



# THE SHADY HISTORY OF THE MUNK SCHOOL OF GLOBAL AFFAIRS & PUBLIC POLICY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

For some, the Munk School's founder, Peter Munk (1927-2018), will go down in Canadian history as a mega visionary, entrepreneur and philanthropist that "made it big." For others, the Munk School will forever be associated with right-wing political influence and Peter Munk's oil, gas and mining ventures shrouded in human rights abuses, environmental crimes and corporate tax evasion. With respect to the latter, it is important to ask: Why would the University of Toronto (U of T) associate itself with such an institution?

Let's just say the relationship between the Munk School and U of T revolves around the almighty dollar. In a world driven by the dollar financial contributions go a long way with respect to securing an affiliation and constructing an institutional image—something the Munk School has nearly perfected with its longstanding unification with U of T. As stated in [U of T Engineering Strategic Communications](#) (2018), "The Munks [Peter and his wife Melanie] are one of the university's most generous benefactors and have cumulatively given more than \$51.1 million to key priorities across the university."

No one disputes the relationship between money and institutional power. In the case of Peter Munk and his school, donation after donation provided Munk with more and more influence to shape the academic priorities, political positions and projects of the school. At one point, Munk's donations were linked to conditions of influence from his mining company Barrick Gold's international advisory board, which included heavy-hitting right-wing politicians such as George Bush and Brian Mulroney. In addition to these right-wing influences, the Munk School was a proponent of Stephen Harper's ruthless pro-American isolationist policies on Iran. As a supporter of economic sanctions against Iran, the Harper regime—and every Canadian PM since including war hawk Carney—contributed to the needless suffering and premature deaths of countless Iranians.

In addition to supporting Stephen Harper's brutal political measures against Iran, the Munk School accepted \$250,000 from the Department of Foreign Affairs during Harper's rule to head off an initiative designed to oppose the Iranian government. As an academic institution saturated in right-wing political thought and U.S. imperialism the Munk School played a key role in mainstreaming an anti-Iran perspective, which played—and continues to play—a central ideological role in the hyper-militarization of Canadian society. In addition, [Pitasanna Shanmugathas's](#) (2018) states, "With respect to stifling academic freedom, in 2013, Munk School Director Janice Stein, along with former Minister of Foreign Affairs John Baird, were accused by a coalition of Iranian-Canadian community groups of stifling academic debate by attempting to sideline critics of Harper's policy on Iran."

Peter Munk's reputation as a "successful entrepreneur" should not overshadow his legacy as a power-hungry capitalist that founded an academic institution as a means of fostering diplomatic relations aimed at expanding his personal wealth and political influence. Saying "NO" to the Munk School is saying "NO" to human rights violations, environmental crimes, corporate tax evasion, a right-wing political agenda that fills the pockets of mining and war profiteers.

## DEMAND THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO BREAK TIES WITH THE MUNK SCHOOL OF GLOBAL AFFAIRS & PUBLIC POLICY

