

## Satloff Unmasks Khouri-Walt 'Conflict of Interest'

May 8, 2010



Articles & Testimony

**O**n May 1, 2010, Jordanian-American journalist Rami Khouri repeated Harvard professor Stephen Walt's critique of The Washington Institute in a Beirut Daily Star op-ed column. In his reply, which ran as a letter to the editor on May 8, Institute executive director Robert Satloff not only responded to the unfounded criticism but shed light on institutional links between Khouri and Walt that readers have a right to know.

Talk about the pot calling the kettle black! Describing himself as nothing more than a reputable scholar and journalist, Rami Khouri last weekend ("A Light is Cast upon Pro-Israel Groups") regurgitated the arguments of Harvard Professor Stephen Walt about "dual loyalties" of various American public policy institutions -- including The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, which I direct -- on the editorial pages of this fine newspaper.

He praised Walt for launching a debate that "pulled [these institutions] out of the world of the shadows where their pro-Israeli agenda has always found comfortable and successful camouflage." This is a farcical claim.

Shadows? Camouflage? The Washington Institute has a paper trail several hundred miles long. Our website includes hundreds of publications by our expert staff produced over our 25 years of existence. Like thousands of public charities across the United States, our financial information is available for all to see. We have nothing to hide.

But wait a minute ... Is this the same Khouri who includes among his many professional affiliations the title of "senior fellow" of the Dubai Initiative at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government? Is this the Dubai Initiative that was established when a foreign government approached the Kennedy School's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs with what the KSG's website calls "the opportunity to advise and assist them in the establishment of the Dubai School of Government"? Is this the same Belfer Center where a certain Stephen Walt serves as Faculty Chair of the Program in International Security?

In other words, isn't it true that Rami Khouri and Stephen Walt are both closely affiliated with the same institution, which itself receives significant funding from an Arab government?

This is not a knock on Harvard -- an outstanding institution where exemplary scholars produce some of the finest scholarship in the world. Indeed, I am proud to call myself an alumnus. But this is a critique of Khouri. If he would like to serve as the PR agent for Stephen Walt on the pages of a newspaper where he once served with distinction as executive editor, that is his prerogative. But a former Nieman Journalism Fellow at Harvard, which Khouri is, should know better than to keep hidden from his readers the institutional links with the people he praises in print. This is what is commonly known as "conflict of interest."

Rami, it's time to come out of the shadows!

**Robert Satloff** (<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC10.php?CID=11>) is executive director of The Washington Institute. ❖

Beirut Daily Star

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