

The Legatum Institute Foundation – Response to Mail on Sunday article 26 November 2017

Today the Mail on Sunday published an attack on The Legatum Institute Foundation, under the headline ‘Putin’s Link to Boris and Gove’s Brexit Coup’. The misleading and inaccurate nature of this article has left us with no option but to issue a response and a correction. It is with sadness that we respond to one of our great journalistic institutions as it attacks an Institute that is dedicated to the public service of this nation at a time when we are seeking to contribute constructively to what is, without doubt, one of the most complex peacetime negotiations in living memory, and as such well within the educational remit of The Legatum Institute Foundation.

1. What does The Legatum Institute Foundation say to the allegation that is being used as a covert means to help bring about a hard Brexit?

This is nonsense. The Legatum Institute Foundation’s mission has been, since its inception in 2009, to promote prosperity. It is important to note that The Legatum Institute Foundation’s research and work with respect to Brexit is not its sole focus. It has researched and published on a variety of topics affecting the pathways from poverty to prosperity, in accordance with its educational objects, including countries undergoing major social and economic transition and how governments can best prepare for them. All of The Legatum Institute Foundation’s historic research can be found in The Legatum Institute Foundation’s [archive](#).

More recently, The Legatum Institute Foundation’s work has focused on the major challenges of our generation, covering topics including: Cultural Transformation (helping our great institutions make a greater contribution to the strength, integrity and health of society); Global People Movements (understanding the flows of refugees, migrants and the victims of trafficking around the world); the Economics of Prosperity (helping the UK and other governments to promote competition and free trade); and 21st Century International Development (examining the economic and social drivers of prosperity in developing nations). This also includes the Special Trade Commission which is engaged in publishing research on Brexit.

During the build-up to the momentous referendum last June, The Legatum Institute Foundation was neutral on the issue of the Brexit referendum (this is public knowledge), and its team – from the core staff to the experts on the Special Trade Commission – held a range of views on which outcome would be best for Britain.

In the aftermath of the referendum, The Legatum Institute Foundation is committed to achieving the best deal possible for Britain. The Legatum Institute Foundation does not advocate a ‘hard’ or ‘soft’ Brexit; it wants to help Britain achieve a good Brexit – one that maximises the opportunities and minimises the disruption for the nation. Indeed, it is a matter of fact and public record that Shanker Singham publicly advocated voting Remain,

and that he was appointed to his position at The Legatum Institute Foundation before the Brexit referendum was announced. The fact that his area of expertise has proved so useful in the aftermath of the referendum is a complete coincidence, and any attempt to imply otherwise is wholly wrong and entirely inaccurate.

2. What does The Legatum Institute Foundation say to the insinuation that it is having undue influence on the Brexit process?

We are flattered but perplexed by the absurd accusation that we are having an undue influence on Brexit: there are 4 members of the Legatum Institute Foundation team that work on Brexit, while the Government has thousands of civil servants at its disposal to advise them on Brexit.

3. What does The Legatum Institute Foundation say to the accusation that Shanker Singham co-ordinated the letter that was sent from Boris and Michael to the PM?

The article alleges that The Legatum Institute Foundation was the “co-ordinator” of what it calls a “coup” against the Prime Minister orchestrated by the UK Foreign Secretary and the UK Environment Secretary to push for a ‘hard’ Brexit. This histrionic language would be comical if the accusation were not so serious.

The letter allegedly sent by Boris Johnson and Michael Gove to the Prime Minister was not co-ordinated by Shanker Singham. Upon request, Shanker Singham shares his insights and expertise with parliamentarians (including members of the Government), members of the civil service and the business community because of his unparalleled level of knowledge and expertise in the areas of economics and trade policy. This is a public service to all stakeholders involved in the Brexit process, as the UK continues with these incredibly complex negotiations. For senior Ministers to write to the Prime Minister is not in any way unusual. To describe such correspondence as a ‘coup’ illustrates the divisions that still exist many months after the referendum, and are reflected in some sectors of the media, including the Mail on Sunday. The Legatum Institute Foundation is seeking to heal these divisions, not exacerbate them, by providing advice to help the UK achieve the best possible Brexit.

4. How does The Legatum Institute Foundation respond to the attack on the Legatum Group?

We are grateful for the generous support of the Legatum Group and their commitment to the work of The Legatum Institute Foundation, as one of over 40 donors in 2017. While accusations are being levelled at the Legatum network generally, we are separate and independent from the Legatum Group. It is not therefore, for us to respond. For further information on the Legatum Group see its website at www.legatum.com.



5. How is The Legatum Institute Foundation funded?

The Legatum Institute Foundation was established in 2007 by Legatum Foundation Limited, the humanitarian development arm of the Legatum Group. Legatum Foundation Limited provides The Legatum Institute Foundation with its core funding, as part of its vision is to see a more prosperous world for all, and they are committed to using their capital to help make that a reality. A community of over 40 donors from trusts, foundations, corporates to individuals fund the programmatic work of The Legatum Institute Foundation and we are grateful for all that their support enables us to do to tackle the root causes of poverty and research the most effective pathways to prosperity. As a UK registered charity, The Legatum Institute Foundation's financial statements are filed with the UK's Charity Commission and publicly available.

6. How does The Legatum Institute Foundation respond to the insinuation that Mr Chandler is closely orchestrating the work of the Institute?

Christopher Chandler is a much-loved friend of the Institute but has no role within The Legatum Institute Foundation. The Legatum Institute Foundation is a fully independent public charity, and all The Legatum Institute Foundation matters are decided by its board of trustees and senior executive team. It should be noted that Shanker Singham was appointed as a recognised global trade expert by the Executive Director of The Legatum Institute Foundation in January 2016 – a full six months before the UK electorate voted to Leave the European Union – to undertake a programme of work investigating how market forces can best be employed to benefit countries, and how they can be improved to create a more equitable future for all, particularly the poor.

7. How does The Legatum Institute Foundation respond to the accusation of secrecy and being mysterious?

The Mail on Sunday accuses Shanker Singham, Legatum's director of economic policy, of "secretly helping to draw up the "hard Brexit" trade policies advocated by Gove and Johnson – including preparing for a no-deal Brexit." It further accuses The Legatum Institute Foundation of being "mysterious". It is ludicrous to suggest that any of The Legatum Institute Foundation's work is undertaken secretly. The Legatum Institute Foundation is a public charity with an educational remit and all our work is placed in the public domain, with frequent open meetings and offers of briefings to MPs of all political persuasions and viewpoints.

8. How does The Legatum Institute Foundation respond to the accusation that it has links to Russia and its leadership?

We refute in the strongest possible terms the allegation that The Legatum Institute Foundation is aligned with, influenced by, or somehow connected to Vladimir Putin or the Russian state, or has ever been. This is patently false, completely unsubstantiated, and frankly, laughable. The implication that The Legatum Institute Foundation's interests are aligned with those of Russia (or its leadership) are demonstrably false and is suggestive of a deeper agenda.

Moreover, this suggestion is completely incongruous with our work, carried out over an extended period, which has openly challenged communication practices in Russia. The Legatum Institute Foundation has been a vocal public critic of Russia over many years and has employed on its staff some of the world's most renowned critics of Russia's leadership. See, for example, the following reports which speak for themselves:

- **Russia: A Post Modern Dictatorship**
www.li.com/docs/default-source/publications/pomeransev1_russia_imr_web_final.pdf
- **Debate: Russia Poses a Greater Threat to Europe than ISIS**
www.li.com/events/international-security-debate-russia-poses-a-greater-threat-to-europe-than-isis
- **The TV vs. The Fridge: *Why economic decline isn't translating into dissatisfaction with Putin.***
<http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/12/02/the-tv-vs-the-fridge-russia-putin-media/>
- **Winning the Information War: *Techniques and Counter-strategies to Russian Propaganda in Central and Eastern Europe***
www.li.com/docs/default-source/publications/winning-the-information-war-full-report-pdf.pdf