

PRESS RELEASE

SUSPENDED: 'TERROR ARREST' WHISTLE-BLOWER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 04 May 2011 at 6pm.

Dr Rod Thornton was suspended this afternoon by Nottingham University for exposing how the university caused the arrest of two innocent men as suspected terrorists [1]. The new whistle-blowing report [2] from Dr Thornton - *'How a student's use of a library book became a "major Islamist plot"'* [3] - exposed how senior University management reported the men and undertook a subsequent campaign to discredit them for being in possession of three publicly available documents, all available from the university's own library [4].

Dr Thornton, a former counter-insurgency advisor to the UK and US militaries, shows how, in the aftermath of the men's release, the university's management conducted a behind-the-scenes campaign of disinformation and spin against the arrestees and their university supporters, disregarding university statutes and governmental guidance. All of this in an effort to shift blame and silence those who challenged the university's account - i.e. that the research material was illegal and the arrests were justified.

What's more, Dr. Thornton's article uncovers how Nottingham University's misinformation has seeped into policy circles. The arrest of the 'Nottingham Two' is now advertised as a 'major Islamist plot' by the Home Office [5]. Similarly, another government department calls the library books in question 'extremist material' [6]. His revelations arrive immediately after a cross-party parliamentary group published a report criticising universities for being hotbeds of radicalisation. Dr. Thornton's account, however, exposes how a university's unaccountable actions aggravate this problem.

A letter written by Vice-Chancellor David Greenaway, was hand-delivered to Dr Thornton and ordered him to vacate his office. The Vice-Chancellor wrote: "the decision has been taken to suspend you until further notice ... [because of a] ... breakdown in working relationships with your colleagues caused by your recent article prepared for the British International Studies Association Conference" (BISA). Dr Thornton, said: "I am very saddened by the university's behaviour".

Rizwaan Sabir, one of the men originally arrested, said: "Yet again, we have more evidence of censorship and silencing of dissent at Nottingham University. I call on the government to launch a full public inquiry into Nottingham University before more people's lives are ruined". Students at the university wishing to remain anonymous stated: "We are extremely concerned by Dr. Thornton's suspension. We call for the immediate reinstatement of Dr Thornton and a full investigation into the claims his research is making".

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NOTE TO EDITORS

[1] The two arrested men were Masters student, Rizwaan Sabir, and staff member, Hicham Yezza. Both were held for a total of six days in May 2008 under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act 2000 and released without charge. The Operation was undertaken by West Midlands Counter-Terrorism Unit and Nottinghamshire Police. It was codenamed Operation Minerva.

[2] The title of Dr Thornton's article was "Radicalisation at universities or radicalisation by universities?: How a student's use of a library book became a "major Islamist plot". It was presented at the British International Studies Association (BISA) conference in Manchester on 28 April 2011. The article was removed from the BISA website on 30 April after threats of litigation were made by staff within the University of Nottingham.

[3] Exec. Summary here - <http://www.scribd.com/doc/54454049/EXECUTIVE-SUMMARY-Radicalisation-by-Universities-or-Radicalisation-at-Universities-by-Rod-Thornton>

Full article here: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/54150076/Radicalisation-at-Universities-or-Radicalisation-by-Universities-How-a-Students-Use-of-a-Library-Book-Became-a-Major-Islamist-Plot>

[4] The three documents that caused their arrests are as follows:

a) P. Gordon, "The end of Bush's revolution", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 4 (2006), pp. 75-86 (*Foreign Affairs* is a US based, world-renowned, political journal).

b) Q. Witorowicz and J. Katner, "Killing in the name of Islam: al Qaeda's justification for September 11", *Middle East Policy Council Journal*, 2003, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 76-92

c) "Al-Qaeda Training Manual", US Government Exhibit 1677-T (declassified), *Federation of American Scientists* (<http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/aqmanual.pdf>). This document is also available in book format from Amazon and from the University of Nottingham's library, albeit, the document is not being actively advertised on the library catalogue (see footnote 18 of Dr. Thornton's article). The document is also available from a number of academic and non-academic websites, including the US Department of Justice website (http://www.justice.gov/ag/manualpart1_1.pdf), albeit, now in a reduced form. Rohan Gunaratna, one of the world's foremost experts on the study of al-Qaeda and global terrorism wrote to Rizwaan Sabir and said that the al-Qaeda Training Manual was "required reading" for anyone studying al-Qaeda. For an account of how the document came to the attention of the Registrar and the arrests, please see: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/54451596/Background-to-arrests-of-the-Nottingham-Two-in-Operation-Minerva-at-the-University-of-Nottingham-on-14-May-2008>

[5] The document which refers to the arrest of the 'Nottingham Two' as a 'major Islamist plot' was disseminated by the Home Office in April 2010 via a Freedom of Information request that asked for information on terror plots in the UK from 2006-2008. The [report](#) was authored by the Heritage Foundation in Oct 2009

http://s3.amazonaws.com/thf_media/2009/pdf/bg2329.pdf

[6] Undated document released under the Freedom of Information Act from the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) entitled : 'Lines to take [to the media] on recent Nottingham arrests'. See footnote 90 and 313 of Dr. Thornton's article.

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