

Campus Conspiracies:  
Security and Intelligence Engagement with Universities  
From Kent State to Counter-Terrorism

Abstract

*Security and intelligence agency concerns with universities range from the commissioning and protection of security-sensitive research, the ongoing recruitment of staff and students for covert security and intelligence work, as well as prominent counter-terrorist concerns. This is an ethically charged terrain of moral ambiguity which raises issues not only of academic freedom and freedom of speech but a less explored, cross-disciplinary complex of intelligence-led interactions from protection of campus property and personnel to ideological battles at the heart of the Academy itself. Current-day counter-terrorism on campus agendas are, then, only an intensified aspect of an historical but ongoing and likely future interface between universities and security and intelligence agencies. Drawing on exemplars from the Kent State University shootings on 4 May 1970 at the height of the Vietnam War to the present era of globalised counter-terrorism, the article uses securitisation theory to conceptualise the historical, contemporary and future parameters of university engagements with the security and intelligence agencies as ‘Incidental’, ‘Incendiary’, and ‘Inevitable’.*

Introduction

To read Arendt – above all her defining work on totalitarianism (Arendt 2004) – is to realise that the autocracy and dictatorship which characterised the twentieth century was a struggle between the powerful and disempowered, the history of colonialism and imperialism, and for Arendt, a seamless transition to the totalitarian (cf. Conroy, 2003). The political twentieth century was therefore for Hobsbawm (1996) ‘the age of extremes’. The ‘extreme’ was not, though, invented in the twentieth century, which so many analyses of ‘post-9/11’ discourses indirectly or by default seem to attest. The phrase which Sven Lindqvist (2002) thus uses to frame his story of journey through colonial history is a line drawn from Kurtz’s report on the civilising task of the West in Africa: ‘Exterminate all the brutes’. Like Nazism and Stalinism and Maoism, and all regimes which speak of programmatic political violence (for which see Power 2010). For Arendt, the colonial impulse to extermination is the seed-bearer of holocaust. As Power usefully details in looking at the etymology of the word genocide – like ‘totalitarianism’ itself, genocide was a new word in the lexicon of twentieth century political science – from the Latin and Greek roots, so named by Raphael Lemkin to mean ‘race killing’.

Perhaps the most effective way to demonstrate the relevance of this longer historical view is to re-read the *9/11 Commission Report* (National Commission 2004). Written within a surprisingly short time in the aftermath of 9/11 and published in 2004, in addition to detailing the events of that September day with some uncanny precision, with historical breadth the Report acknowledges the colonial origins of resentments in the Arab world and the wider Middle East as a source of a resurgence, post-Cold War politicised Islam. What followed is that which we are all familiar: wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, the ‘war on terror’, contested narratives over marginalisation and manipulations of powerful states and their agents, the terror attacks on European cities, the toppling of dictatorships and the carnage of autocratic collapse, the current unease over the unexpected, Chemical, Biological, Nuclear and Radiological (CBNR) in a world where the insecurities of environments leads to unprecedented migrations of peoples. These threat narratives are not paranoid or the products of conspiratorial thinking. They represent real and existential level threats in a world characterised by a fragmentation as much as by globalisation.

Most often today the task in education – schools and universities – is to respond to the insecurities and terror-threat narratives to ‘counter-extremism’ and to assess the effectiveness of an ideological conformity (Ghosh, Manuel, Chan, Dilimulati and Babaei, 2016), invariably, predominantly focused a particular religious tradition (Panjwani and Moulin-Stozek 2017). Beyond education, however, approaches to the extremism, radicalisation, terrorism and counter-terrorism forms an analytic fraction of a broader landscape of security threat which is existential and narrative seeking in past, present and future tenses that examine not only constant re-configurations of governance and power but the world as a threatened environment characterised by risk (Glazzard 2017; Rychnovska, 2014).

We should not here, however, be too quick to laud the research literature of security and intelligence studies as somehow superior to educational analyses, the former for example curiously have very little explicitly or systematically to say about the role of higher education and universities as institutions which have been central to the formation of the modern intelligence agencies themselves (Davies 2002; de Graaf, Nyce and Locke 2018). The critical issue is that there is only limited discourse between these disciplines. More would help and this article in some senses has the broader intention of adding to previously made contributions at the interface of education, security and intelligence studies (Author, dates).

Behind the analysis are the real machinations of actual power, military in the traditional sense, but – with widening and deepening measures of security involvement across all sectors of society – also security in broader societal senses. Security permeates are social worlds

today in every, and not always self-evident senses. This article looks at the security and intelligence agencies which are part of this picture in relation to the particularities of universities. Where such involvements may seem to mark conspiratorial incursions into the hallowed sanctum of free-thought and speech, this article shows that such engagements are not new, there are obviously today intensified, and are in the future not likely to disappear.

Security and intelligence agency concerns with universities range from the commissioning and protection of security-sensitive research, the ongoing recruitment of staff and students for covert security and intelligence work, as well as prominent counter-terrorist concerns. This is an ethically charged terrain of moral ambiguity which raises issues not only of academic freedom and freedom of speech but a less explored, cross-disciplinary complex of intelligence-led interactions from protection of campus property and personnel to ideological battles which strike at the heart of the Academy itself. Current-day counter-terrorism on campus agendas are, then, only an intensified aspect of an historical but ongoing and likely future interface between universities and security and intelligence agencies. Drawing on exemplars from the Kent State University shootings on 4 May 1970 at the height of the Vietnam War to the present era of globalised counter-terrorism, the article uses securitisation theory to conceptualise the historical, contemporary and future parameters of university engagements with the security and intelligence agencies as ‘Incidental’, ‘Incendiary’, and ‘Inevitable’.

#### ‘Four Dead in Ohio’: The Kent State Massacre, 4 May 1970

##### Security and Intelligence Engagement with Universities in the United States

On 4 May 1970, just after twelve noon, Ohio State Troopers opened fire on unarmed protestors on the university campus of Kent State. It was in an area of the campus known as Blanket Hill. There was a volley of around 61 to 67 rounds of live ammunition fired into the student body, after which four students lay dead, and nine lay seriously injured.

On 15 May 1970 *Life* magazine’s front cover showed an image of a student shot dead in that massacre on the Kent State University campus eleven days earlier. It was this image which said to have influenced Neil Young to write ‘Ohio’ about the events on the Kent State campus. The song was recorded by Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young on 21 May in Los Angeles and released by Atlantic in June 1970 at what in retrospect may have been the apogee of the 1960s counter-culture, the tensions between calls for peace and love being perfectly counterpoised by the seemingly intractable Vietnam War. In the 1960s and 1970s student protest had been central to the entire anti-war movement in ways which, regarding today’s politically docile universities, seems difficult to understand, and because of this is

often eulogised and romanticised as an era of ingenuous authenticity for academic no less than existential freedoms.

On 13 June 1970, President Richard Nixon established the presidential Commission on Campus Unrest, known subsequently by the name of its chair, the former Pennsylvania governor William Scranton, as the Scranton Commission. Prompted by events at Kent State, Scranton was tasked with an analysis of the causes of student dissent on university campuses which had been evident across America in the past few years, from centres such as the University of California at Berkeley in the west through Ohio in the mid-west and Colombia in east. Each of these had been significant centres for movements such as the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), which became later committed through the Weather Underground Movement (WUO) to terroristic direct action. Scranton's major focus however was on the current nationwide student strike which was a protest at the ongoing war in Vietnam and indeed its seeming intensification with the invasion and bombing of Cambodia.

The Commission Report was published in September 1970. The Kent State shootings could not be justified: 'The Kent State tragedy must mark the last time that, as a matter of course, loaded rifles are issued to guardsmen confronting student demonstrators' (Thomas, 2018, np). Charles A. Thomas' (2018) *Mission Betrayed: Richard Nixon and the Scranton Commission Inquiry into Kent State* remains the most authoritative guide to the intricacies of tone which marked a divided era. 4 May was quiet in the Whitehouse. The President was preparing for a vacation in Florida. After a post-lunch nap he called on H.R. Haldeman, his chief of staff, later to feature strongly in Watergate, to discuss security arrangements for his vacation. According to Nixon's memoirs 'Bob' look ill at ease. Haldeman explained:

'Something just came over the wires about a demonstration at Kent State. The National Guard opened fire and some students got shot.

'Are they dead?' Nixon asked.

'I'm afraid so. Nobody knows why it happened.' (Thomas, 2018, np)

At 5.30 in the afternoon, the official White House press secretary Ronald Seigler issued the official administration statement on Kent State: 'This should remind us all once again that when dissent turns to violence, it invites tragedy (Thomas, 2018, np). According to other accounts, including Haldeman's, Nixon had hoped a show of force might crush the student-led anti-war movement. In many ways it is possible to argue that it did. No other such violent repression of student protest was evident in the years which led to the eventual end of the Vietnam War.

The lack of energy, impetus and effectiveness of student anti-war movement is apparent in the planned mass protest set for Washington, five days after the Kent State shootings. Charles A. Thomas renders here a surreal narrative of President Nixon taking calls through the night and then, to the dismay of the Secret Service he seems to have evaded, wandering alone, except for his valet, through the streets of Washington in a late spring dawn:

... he disappeared from the White House, throwing the Secret Service into a panic. Accompanied only by his valet, he sallied out into the darkest hour before dawn, into the midst of a hundred thousand demonstrators gathering for the rally. He would communicate with the young himself, without any advisors or commissions, and show them the error of their ways ('lift them a bit out of the miserable intellectual wasteland in which they now wander aimlessly around'). By the time the Secret Service caught up with him, he was wandering alone and unmolested through the sea of protestors around the Lincoln Memorial, chatting with some of them aimlessly and even dissociatively, without drawing so much as a sharp retort (Thomas, 2018, np).

Security and intelligence agency engagements with campus neither began, however, nor ended with the Vietnam War. Robert Winks, a former Master at University of California at Berkeley presents in some depth for example the historical origins of such agencies, particularly the Central Intelligence Agency, on the campuses of America's elite universities themselves (Winks 1987). Less favourable interpretations of such are found in sporadic patches on the margins of radical educational perspectives such as, from the late 1980s, Witaneke (1989) to the more recent treatments of Zwerling (2011). To contextualise the edited collection on 'academic freedom and the national security state' Zwerling provides a framing citation from CIA Personnel Director F.W.M. Janney: 'It is absolutely essential that the Agency have available to it the greatest single source of expertise: the American academic community' (Zwerling 2011: 3). As Zwerling highlights, and rightly notes, the Central Intelligence Agency – we may add several other wings of the US National Intelligence – has made substantial investments into the United States academic system. The interpretation of this investment is open however to debate, yet not for Zwerling. For Zwerling this is a malign, autonomy-denying and thus academically-distorting influence on university teaching and research, skewing publication through covert bias of secret intelligence funding and so forth. Publicity for the collection of nine essays across a diverse academic fields explores 'the pernicious penetration of intelligence services into U.S. campus life to exploit academic study, recruit students, skew publications, influence professional advancement, misinform the public, and spy on professors' (Zwerling 2011).

In a context of academic research ethics and professional integrity in all disciplines in universities worldwide, in the student and teaching/ research communities (Bretag 2016; Gallant 2011; Hedgecoe 2009; McCabe 1992; McCabe and Trevino, 1993; Willinsky and Alperin, 2011), wider concerns over academy integrity and autonomy across the Academy only occasionally reference the security contexts beyond the campus which have essentially prompted these developments (Post 2013). That is, it is the revelations of grotesque live human experimentations by the Nazis in the concentration camps which formed part of the evidential base of the Nuremberg trials after the Second World War. These have initiated new emphases, beginning in the medical sciences, which have imparted the modern day ethical consciousness of research ethics from the resultant Nuremberg Code for research ethics onwards (Dhai 2014). Though the security impetus is now only a dimly recalled part of the academic unconscious here, today's security sensitive research environment should bring these matters to the fore, as Zwerling, Post and others rightly, if polemically, pronounce.

The traffic is, of course, two-way and a matter though of historical record. The CIA was part-created in its senior strategic echelons through Faculty of all disciplines from its formation in the 1940s. It was the Manhattan Project on atomic and nuclear bomb development in the early part of that World War II decade which demonstrated more than any time in modern history the importance of academic expertise to military and security prowess, especially in the then new science of quantum mechanics. Histories and biographies of any of the leading scientific names of the era will reveal now what was then the secret interface of science and security, university campus and the scientific community were central not peripheral to what was an ultimately triumphant war effort. Michael Frayn's (1998) play *Copenhagen* dramatises some of the political tensions of this central and deciding fact of the war, a search for atomic and nuclear weaponry, in the meeting of quantum mechanics' pioneers Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg in September 1941 in Nazi-occupied Copenhagen. It is as one reviewer notes of a modern classic this is a meeting of politics, morality and quantum mechanics (Billington 2018). It is also a part of a deep and if obscurely revelatory relationship between universities and state security.

A quarter of a century after Kent State when the Twin Towers and the Pentagon were attacked on 11 September 2001 and provoked the War on Terror, then President Bush also instigated a programme which would strengthen the links between the American Academy and the security and intelligence agencies. Mandated by the US Congress, this became known as the Intelligence Community (IC) Centers for Academic Excellence programme (DIA 2018).

States beneficiaries are: ‘Universities, students, the IC and each of its agencies, and the nation’ (DIA 2018). The programme itself however is only one aspect of an overt, as opposed to covert, relationship between universities and the security and intelligence agencies, which, given the defining secrecy of such agencies often elides between the overt and covert. There has of late been considerable interest in this elision in the mainstream academic and wider press, in for instance Michael Reiss’s (2018) ‘Following the footprints of spies on campus’ and Daniel Golden’s (2017) ‘The science of spying: how the CIA secretly recruits academics’.

The involvement of these agencies is long, complex, and because of the nature of their organisational principles and *modus operandi*, obscure. It is often the very secrecy of the operations, along with the ultimately military associations of lethal force somewhere along the chain, which focuses academic resistance to security and intelligence engagements. Mark LeVine (2012), for example, implores the academic community ‘to create a clear firewall between itself and the military and intelligence communities’ (LeVine, 2012, np). Highlighting US security and intelligence academic engagements to assist ‘military and strategic objectives’, what LeVine calls ‘deplorable’ is the use of academic cover to gather intelligence. It happened, to the dismay of the American Association for Anthropology, with anthropologists engaged in clandestine counter-insurgency work during the Vietnam War (Wakin, 2010), it happened during the Iraq War (NYT 2005), and, as Michael Herman (1996) showed, the Cold War itself became the prime justification for covert intelligence gathering even in times when power blocks were not at war. We are in that time still now, even post-Cold War, with leaks such as that by Julian Assange and Edward Snowden showing that security and intelligence interests are expansive to the point of being all-inclusive. In the quest for knowledge, universities remain here critical, as the IC-CAE programme highlights in overt ways.

The charge of covert action of course works both ways. One of the former ‘Weathermen’, Bill Ayers, became a professor of education at the University of Chicago at Illinois, and in 2008 was elected Vice President of Curriculum Studies by the American Educational Research Association. In 2010 he was denied emeritus status by the son of assassinated US Senator Robert Kennedy, Christopher G. Kennedy whose case was put as follows:

I intend to vote against conferring the honorific title of our university to a man whose body of work includes a book dedicated in part to the man who murdered my father, Robert F. Kennedy. There is nothing more antithetical to the hopes for a university

that is lively and yet civil...than to permanently seal off debate with one's opponents by killing them (Washington Times 2010)

The book referred to is a co-authored Weather Underground volume, *Prairie Fire: The Politics of Revolutionary Anti-Imperialism*, dedicated to over two hundred revolutionary figures including the man serving a life sentence for the 1968 murder of Robert Kennedy. Lists of supposedly 'dangerous' or politically subversive academics have long circulated among the corridors of the FBI and the CIA.

Others take a contrary and more positive view, in 'Spies, Scholars and Global Studies', Nicolas B. Dirks (2012), provides an acute and insightful analysis of the origins, development and security/ intelligence applications of academic endeavour in the light of American academic relations with the rest of the world. The era of intensified global counter-terrorism efforts into which universities have been inexorably drawn towards relations with the security and intelligence agencies becomes part of a wider story when we see that learning and research are themselves part of the processes of a very fundamental security of the global community.

On American soil the protective measures seem perhaps excessive, this engagement today being – from a UK perspective at least – seeming staggering in scale. It is justified directly in relation to counter-terrorism: 'Campus Public Safety: Our Post-9/11 Role', writes the Federal Bureau of Investigation, or FBI: 'This is why the FBI takes campus public safety more seriously than ever' (FBI 2009). The Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) is here but one aspect then of the 'Campus Liaison Initiative'. The wider 'Academic Alliance Program' was set up to tackle national security challenges like global adversaries trying to steal U.S. information or technologies, such as proprietary information and trade secrets. Included in that program are the National Security Higher Education Advisory Board (NSHEAB) which provides the liaison between US universities and the security and intelligence agencies (FBI 2011; 2015).

These are the constructive roles overtly stated by one of America's most significant arms of security and intelligence. Other roles, such as surveillance, might and are (as we have seen from voices such as LeVine) regarded with suspicion. The fear of foreign spies on American campuses might be against the multi-cultural or cosmopolitan spirit in a world of globalised higher education where universities though competitors share in a universal quest for the advancement of knowledge and progression of societies. Yet to think the presence of non-US citizens working entirely with innocent on American campuses is as naïve as it is potentially dangerous. There is firm evidence of foreign nationals using American campuses as a means



of covertly collecting intelligence under the guise of academic, professorial or student cover. Historically, as Svetlana Lokhova (2018) has recently demonstrated with new, hard archival evidence, in the 1930s Soviet scientists systematically penetrated American universities to aid Stalin's mission for the rapid industrialisation of a relatively backward Soviet industrial complex and economy. She rightly makes the connection between the spies associated with the University of Cambridge – Burgess, MacLean, Philby et al. – and another Cambridge, this one in America, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in Cambridge, the outskirts of Boston, where one Stanislav Shumovsky led a whole host of scientists to have their scientific 'finishing school' education funded by the NKVD, the predecessor to the KGB. It was the knowledge garnered by this generation of Soviet scientists in the American Cambridge that made advances in Soviet air technology possibly during the Second World War, arguably at least heightened the possibility of victory over Hitler and certainly aided, through other scientific quarters, the development of the atomic bomb technology that would lead to the arms race which defined American and Soviet Russian relations during the Cold War. Here of course, in historical terms, a Transatlantic link between the US and the UK (Davies 2002; de Graaf, Nyce and Locke 2018).

‘Higher education is at the heart of the UK's counter-terrorism efforts’:

#### Security and Intelligence Engagement with Universities in the United Kingdom

Any thought-association between universities and spies (or the security and intelligence agencies) will, for those at least of a certain generation, perhaps not now so prominent, bring to mind 'the Cambridge Spies'. There are generally numbered as five: Guy Burgess, Kim Philby, Donald Maclean, Anthony Blunt and John Cairncross. Scholars have been suggested to make up their number. They were, collectively and self-consciously an elite, befittingly intelligent, even hyper-intelligent, to varying degrees debauched (even by the standards of our more liberal and decadent age), and treacherous. Each in their own way had been born to privilege, and had the privilege of the best education England could provide. Space does not permit the revisiting of their complex and complexly interrelated lives, but the story of their betrayal of their country is clear. Burgess, Maclean and Philby were the first to be discovered. Burgess and Maclean defected in 1951 to the Soviet Union where their Soviet paymasters lived and where they were allowed to live the remainder of their lives in loneliness – bare the occasional visits by fellows travellers in communism and the security and intelligence services such as Graham Greene – and ironically under suspicion from the very Soviet authorities who recruited them, under suspicion many argued for having been too successful

in infiltrating not simply the English Establishment but the highest levels of the security and intelligence services themselves. Anthony Blunt, adviser to Her Majesty the Queen on matters of art, was stripped of his knighthood in 1979 by no less a figure than Prime Minister Thatcher. The question of betrayal of course reveals a nationalist and patriotic perspective – Kim Philby and others never truly considered themselves traitors at all, but rather loyal servants of another socialist cause. Their addiction to secrecy remains part of their allure, and two of them – Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean – were members of a Cambridge group called the Apostles, founded in 1820, by elite within an elite, itself committed to secrecy: founded in 1820 by George Tomlinson, its alleged members have included Bertrand Russell, G.E. Moore, John Maynard Keynes and Ludwig Wittgenstein, the group coming to prominence in the First World War when it was discovered many notable members of the Bloomsbury group, including Leonard Woolf, Lytton Strachey, E.M. Forster and Rupert Brooke were also Apostles. Of the Cambridge Five it was Guy Burgess who was the Apostle, though his influence as a spy was shown in his connections particularly with MI6 officer and secretary to the deputy foreign minister, Donald MacLean, and the journalist and MI6 officer Kim Philby.

The Apostle's connections further emphasises the integral worlds within worlds that marks the relations between universities and the security agencies. The further one looks the more pronounced seems this connection. Thus in the early 1960s, the American writer and former Cambridge Apostle Michael Straight claimed he had a covert relationship with the Soviets, naming Anthony Blunt, MI5 officer and prominent director of the Courtauld Institute, as the individual responsible for his recruitment. Other accusations have been labelled at links between Cambridge Apostles and Soviet Intelligence. Roland Perry (1994) *The Fifth Man* makes a case against Victor the 3rd Baron Rothschild, a friend of Burgess and Blunt. In *The Jew of Linz*, Kimberley Cornish (1998) offers a well-spun tale that Ludwig Wittgenstein was in the same class not only the same school as Adolf Hitler, makes extravagant claims that the young Wittgenstein is the reference to school-boy Jew in *Mein Kampf* which impacted Hitler's anti-Semitism, and that Wittgenstein, a Communist fellow traveller and Stalinist-sympathiser (like many of the Cambridge left at the time) was enacted a Hitlerite revenge by recruiting Blunt, Philby and others at Cambridge, that Wittgenstein was in effect *the* éminence grise of the Cambridge spies. Documents from the post-Cold War-opened KGB Archives are, suggest Nigel West and Oleg Tsarev (1999) revelatory not only of the importance of Cambridge but Oxford intellectuals from the 1920s onwards, described by the

KGB, with mock deference to the British monarchy, as the ‘crown jewels’ of their intelligence networks.

Beyond Cambridge, MI5 has numerous other cases of engagement with universities. MI5 was established in 1909 as the Secret Service Bureau in response to fears of German espionage. The official history of the agency is in many senses no less sanguine and provided by the definitive work by one of the world’s leading historians of the security and intelligence agencies, Christopher Andrew (2010) in his *Defence of the Realm: The Authorised History of MI5*. A professorial fellow of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, Professor Andrew also co-convenes the Cambridge Intelligence Seminar in the History Faculty with other notable figures such as the Sir Richard Dearlove, former Master of Pembroke College, Cambridge, and former Chief of MI6.

Prominent public notes from MI5’s list of historical spy cases is the story of Emil Klaus Fuchs, a German citizen who joined the German Communist Party in the 1930s, subsequently fled to Britain when the Nazis came to power, earned a doctorate in physics at Edinburgh University and obtained a teaching post there. While at the outbreak of the Second World War he was briefly detained, he was released and made a return to Edinburgh in 1941, where his noted scientific expertise led to him being recruited to join ‘the Tube Alloys nuclear weapons’ programme’, in effect the UK contribution to the US’s atomic weapon seeking Manhattan Project, a rush to the technical application of quantum mechanics before the German scientists who had first conceived the idea of splitting the atom did. Codenamed REST, Fuchs was transferred, according to MI5 to Soviet Military Intelligence (GRU) and a GRU agent named Ursula Beurton (codenamed SONYA)’. As the MI5 record notes, the ‘two met regularly in Banbury, Oxfordshire where Fuchs passed secret documents to Beurton’ (MI5, 2018). In 1943, Fuchs formally joined the Manhattan Project representing the contribution of British science. He played, according to MI5, ‘a key role in the project over the next three years, developing many of the designs, equations and techniques used to build the first atomic bombs’, later being jailed for espionage (MI5, 2018).

All of these singular exemplars reveal some consistent relationship, a necessary and important one linked to academic contacts, to intelligence (of the secret and open kind), to universities and the security and intelligence agencies. There is some great allure in these stories. The writer Ian Fleming, himself both a journalist with numerous university connections in the arts and sciences as well as a member of Naval Intelligence during World War II mirrored many aspects of his character James Bond. James Bond of course has added and now over decades continues to add to the allure of defending not simply Britain but the

world against the enemies which would seek to harm, to destroy or otherwise exploit, often through new and secret, and naturally deadly developments in science and technology put to ill-gotten uses by unscrupulous, or rather unremittingly evil characters.

Universities UK documents such as *Oversight of security-sensitive research material in UK universities* (UUK 2012) highlight the ethics and related procedural matters in conducting research which is security sensitive. Security is here as ever a matter of current-day threat, and for universities as for the wider society this is deemed as terroristic. The UUK guidance covers matters such as researchers visiting sites on the Internet which in non-researchers could well be interpreted as eliciting sympathy or a possible trajectory towards more active extremist engagements, and cover practicalities of ethic approval and so forth. Yet a climate of terroristic threat has highlighted wider matters of risk and threat, one where considerable interpretive autonomy if given to universities (UUK 2012). Dig deeper and you will get to some world-threatening, literally existential possibilities, as agencies which work with Chemical, Biological, Nuclear and Radiological defence will know, for instance in the case of the UK Government's Defence Science and Technology Laboratory will know (DSTL 2018).

UUK (2012) security sensitive research-type documents may seem mundane and administrative. They may well lack the flourishes of character or the urgency of *Dr No* or *From Russia with Love* (a book found by the bedside of President Kennedy the day of his assassination) there is an identity of substance. The methods do differ between UUK and Ian Fleming but in essence the matter to the fore is safety: in the one case, the safety of campus personnel, in the other, the safety of a nation or more generally the world itself. Then again when we look closer, the sorts of safety directed at in UUK (2012) documents like *Oversight of security-sensitive research material in UK universities*, and we see the potential for destructive power inherent in the warning within the few pages of a policy document and the two hundred and fifty to three hundred pages of a James Bond novel is precisely the same. Perhaps if university academics were to take the question of security and intelligence in the same manner as the latter then perhaps the wider relationship between universities and the security and intelligence agencies might be more open.

For the most part debates tend these days to be restricted to worn out discussions of counter-terrorism and freedom of expression or academic freedom, and the restriction which the UK prevent duty – recently tightened by the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 – puts on such freedoms.

Lord Agnew, writing in the *Times Higher Education*, makes an even starker claim under the headline: 'Higher education is at the heart of the UK's counter-terrorism efforts': 'It is a

sad fact,' writes Lord Agnew, 'that young people make up a disproportionate number of those who have been arrested in connection with terrorist offences or who set off to join terrorist groups. Schools, colleges and universities are therefore uniquely placed to not only help stop this behaviour but also to prevent their students from becoming radicalised in the first place' (Agnew 2018). The cultivation of 'fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs' is described as the way forward, Agnew reiterating here the position of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

Mattsson, Hammaren, and Odenbring (2016) represent a typical stigmatising interpretation of such initiatives, their paper 'Youth 'at risk': A critical discourse analysis of the European Commission's Radicalisation Awareness Network Collection of approaches and practices used in education', with the claim that 'the so-called War on terror discourse has merged into the educational system and brought about a securitisation of education' (Mattsson, Hammaren, and Odenbring 2016).

There is thus now a burgeoning literature cognisant of security issues across European higher education in relation to wider European public policy (Balzacq, Bigo, Carrera and Guild, 2006; Bellaby, 2012; Barnard, 2016; EU, 2007; Karyotis, 2007; Krahmann, 2004; Lazaridis and Wadia, 2015; Leonard, 2015; 2015a; Monar, 2015; TFEU 2012). There has been strong general student resistance to these patterns of securitisation (NUS 2015), the National Union of Students in the UK delineating and in a fashion of protest the implied between being students and suspects (NUS 2015; 2017). This resistance, in the UK and elsewhere has typical of the reaction too of academics who sense some malign and conspiratorial incursion into the realm of what might be defined as academic autonomy (Durodie 2016). And yet such scholars seem blatantly to ignore the threat to the lives of their international colleagues: security states far more pernicious than those of western states place scholars at risk of physical harm continuously, even as we have seen in recent years at the very borders of Europe (SAR 2018).

#### Campus Conspiracies:

##### Securitisation Theory and the Securitised University

Conspiracy theories have formed an increasingly prominent aspect of modern social and political life. There is always now a seeming alternative, and often seemingly more sinister and subverting story behind the narrative fed by mainstream media. The current incumbent of the White House repeatedly describes such media conspiracies as 'fake news'. 24/7 social media makes everyone a reporter, lacking the checks and balances of newsprint and other

forms of traditional journalism stories spread within seconds and if not automatically accepted are often sufficient to enter doubts into the frame of public narratives. Security or rather more properly insecurity is in many ways the antecedent motivation for the emergence of conspiracy theory (Balzacq 2010; Peoples and Vaughan-Williams, 2010).

The defining political and security event of the twenty-first century – 9/11, whose numeric configuration represents the emergency services number in the United States, and which date was prefigured as far back as 1978 as a date of terroristic devastation in the white supremacist novel, *The Turner Diaries* (Macdonald 1980) – itself represents a defining moment in the history of modern conspiracy. Was this a genuine attack on the Twin Towers and Pentagon or was it an intricately planned attempt to justify the War on Terror, bombardments of Afghanistan, invasion of Iraq, and so forth? Certainly we may note that in the post-Cold War period of the 1990s security and intelligence service as well as military and defence budgets more generally were subject to significant budgetary depletions. Conspiracies aside, the effect was and remains a sustained increased in budgets on matters of security per se. Even if the statistical figures show Middle-Eastern and other regions suffer more in terms of direct terroristic casualties (GTI 2017), all European nations along with the United States remain on now perpetual alert against the next imminent and expected, inevitable attack.

All of this may seem distant from university campuses. Or had at least until such terrorist possibilities prompted the intensification on university campuses themselves, as we have noted. We have also shown that issues of security have long been part of the university setting. The Kent State shootings are important milestone here because they show a direct and tragic incursion of a security military intervention.

The legal entrenchment of security as part of wider public policy has certainly become part of public life across the UK, Europe and the United States (Christou, Croft, Ceccorulli and Lucarelli, 2010). This is product of a now more evident rather than nascent narrative of threat which was accentuated but not originated in 9/ 11 (Croft and Moore, 2010; Glazzard 2017; Rychnovska, 2014). This threat-framing is now also an absolutely, that is definite and integral aspect of international law and global governance (UN, (2017). While security and intelligence communities vary in their operational scope across these regions (Davies 2002; de Graaf, Nyce and Locke 2018), as it does outside the intelligence ‘Anglosphere’ – in Russia, in India, China, across the Arab nations (Davies and Gustafson, 2013) – it is counter-terrorism measures which have both galvanised and justified the global intensification of security and intelligence operations extra-military domains, including universities.

In the United States the Department of Homeland Security (DHS 2018) has instigated measures which naturally integrate the security of United States campuses as an integral part of United States territory per se. The European Agenda on Security (EAS 2015) has made a point of ensuring security is part of the wider remit of public policy, including universities. The involvement of universities is here relatively new in a series of political maneuvers which have seen a close correlation between Europeanisation and securitisation (Argomanis, 2009; Argomanis, Bures and Kaunert, 2014; Bakker, 2014; Den Boer, 2015; The move, however, from what Den Boer and Wiegand (2015) describe as a shift from policy ‘convergence’ in matters of security to ‘deep integration’ has not gone unnoticed by civil and human rights campaigners. Amnesty International’s (2017) recent report detailing a process of securitisation across Europe as ‘dangerously disproportionate’ to the very freedoms such security measures are designed to uphold. It is the irony, much noted by radical thinkers such as Chomsky (2017), of illiberal actions in justification of liberal ends. Didier and Tsoukala’s (2008) collection linking *Terror, Insecurity and Liberty* highlights precisely the same perceived justification of ‘illiberal practices’ by ‘liberal regimes’ directly following 9/11 (see also Aradau, 2004).

In the UK, the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (CTSA 2015) is simply the continuation of a state of terroristic preparedness which had been in place since the Troubles of the 1970s, and as one author has suggested making the protection against terror part of a ‘normative permanence’. The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 is of especial importance to universities in for the first time providing them with direct, legal responsibilities to become an integral part of Government counter terrorism policy.

This increased emphasis upon security has been long noted by theorists in security and intelligence studies. The emergence in the 1990s, a good decade before 9/11, saw for instance the development of what is known in the latter field as the critical security project and the development of ‘securitisation theory’, security that is beyond its traditional military foci to wider and deeper societal arena, a sort of accessing of all areas. The originating thinking on this has come from what has come to be known as the Copenhagen School, particularly figures such as Ole Waever and Barry Buzan (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde, 1997; Wæver, 1995; 1998; 2000). From the early 1990s onwards they had begun to perceive an increasing turn to security across numerous societal contexts, indeed to conclude that security had left its traditional military domain with which it has been historically associated, and spread, virus-like, perniciously to a range of public policy domains which they defined as: the ‘military’, the ‘political’, the ‘societal’, the ‘economic’, and the ‘environmental’

(Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde, 1997; Buzan and Hansen, 2009). Presciently, prior to 9/11, Bagge Laustsen and Wæver (2000) subsequently added a further field, that of the 'religious' to the five previously identified domains of securitisation. We can interpret this as an additional public policy domain or we can interpret this as part of security even intruding into the most personal arenas of private life. The conclusion made is the same, that security has become an all-pervasive aspect of modern life, public and private (see also Albert and Buzan, 2011; Buzan and Hansen, 2009; Dunn Cavelty and Mauer, 2012; Dunn Cavelty and Balzacq, 2016; Eriksson, 1999; Huysmans, 1998; van Munster, 2016). There is something of a totalising effect in all of this: a conspiratorial voice might say totalitarian, identifying sinister hidden forces tightening the screws of security surveillance in ways which the prophetic George Orwell has foreseen in writing *1984*. The facts of heightened security cannot be denied. For universities today, in view of the facts, as we know them, that is a matter of evaluative judgement: to resist, or to remain indifferent, or actively assist. In some respects, the legal entrenchment of security into society compels all to assistance. As evidenced in the UK at least through the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to resist the engagement, not to support security efforts has become a matter of borderline legality.

This is a great change from the days from security and intelligence meant a secretive, covert world of spies infiltrating elite arenas of Government, of public life, emerging from the privilege of ivory tower universities to impact the balance of world power in the great play of politics. In this sense, security has become democratised. In security theory terms, though, there are limits to the notion of security. As Taureck (2006) shows, to avoid everything become a matter of security, or the subject of securitisation, and thus for the term perhaps to lose its edge, there needs be not simply a declaration that something is subject to a 'securitising move' – to say that something a security issue does not automatically make it so – but rather there must be some sense of a real, perhaps even imminent threat. And the threat must be existential. If, as Taureck explains, this matter is not addressed, things will not be the same as before. There is no choice but to address this matter of life and death. When we look at the terroristic justifications of security – with individual or non-state actor and state terrorism and counter-terrorism remain, with all-out war, the predominant as justifications for all global security – we see that the securitisation model here fits the bill. The elision of war and the War on Terror has brought civilian and military populations to a convergence in a shared domain of security, it is not just a matter of word but images, an holistic move to shift consciousness to matters of threat and insecurity to justify the security protections enacted



(Williams, 2003). There is in other words a perpetual declaration of existential threat (Stritzel, 2007).

On campuses this means individual safety of university personnel, the protection against the threat from student or even university staff who might do harm to others through their ideologies or actions; it might also mean, and in fact does mean, protection against the uses of what is known as security sensitive research which could entail actual societal harm as well as injuries to academic esteem, ethics, or the more general university environment. Security and intelligence scholars have themselves only of relatively recent date considered ethical matters, perhaps since historically, though such would be little explicitly stated, security and intelligence agencies considered themselves above the law and democratic control while ironically existing to uphold both (Goldman 2009; 2011; Omand 2006; Omand and Phythian, 2013; 2018). To leading former heads of such agencies, as for example Alan Dulles, former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, all of this is just part of the wily ‘craft of intelligence’ – it is the unfortunate way of the modern world that it wishes to place secret agencies in the public domain of accountability (Dulles 2006); and for a more critical view of Dulles and the CIA as a secret arm of American government, Talbot (2016) is revelatory.

A recently developed model of university engagements with the security and intelligence agencies suggests an historical shift from the covert, or secret, to ever more overt, or transparent and open, models. This is largely a result of legislation which both make the security and intelligence services themselves more open, and in turn more accountable. There area where the overt overlaps with covert, where secrecy becomes a justification for activity, remains here the most problematic for a university and for academic, staff and students. By their very nature the security and intelligence services are secret. They could not operate if they were not below the radar. But in universities, which are and remain, committed to transparency and academic openness, the idea of anything covert operating on the corridors of the campus seems rightly difficult to entertain or justify.

This new campus security environment raises multi-layered ethical and other issues, not essentially new in terms of professional standards themselves, but new in the sense they are prompted by a new and now entrenched interface between universities and the security and intelligence agencies. For academic research ethics in particular, as has been set out elsewhere, there are critical issues for staff and academics at universities today around academic standards, academic freedom, academic engagement, and professional conduct (Author, date).

Space precludes detailing matters further here but we may note, in brief, that each of the latter four areas provide their own internal tensions, dichotomies and dilemmas: in academic standards, between openness and opacity or secrecy; in academic freedom, between the requirements of academic autonomy of the university and individual students and staff, and the seeming intrusions of a legal-security network of legislative compulsion; in academic engagement, between the necessary demands of scrutiny in terms of standards (say of teaching and research) and scrutiny of movement, ideas, and so forth, deemed intrusive surveillance; in professional conduct between the ethical integrity of respective professional and research codes, and operating outside of these boundaries through, for instance, covert work for security and intelligence purposes while on the service living the life of an everyday academic (IRISS 2015). It is the doubts which prevail in an environment of secrecy which makes this relationship in all such a problematic one. European nations with histories of relatively recent dictatorial rule – and the list is a long one, Austria, Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal – with direct and militaristic targeting of university campuses and personnel are in particular ways wary for historical reasons of such engagements between universities and the security and intelligence agencies. We have noted some of the reasons for this, and LeVine provides a particularly effective account of this side of the liberal argument, and is arguably part of a majority of such perspectives inside the Academy (Durodie 2016), support for security agendas in universities being much more of a minority (Glees 2015).

### Conclusion

The argument about degrees of university engagement with the security and intelligence agencies cannot be settled easily if at all. To provide some fundamentals or grounding for the basis if not the resolution of argument, there are perhaps three frameworks which define the historical, the contemporary and the future of this complex relationship between universities and the security and intelligence services. In deference to the notional common interest in ‘intelligence’, and we can call these the three ‘I’s: the incidental; the incendiary; and the inevitable. These should at least in part guide ‘moral’ thinking on the relationship, its value in the past and present, and its likely future trajectory.

On the first, the incidental, we can note the historic relationship between universities and the security and intelligence agencies has been a coincidence, a not to be unexpected conjoining of two centres of interest in knowledge or intelligence. As Michael Holman (1996) has pointed out this came very much to the fore during the Cold War when cultural as well as technical and scientific knowledge became the proxy for an ideological war of words and ideas while the nuclear arms race carried on unabated, what Stonor Saunders (2013) has

memorably called ‘the cultural cold war’. Risso (2014) has shown too how military agencies such as NATO had throughout the Cold War especially a less well-funded but effective and secretive programme of cultural spheres of influence which included the universities of the NATO-alliance in powerful alliances between knowledge and democracy. Universities as still important cultural centres today remain therefore importance. Both universities and the security and intelligence agencies have knowledge at the centre, heart and *raison d’être* for their respective existences. It so happens that a natural meeting place for spies and scholars then should not be the university. It is a natural partnership if we think about it. And those pioneering scholars who have looked at the histories of the security and intelligence agencies always point out the relationship (Aldrich 2010; Aldrich and Cormac 2016; Andrew 2010; Jeffery 2011; Johnson 2012; Weiner 2012; Winks 1987; Zwerling 2012). Only to those in education for whom the counter-terrorist agendas of modern times has brought to the fore this relationship are surprised. For those long familiar with the world of security and intelligence, this is familiar territory. The incidental of an historical meeting between two sorts of party with similar interests in knowledge – but generally for different reasons – coincides most strongly when the interests in knowledge of scholars are the same as spies, or vice versa. It is an incidental fact of the modern world and its intensified emphasis on global security which has brought an historical relationship between universities and the security and intelligence services to the fore.

On the second, the incendiary, we may rightly suggest – as evidence abounds – that the worlds of terroristic threat, real, actual, even imagined as threat, pervade a fractured modern world. We should note that the notion of an incendiary is of a fire, a conflagration, which is itself a sign and a deeper level symbol of a world at war with itself, which feels, as least in the West, under threat. Incidents such as at Kent State show that campuses have in the past been politically and literally inflammatory environments. And as we note from today’s counter-terrorism legislative context, remain perceived as sources of literal sources of the incendiary, whether of words or weapons. Campuses themselves however have not as such been targeted in any wholesale or systematic manner for physical attack, for the flames, though western education has been, and this should certainly put us – or those of us in the Academy – on guard against such future attacks. Such, sadly, are as likely as they are possible. The average university campus is not, due to its openness, its public situatedness, even universities’ increasing emphasis on societal impact for the wider good, all of these factors means universities themselves are vulnerable, either internally or externally. The campus incendiary remains perhaps the greatest justification for security engagement with

universities. Unless that is one would wish to define the threat itself as conjured, illusory, a conspiracy to enhance the power of the State through the intractable entanglement of its most powerful and secretive operational organs of security and intelligence.

On the third, the inevitable, one may conclude as one wishes about the trajectory, that is, the future. This notion of future prospects for the world of security and intelligence has been much debated in the relevant political fields, in international relations and so forth (Agrell 2010; Nye, 2011) but little in the too parochial frame of higher education policy preoccupied with narrow policy and power through matters of economics and academic autonomy (Badley, 2009; Ozga, 2011; UUK 2011; 2012; 2013), when arguably the larger threat – which comes now much to the fore (UUK 2016) is perhaps more fundamental, the future intellectual and even physical existence of places of learning themselves. For such reasons, very significant amounts of research and related funds have been funnelled into security oriented programmes of teaching as well as research across both sides of the Atlantic and across continental Europe, as well as the promotion of democratic ethos and values through law, treaty as well as programmes of teaching (EU, 2007; Freilich, Chermak and Gruenewald, 2014; GCRF 2018; IAFIE 2018; ODNI 2005; Rainey, Wicks and Ovey 2014; Richardson, 2015; Technopolis, 2015). University learning communities did they but see it, are now under the embrace of what Adler and Barnett (1998) two decades ago defined as ‘security communities’. Given the outline of university and security-intelligence agency engagements outlined in this article, these are what Sardar (2010) has call ‘postnormal times’, marked by a heightened sense of perpetual threat, risks and insecurity, in which case exceptional measures are persistently taken to enhance protection against threat and risk. Security is the antidote to security. Securitisation theory would here seem to present a model where the directory of travel is toward ever more not less security. Yet if we had the historical sense to recognise it, knowledge has always and everywhere been central to questions of power and governance and control, Foucault saw it throughout a long career (Foucault, 1970; 1972; 1977; 2009; 2010), as did Bourdieu (1986), the postcolonial critiques have long established knowledge to be the means of cultural control as much as imperial armies (Arendt 2004; Bhabha 2004; Said 1996) while theorists of totalitarian governance have consistently recognised that there can be no power without power over public education (Friedrich and Brzezinski 1967).

As global problems become intensified and intensively globalised, the university is itself a central hub representative of this trajectory, both in establishing a close correlation between securitisation and globalisation. In other words, global problems will require increased security measures to protect against their consequences. It is, we argue, inevitable that

universities in this scenario will also become more not less engaged in questions of security, and this will mean, also inevitably, an ever more close relationship – whether covert; overt; overt-covert – between universities and the security and intelligence agencies.

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