. I do not look Middle Eastern, neither do I travel on a passport from the region, but I have a name that fits the suspicious parameters. Add that name to a copy of the Qura'n and there is no knowing what could happen to me.

The name and place of birth alone were the source of some scrutiny at London's Heathrow airport when I asked if I could be moved from the seat assigned to me in the back of the aircraft to a seat "as far in the front as possible." My passport was checked and rechecked at every point and I was moved just about four rows up. Inside the airplane a certain person stood up when I did, just to exercise my legs, as recommended in the video played by the airline, and followed me when I stood up again and walked to the bathroom. Call me paranoid, but this is exactly my point, I have turned into one suspicious and suspected traveller. My ease in the airplane has been replaced by, maybe unfounded, fear of my surroundings. I am constantly going out of my way to absolve myself of all possible liabilities, even though the airlines have never asked me to leave certain baggage home. I started to understand the culture of fear that Michael Moore pointed in his acclaimed "Bowling for Columbine."

Constitutional rights are not guaranteed any more and the media can draw up a 'mythical suspect', all this creates the fearful American public. The fear has become mutual: we all have something to be afraid of. May Allah help us all.

Announcements: The African Activist Archive Project, "No Easy Victories" Project, and a Mellon Project on Electronic Resources for Scholars

"As someone who was active in the struggle against apartheid inside South Africa and later for two decades in the U.S., I believe it is extremely important that the history of the solidarity movement be documented." — Dumisani S. Kumalo, South African Ambassador to the UN, letter to David Wiley, 20 December 2002

The African Studies Center at Michigan State University in East Lansing, MI, USA, announces the *African Activist Archive Project* that is working to preserve for history the record of activities of U.S. organizations and individuals that supported African struggles for freedom and had significant collective impact on U.S. policy during the period 1950-1994. One of the most significant U.S. political movements in the second half of the twentieth century, it included community activists, college/university students & faculty, churches, unions, city and county councils, state governments, and others. This democratization of foreign policy was unprecedented, and it is important that the lessons learned be documented for the benefit of ongoing social justice activism. This project will focus mainly (but not exclusively) on smaller local and regional organizations that supported the struggle against colonialism and white minority rule in Africa, especially in Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. Their advocacy reached a peak in the U.S. anti-apartheid movement in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The project's web site contains an expanding amount of material including a **Directory of African Activist Archives** (with an international section for non-U.S. solidarity organizations) and a series of **Historical Reminiscences** by activists. In the future historical documents and audio material will be added. For more information visit the web site or contact Richard Knight, Project Director, African Activist Archive Project, 521 West 122nd Street, Suite 61, New York, NY 10027 (212) 663-5989.

In the "No Easy Victories" project, Bill Minter, Charles Cobb Jr. and Gail Hovey are interviewing a number of activists about their personal histories and memories of the struggles. Their website (http://www.solidarityresearch.org) is a work in progress, designed to support research on international solidarity. As of early 2004 there are only two sections of the site: (1) a private section for use by editors and writers working on a book with the working title of *No Easy Victories: African Liberation and American Activists over a Half Century, 1950-2000*, and (2) selected public material associated with that project, including a working bibliography for that project. Additional sections will be added to this home page as they are developed.

Allen Isaacman and Bill Minter are involved in a Mellon Project on electronic resources for scholars that includes collecting some of the early histories of the anti-apartheid movement and to make them available digitally on their Aluka site. The African Activist Archive Project is negotiating for Richard Knight to prepare a lot of ACOA fact sheets and the Southern Africa Magazine for digitizing that would be available as well on the African Activist Project website.