



## UK Foreign Secretary lectures on Building Coalitions and Winning Consent

The British Foreign Secretary, the Rt. Hon. David Miliband MP, was invited by the Centre to give a lecture at the Taylor Institution on 21st May on the topic, 'Our Shared Future: Building Coalitions and Winning Consent'. Underpinning his talk was an awareness of the necessity for dialogue with Muslim-majority countries to establish shared goals.

He acknowledged that British history, from the times of the Crusades through the colonial period to the recent invasion of Iraq, may arouse distrust and resentment. Mr Miliband went on to point to the more positive examples of interchange and mutual contribution, in which cultures have come together to learn from one another. Arguing for a deeper understanding of the Muslim world, and acknowledging that labels such as 'moderate' and 'extremist' are unhelpful, the Foreign Secretary proposed a template for people with diverse views to work together. He called for a broad coalition of states and political movements, and recognized that progress would involve citizens' consent.

The Foreign Secretary paid tribute to the Centre for its notable contribution to scholarship and debate in the UK. Referring to his tour of the Centre's new building, he commented, "It is remarkable how distinctively Islamic the architecture is. Yet at the same time, the complex as a whole, with its towers, quadrangle, cloisters, and—eventually—gardens, is



*The Rt Hon David Miliband MP delivering his lecture*

also distinctively Oxford. When Edward Gibbon suggested in the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* that if Charles Martel had lost the battle of Poitiers, Oxford would have become an Al-Azhar of the Cotswolds, he could not imagine a future in which both Islamic and Christian institutions could coexist here by consent and through toleration. It can be so. It should be so."

## Shaikh Abdul Rahman Al-Sudais Imam of the Holy Mosque visits the Centre



*Shaikh Dr Abdul Rahman Al-Sudais with Dr Abdullah Nasseef and the Registrar at the new building*

While on a tour of the United Kingdom, Shaikh Dr Abdul Rahman bin Abdulaziz Al-Sudais, Imam of the Holy Mosque in Makkah, visited the Centre, where he was received by the Chairman of the Trustees, Dr Abdullah Nasseef. While at the Centre he delivered a lecture on the importance of dialogue and

understanding between the Islamic and Western worlds. He noted that the human community has been honoured by God with a variety of nations and peoples so that they could know one another.

Shaikh Sudais stated that the differences in culture, ideas, and religion are part of the grand design for humanity. These differences should not be a cause for conflict between people but rather they should strive to work together for the common good. He emphasized that Islam calls for moderation in all things, and there was a need to encourage tolerance and understanding in relationships with people of different faiths.

His lecture was attended by representatives of different community organizations, faith groups, and members of the University. Shaikh Al-Sudais thanked the Centre for its role in promoting a better understanding of Islam and Muslim societies. Now more than ever, he said, there was a need for institutions that could form a bridge between cultures and civilizations in the Islamic world and the West.

## Visiting Fellowships and Scholars

**Professor Tariq Rahman**, Director of the National Institute of Pakistan Studies at Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan, has been awarded the Abdul Aziz Al Mutawa Visiting Fellowship. While at the Centre, Professor Rahman will be researching aspects of social history of the Urdu language.

**Dr Yang Guiping**, from the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at the Central University for Nationalities, Beijing, China, has been appointed a Visiting Research Associate at the Centre for the 2009–2010 academic year. She will undertake research on China's Hui Muslim minority.

**Dr Hamza Alsalem**, from the Faculty of Economics at the Prince Sultan University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, has been appointed a Visiting Research Associate at Oxford. While at the Centre, Dr Alsalem will be conducting research into the field of Islamic banking, particularly on the issue of decoupling paper money from gold.

## Colloquium on Contemporary Muslim Societies

In June the Centre held a well-attended colloquium which offered graduate and undergraduate students at Oxford the opportunity to present works in progress to their peers and fellow scholars.

# International Contacts

## UAE

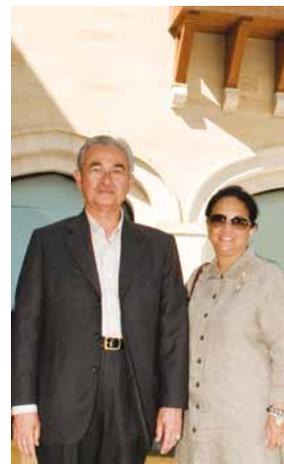


*HE Dr Al Mazrouei and HE Mr Abdul Rahman Al Mutaiwee with the Registrar*

In August the Centre received HE Dr Hamdan Al Mazrouei, Chairman of the Islamic Affairs and Endowments Authority, and HE Mr Abdul Rahman Al Mutaiwee, the UAE's Ambassador to the UK. For many years the government of the UAE has supported the Centre's work, and Dr Hamdan Al Mazrouei expressed interest in strengthening ties between foundations in the UAE and the Centre. During a visit to the Centre's new building, Dr Hamdan Al Mazrouei remarked on the blend of traditional Islamic and Oxford architecture reflected in its design.

## Malaysia

Tun Abdullah Badawi, former Prime Minister of Malaysia, visited the Centre's new building to view the progress on the Malaysia Auditorium. He was accompanied by his wife, Toh Puan Jeanne Abdullah, and the Malaysian High Commissioner to the UK, Datuk Abdul Aziz Mohamad. Tun Abdullah expressed his satisfaction with the project as well as the hope that the existing Malaysian links with the Centre would be strengthened.



*Tun Abdullah Badawi and Toh Puan Jeanne at the Malaysia Auditorium in the new building*

## Preparing Tomorrow's Leaders

The Centre conducted the fourth annual summer school of the Young Muslim Leadership Programme at Wadham College, Oxford. The Programme, which is organized jointly by the Centre and the Prince's Charities, sponsors a two-week residential summer school for young British Muslim men and women who have shown leadership potential in their respective careers.

The Programme encourages participants to consider together the diverse ways in which they can engage with the wider society.



*Participants outside Wadham College*

The summer school is structured around workshops, lectures, discussion groups, and visits to principal national institutions of government, business, and public life. The formal programme includes presentations by senior academics, representatives of community organizations, the diplomatic service, the media, and national and local government officials.

There were also opportunities for informal meetings with public figures. This year, they included the Rt. Hon. Stephen Timms MP, Mr Simon Hughes MP, and Mr Alan Duncan MP.

Throughout the summer school discussion focused on the future local and national roles of participants: how they could best serve the aspirations and needs of the Muslim community as a whole, and play an active role in the future of their country.

Follow-up activities now form an important part of the Young Muslim Leadership Programme. The Centre facilitates continued contact with and among alumni of the Programme, in order to sustain networks for continued exchange of ideas and experiences.

## Trustees hold Annual Meeting



HE Sheikh  
Mohammad Al Sabah

The Centre's Board of Trustees held their annual general meeting in Oxford in July. They reviewed the Centre's academic and outreach activities over the preceding year and set priorities for the future. This meeting marked the first opportunity for HE Sheikh Mohammad Al Sabah to attend since his election last year to the Board of Trustees.

HE Sheikh Mohammad has a PhD in Economics from Harvard University and was a Professor of Economics at Kuwait University in the late 1970s and early 1980s before entering the foreign service of Kuwait. From 1993 to 2001 he served as the Ambassador of Kuwait to the United States. Following several ministerial positions he was appointed as Foreign Minister in 2003; he is currently Deputy Prime Minister. HE Sheikh Mohammad Al Sabah joins a distinguished group of international figures on the Centre's Board, which includes

the President of Turkey and respected scholars from different parts of the world.

At a dinner in honour of the Trustees, the Director of the Centre said: "We are delighted to welcome Sheikh Mohammad Al Sabah on the Board of Trustees. Given his distinguished academic career, and his service to his nation and the wider international community, he brings very valuable qualities to our Board." Other guests at the dinner included the Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire as well as Heads of Oxford Colleges, members of the diplomatic corps, and academics from the US, Britain, and Europe. This meeting coincided with the Centre's International Academic Committee meeting.

The Very Reverend Christopher Lewis, Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, was also appointed to the Board of Trustees. The Dean replaces Sir Marrack Goulding as one of the two University representatives on the Board, the other being Dr Andrew Graham, Master of Balliol College.



The Very Revd  
Christopher Lewis

## New Education Initiatives in the Gulf



HH Prince Faisal Al-Abdullah  
(centre) with Sheikh Khalid  
Alireza and the Director

In April HH Prince Faisal Al-Abdullah, Minister of Education for Saudi Arabia, visited the Centre. In meetings with Centre Fellows the Minister not-

ed that the Saudi education sector had undergone a tremendous overhaul in recent months. The Saudi government had launched the King Abdullah Project for the Development of Public Education to improve standards and provide training and development for teachers. Prince Faisal stated that there was a need for greater cooperation with institutions of learning in the UK in order to develop these plans further.

## Forging Links with Al-Azhar University

During an official visit to the UK, the Rector of Al-Azhar University, Dr Ahmed Mohamed El-Tayeb, held discussions at the Centre regarding the establishment of joint programmes and conferences. He was accompanied by Dr Mohamed Abdel Fadil Abdel Aziz, Deputy Rector of Al-Azhar University; Dr Abdalla El Husseny Helal, Vice President for Higher Studies and Research;

and Dr Abdel Dayem Nosseir, Special Adviser to the Rector. After a lunch hosted by the Centre, the delegation visited the Centre's new building.



Dr El-Tayeb and the Director

## Islam and Science

In cooperation with the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science the Centre organized a series of seminars on Islam and Science for Trinity Term. The series examined the legacy of Muslim scholars and their contribution to different fields of scientific learning, such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, medicine, astronomy, and cartography. Speakers provided an insight into the myriad ways in which scholarship produced in the Muslim world has influenced modern science and technology. Speakers included *Professor Emilie Savage-Smith* (University of Oxford) on "Cartography and Islam: The Book of Curiosities"; *Dr Peter E. Pormann* (University of Warwick) on "Medicine and Islam: Between Tradition and Innovation"; *Dr Rim Turkmani, FRS* (Imperial College, London) on "17th-Century England and Arabic Science"; *Professor Peregrine Horden* (Royal Holloway, London) on "Early Islamic Hospitals: New Evidence, Old Questions"; *Professor Roshdi Rasheed* (CNRS, Paris) on "Al-Khwarizmi and the Beginnings of Algebra"; *Dr Guy Attewell* (Wellcome Trust, London) on "Science and the Rhetoric of Revivalism: 20th-Century Yunani Medicine in the Making"; *Professor Charles Burnett* (Warburg Institute, London) on "Astrology as Science: Al-Kindi, Abu Ma'shar, and Al-Qabisi" and *Professor Len Berggren* (Simon Fraser University) on "The Mathematical Legacy of Islam".

## New Scholarships for Students at Oxford



*The Rt Hon Ed Balls MP launching the scholarships at the Houses of Parliament with the Director and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor*

At a ceremony held in Parliament in June, the Rt. Hon. Ed Balls MP, Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, launched the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies Scholarships Programme. These scholarships will assist British Muslim students, as well as those from developing countries, to read for undergraduate and graduate degrees at the University of Oxford.

From October 2009 onwards, the scholarships will support degrees in any field within the arts, humanities, and social and natural sciences (excluding medicine). For home students, the scholarships will provide support to those from Britain's diverse Muslim communities wishing

to read for either undergraduate or graduate degrees at the University of Oxford. The scholarships will also support overseas students from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East reading for graduate degrees at the University of Oxford. Both types of scholarships are intended to raise the aspirations of young men and women, promoting education and human development, creating opportunities for them to enter higher education, and encouraging them to play a significant role in society.

Referring to the value of his own education at Oxford, the Secretary of State spoke warmly of the major contribution that the Centre was making to the widening access agenda through the new scholarships. Mr Balls added that he recognized how well this new development fitted alongside existing Centre initiatives such as the Young Muslim Leadership Programme. Professor Sue Iversen, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford, described the importance of the Centre both in supporting Muslim students and in contributing to the vitality and academic expertise of the University's work in the study of the Muslim world. A notable example of this successful collaboration was the Centre's recent involvement in the Vice-Chancellor's Research Forum: 'The Islamic World: Unity and Diversity'.