



THE LONDON SCHOOL
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The Rt. Hon. Tony Blair
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20 January 2006

Howard Davies
Director

Dear Prime Minister,

At Prime Minister's Questions on Wednesday the Leader of the Opposition asked you about the so-called 'LSE Report' on the cost of the Government's proposed ID cards scheme. In response you said that the Report was 'written' by someone who is a campaigner against ID cards on civil liberty grounds.

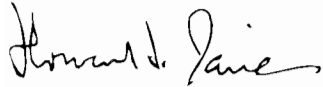
That is not the case. A similar point has been made before by Home Office Ministers, and I wrote to clarify the position. I am sorry that clarification has not been passed to your office.

The reports in question were prepared by a large group of academics here, and elsewhere. Indeed some 60 academics were involved. The principal authors are members of our Information Systems Department which, as its name suggests, is a specialised group which researches and teaches in the area. One of the authors, to whom I imagine your comment referred, is Mr Simon Davies. He is also the part-time voluntary director of an NGO, Privacy International.

But it is quite wrong, as I have explained, to suggest that he is the sole author of the reports. I would also question the assumption that an interest in civil liberty necessarily means that one is biased when producing an estimate of costs. Furthermore, the reports themselves are not part of a campaign against ID cards. The first sentences of the first report read 'The Report concludes that the establishment of a secure national identity scheme has the potential to create significant, though limited, benefits for society. However, the proposals currently being considered by Parliament are neither safe nor appropriate.'

The research and the resulting reports were attempts, in good faith, to produce realistic and independent assessments of the costs of the government's proposals. I would hope the Government could deal with it on that basis.

I am copying this letter to David Cameron and Sir Menzies Campbell.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Howard Davies". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial 'H'.

Howard Davies
Director