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news

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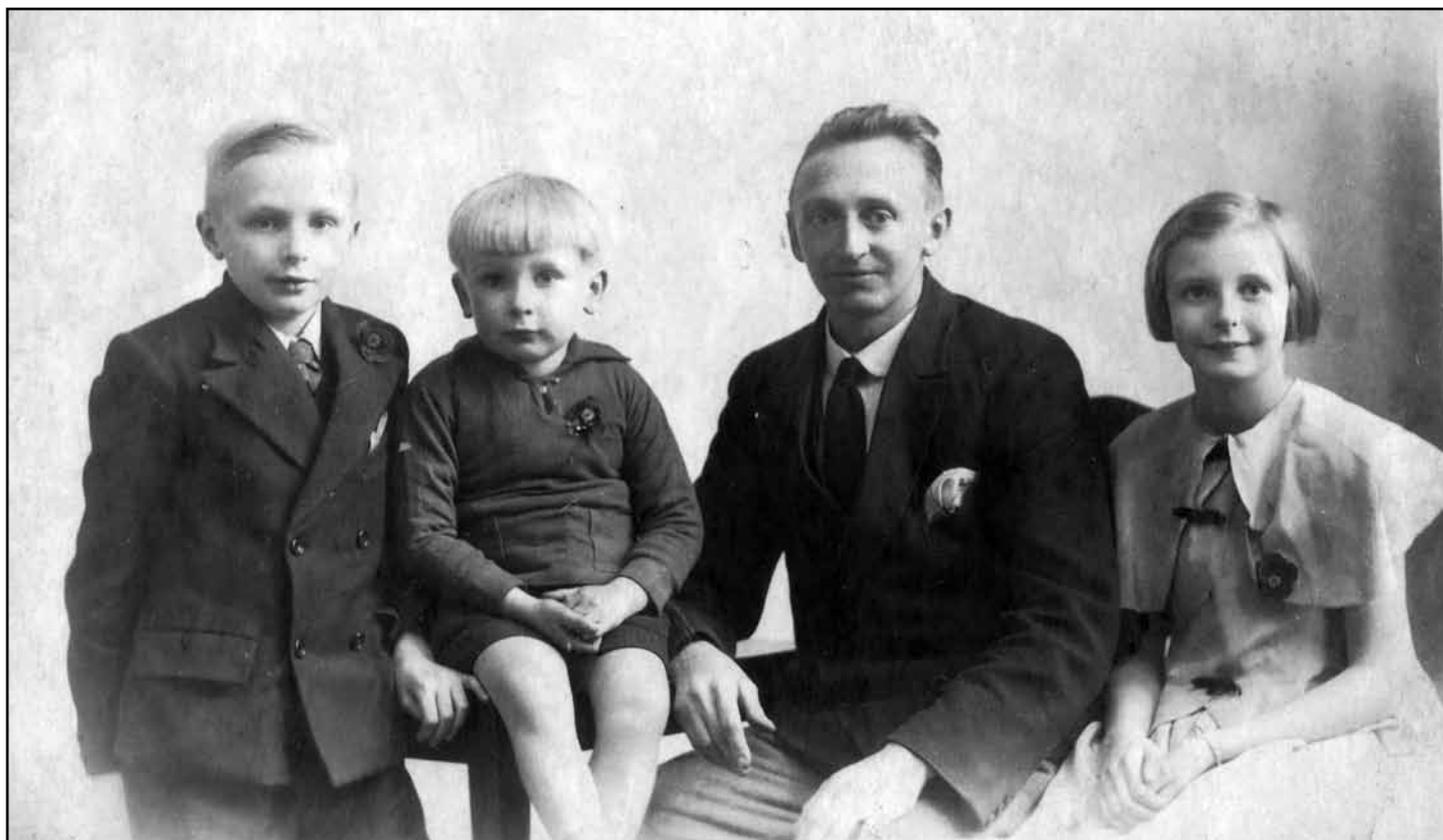


Editorial Ramblings



Depression is setting in. Actually, it started setting in during August when we had our holiday ruined by the dreadful weather. I say that, but when I think back, it started setting in on 2 July 2008 when we arrived in this awful place. Before the end of that July, I was in hospital with serious pneumonia. I haven't felt well since then - physically or mentally. Not that the incompetent doctors here can find anything wrong with me. How I hate being in this cold, wet, sunless, miserable failure of a country. I don't know how much longer I can endure being here. I only hope we can have a long winter holiday in the sunshine somewhere.

Until very recently I was doing my best to get us out of here and back to the Middle East, although good contracts overseas are hard to come by at my age. At an age when I should be able to retire to the sunshine, I was spending my time looking for a job in the sunshine! However, after spending some time in thought, I now feel that the Middle East, my favoured destination to find work, is perhaps not a good place to be at present - and for the foreseeable future. With a war likely to happen in the region any time soon, I suggest to all of our family and friends in the region that now is a good time to get out. The reason I say this is not some wild fantasy, but fact; Israel will not take lightly the fact that Iran is now a nuclear state. Israel has many enemies and nations who aren't sympathetic to them. These include Russia, who fuelled Iran's reactor, Turkey, Syria and most of the Arabian Gulf countries, as well as the Palestinians and other surrounding nations. In 1981, Israel bombed Iran before they got as far with their nuclear programme as they have today. As the nuclear reactor at the power station at Bushehr is now fuelled, I cannot see that Israel is going to tolerate this situation for much longer - and this time there could be a nuclear holocaust. Many other people are thinking along the same lines as myself too - you have been warned! The Far East is also likely to be an area under threat in the near future too, now that North Korea is going nuclear. Maybe Australia, New Zealand or even Canada (not the West Coast) would be a safer place to be in this time of uncertainty. **Note:** *I wrote the above before the *The Changing Map of the Middle East* and the report on the speech made by John Sawyer were published* (later in this edition). On the 17th October, Grace and Little Lad came home from a children's party in the early afternoon and Grace suggested we took a trip to Blackpool to see the illuminations. So off we went. En-route we popped in to see our family in Preston and were given a bag of family photographs. This, to me, was worth more than gold bars, so I have now started to digitise them. It gave us great delight to see the photographs below (and overleaf), that I'd never seen before, showing my mother Joan Topping (right), her father, John Topping and two brothers, Eric (left) and Jack (actually John Joseph) Topping (2nd left).



Cover Photograph: The famous Blackpool illuminations, as interpreted by John Cook (JP), who took this photograph.

Photograph above: The Topping family: Eric, Jack (actually John Joseph), John - my Grandfather and Joan Topping - my Mother. Taken circa 1933 - 1935.

Photograph overleaf: Ethel Topping (nee Shanley), my Grandmother and wife of John Topping (above). Date unknown.





The seafront at Blackpool during the illuminations



The famous Blackpool Tower and the illuminations.

Autumn colours along the banks of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal, not far from our home.





*A Grey Heron
by the canal*

*didn't hang around
for long.....*



One of the locks on the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal.



From Human Rights to Pagan Rites

by **Melanie Phillips**
Daily Mail, 4 October 2010

Will someone please tell me this is all a joke?

Until now, Druids have been regarded indulgently as a curious remnant of Britain's ancient past, a bunch of eccentrics who annually dress up in strange robes at Stonehenge to celebrate the summer solstice.

However, according to the Charity Commission, they are to be recognised as a religion and, as a result, afforded charitable status, with the tax exemptions and other advantages that follow.

After a four-year campaign, the Commission says it accepts that the Druids worship nature and that they also believe in the spirits of places such as mountains and rivers, as well as in 'divine guides'. This, apparently, makes them qualify as a religion.

Can it be long before the BBC transmits *Stones Of Praise*, or solemnly invites listeners to Radio 4's *Thought For The Day* to genuflect to a tree?

Some might shrug this off. After all, the Druids don't do any harm to anyone. What skin is it off anyone else's nose how they are categorised?

Well, it actually matters rather a lot. Elevating them to the same status as Christianity is but the latest example of how the bedrock creed of this country is being undermined. More than that, it is an attack upon the very concept of religion itself.

This is because Druidry is simply not a religion. Now, it's true that religion is notoriously difficult to define. But true religions surely rest on an established structure of traditions, beliefs, literature and laws.

Above all, they share a belief in a supernatural deity (or more than one) that governs the universe.

By these standards, Druidry is surely not a religion but a cult — a group defined merely by ritual practices but which stands outside mainstream religion.

Nor does it seem to conform to the definition of a religion according to charity law. When Radio 4's *Sunday Programme* suggested yesterday morning to Phil Ryder, chairman of the *Druid Network*, that the legal definition of religion included a 'significant belief in a supreme being or entity', he saw no contradiction. Druids, he said cheerfully, might venerate many gods, inanimate objects or nature.

How very inclusive of them! But the key point is surely that

none of these beliefs involves a 'supreme' being that exists beyond the Earth and the universe. On the contrary, Druids worship what is in or on the earth itself.

When asked further how Druidry benefited the public interest — the key test for charitable status — Mr Ryder burred that its ethical framework consisted of forming 'honourable and sustainable relationships' with everything in the world, including animals, people and nature.

But there are many who subscribe to no belief system at all and who would say they, too, want to live in harmony with the earth and everything in it. Are they, therefore, also to be regarded as religious folk and given charitable status?

Maybe Prince Charles, who famously talks to his plants, could register himself on that basis as the founder of a new religion? *Duchy Devotions*, anyone?

If the Druids qualify as a religion, can other cults such as the *Scientologists* be far behind? Can it be long, indeed, before the wise and learned theologians of the Charity Commission similarly grant charitable status to sorcery, witchcraft or even the Jedi — the fictional *Star Wars* 'religion' which the 2001 census recorded as having no fewer than 390,127 adherents in England and Wales.

The whole thing is beyond absurd. But it is also malevolent. For it is all of a piece with the agenda by the oh-so politically correct Charity Commission to promote the fanatical religious creed of the Left — the worship of equality.

The Commission was primed by Labour for this attempt to restructure society back in 2006, when charity law was redrawn to redefine 'public benefit' as helping the poor.

This put the independent schools in the front line of attack, since education was no longer itself considered a benefit — as it had been since time immemorial — but only insofar as it furthered the ideology of 'equality'.

Thus, we have arrived at the extraordinary situation where some of these schools, which have delivered such inestimable benefit to the nation, face the loss of their charitable status which is to be given instead to people who dance naked around stones and worship the sun.

But the new respectability of paganism cannot be laid entirely at the Charity Commission's door. For in recent years, pagan practices have been rapidly multiplying, with an explosion of the occult: witchcraft, parapsychology, séances, telepathy and mind-bending cults.

Astonishingly, around 100 members of the *Armed Forces* now classify themselves as pagans, and a further 30 as witches.

There are thought to be about 500 pagan police officers. A Pagan Police Association has even been set up to represent officers who ‘worship nature and believe in many gods’.

They have been given the right to take days off to perform rituals, such as leaving food out for the dead, dressing up as ghosts and casting spells, or celebrating the sun god with ‘unabashed sexuality and promiscuity’.

Britain’s prison authorities are equally hospitable to the occult: under instructions issued to every prison governor, pagan ‘priests’ are allowed to use wine and wands during ceremonies in jails. Inmates practising paganism are allowed a hoodless robe, incense and a piece of religious jewellery among their personal possessions.

Political correctness gone mad or what? As one disgusted police officer exploded: ‘What has it come to when a cop gets time off so he can sit about making spells or dance around the place drinking honey beer with a wand in his hand?’

How on earth has our supposedly rational society come to subscribe to so much totally barking mumbo-jumbo?

In part, it developed from the New Age embrace of Eastern beliefs in the inter-connectedness of everything in the universe. The defining characteristic of such faiths is a spirituality which is concerned with the self rather than the world beyond the individual.

These beliefs were, therefore, tailor-made for the ‘me society’ which turned against Biblical constraints on behaviour in the interests of others. They were subsequently given rocket fuel by environmentalism, at the core of which lies the pagan worship of ‘Mother Earth’.

And they were then legitimised by the doctrines of equality of outcomes and human rights — which, far from protecting the rights of truly religious people, aim to force Biblical morality and belief out of British and European public life altogether.

This is because human rights and equality of outcomes are held to be universal values. That means they invariably trump specific religious beliefs to impose instead equal status for all creeds.

But if all creeds, however absurd, have equal meaning then every belief is equally meaningless. And without the Judeo-Christian heritage there would be no morality and no true human rights.

There is nothing remotely enlightened about paganism. It was historically tied up with both communism and fascism, precisely because it is a negation of reason and the bedrock values behind Western progress.

The result is that, under the secular onslaught of human

rights, our society is reverting to a pre-modern era of anti-human superstition and irrationality. From human rights, you might say, to pagan rites in one seamless progression.

Anyone who thinks radical egalitarianism is progressive has got this very wrong. We are hurtling backwards in time to a more primitive age.

Courtesy of URL: <http://www.melaniephillips.com/articles-new/?p=769>

Another Office

No doubt many of you use Microsoft Office in one of its many iterations. No doubt you have also suffered the idiosyncrasies and frustrations of using *Word*, in particular. I certainly have, as I use it every day when earning my living. One of the most annoying aspects of using *Word* is that it handles graphics and tables very badly. So badly, that accurately placing a graphic of whatever sort; drawing, photograph etc., is made almost impossible because the program puts them wherever it chooses and it is impossible to place them precisely. In contrast, the program I use to compile this newsletter (Adobe InDesign CS5) allows me to place a graphic to 0.001 mm of where I want it to be located. Another aspect of *Word* that is so annoying is that whenever I want to add a column to a table, the table over-runs the margins - and indeed over-runs the page, making it very difficult to re-arrange the table. These are only two areas of frustration and annoyance of using MS-Office. I’m pleased to say that one can now throw Microsoft in the bin and use a FREE alternative. Microsoft software is always over priced so this could save you a bundle of cash too. Now, most free software isn’t up to much when compared with its expensive, commercial counterparts. As such, I don’t use a lot of it. However, this is an exception to the rule.

I’m talking about *Open Office 3.2*. Yes, *Open Office* has been around for a while and some of you may have already tried it. But this recent version is very good - and it doesn’t have the annoyances of *Word* when using graphics and tables - or the annoying ribbon toolbar of the later versions. The company that gave us this delightful software was *Sun Microsystems*. This company has now been bought by *Oracle* and is now available for **purchase!** However, there is still a FREE download available from URL: <http://www.openoffice.org/> so get in there fast before it’s no longer available for free. You won’t regret it as all your *Word* documents can be opened in *Open Office* and also documents compiled in *Open Office* can be saved in the *Word* format (.doc). And you won’t be adding to the already overflowing coffers of Microsoft.

The shaming of America

by Robert Fisk

Our writer delivers a searing dispatch after the WikiLeaks revelations that expose in detail the brutality of the war in Iraq - and the astonishing, disgraceful deceit of the US

Sunday, 24 October 2010 *The Independent*

As usual, the Arabs knew. They knew all about the mass torture, the promiscuous shooting of civilians, the outrageous use of air power against family homes, the vicious American and British mercenaries, the cemeteries of the innocent dead. All of Iraq knew. Because they were the victims.

Only we could pretend we did not know. Only we in the West could counter every claim, every allegation against the Americans or British with some worthy general – the ghastly US military spokesman Mark Kimmitt and the awful chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Peter Pace, come to mind – to ring-fence us with lies. Find a man who'd been tortured and you'd be told it was terrorist propaganda; discover a house full of children killed by an American air strike and that, too, would be terrorist propaganda, or “collateral damage”, or a simple phrase: “We have nothing on that.”

Of course, we all knew they always did have something. And yesterday's ocean of military memos proves it yet again. Al-Jazeera has gone to extraordinary lengths to track down the actual Iraqi families whose men and women are recorded as being wasted at US checkpoints – I've identified one because I reported it in 2004, the bullet-smashed car, the two dead journalists, even the name of the local US captain – and it was *The Independent* on Sunday that first alerted the world to the hordes of indisciplined gunmen being flown to Baghdad to protect diplomats and generals. These mercenaries, who murdered their way around the cities of Iraq, abused me when I told them I was writing about them way back in 2003.

It's always tempting to avoid a story by saying “nothing new”. The “old story” idea is used by governments to dampen journalistic interest as it can be used by us to cover journalistic idleness. And it's true that reporters have seen some of this stuff before. The “evidence” of Iranian involvement in bomb-making in southern Iraq was farmed out to *The New York Times*'s Michael Gordon by the Pentagon in February 2007. The raw material, which we can now read, is far more doubtful than the Pentagon-peddled version. Iranian military material was still lying around all over Iraq from the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war and most of the attacks on Americans were at that stage carried out by Sunni insurgents. The reports suggesting that Syria allowed insurgents to pass through their territory, by the way, are correct. I have spoken to the families of Palestinian suicide bombers whose sons made their way to Iraq from Lebanon via the Lebanese village of Majdal Aanjar and then via the



A US soldier shows the strain of serving in Iraq

northern Syrian city of Aleppo to attack the Americans.

But, written in bleak militarese as it may be, here is the evidence of America's shame. This is material that can be used by lawyers in courts. If 66,081 – I loved the “81” bit – is the highest American figure available for dead civilians, then the real civilian mortality score is infinitely higher since this records only those civilians the Americans knew of. Some of them were brought to the Baghdad mortuary in my presence, and it was the senior official there who told me that the Iraqi ministry of health had banned doctors from performing any post-mortems on dead civilians brought in by American troops. Now why should that be? Because some had been tortured to death by Iraqis working for the Americans? Did this hook up with the 1,300 independent US reports of torture in Iraqi police stations?

The Americans scored no better last time round. In Kuwait, US troops could hear Palestinians being tortured by Kuwaitis in police stations after the liberation of the city from Saddam Hussein's legions in 1991. A member of the Kuwaiti royal family was involved in the torture. US forces did not intervene. They just complained to the royal family. Soldiers are always being told not to intervene. After all, what was Lieutenant Avi Grabovsky of the Israeli army told when he reported to his officer in September 1982 that Israel's Phalangist allies had just murdered some women and children? “We know, it's not to our liking, and don't interfere,” Grabovsky was told by his battalion commander. This was during the Sabra and Chatila refugee camp massacre.

The quotation comes from Israel's 1983 Kahan commission report – heaven knows what we could read if WikiLeaks got its hands on the barrels of military files in the Israeli defence ministry (or the Syrian version, for that matter). But, of course, back in those days, we didn't know how to use a computer, let alone how to write on it. And that, of course, is one of the important lessons of the whole WikiLeaks phenomenon.

Back in the First World War or the Second World War or Vietnam, you wrote your military reports on paper. They may have been typed in triplicate but you could number your copies, trace any spy and prevent the leaks. The Pentagon Papers was actually written on paper. You needed to find a mole to get them. But paper could always be destroyed, weeded, trashed, all copies destroyed. At the end of the 1914-18 war, for example, a British second lieutenant shot a Chinese man after Chinese workers had looted a French military train. The Chinese man had pulled a knife on the soldier. But during the 1930s, the British soldier's file was "weeded" three times and so no trace of the incident survives. A faint ghost of it remains only in a regimental war diary which records Chinese involvement in the looting of "French provision trains". The only reason I know of the killing is that my father was the British lieutenant and told me the story before he died. No WikiLeaks then.

But I do suspect this massive hoard of material from the Iraq war has serious implications for journalists as well as armies. What is the future of the Seymour Hershes and the old-style investigative journalism that The Sunday Times used to practise? What is the point of sending teams of reporters to examine war crimes and meet military "deep throats", if almost half a million secret military documents are going to float up in front of you on a screen?

We still haven't got to the bottom of the WikiLeaks story, and I rather suspect that there are more than just a few US soldiers involved in this latest revelation. Who knows if it doesn't go close to the top? In its investigations, for example, al-Jazeera found an extract from a run-of-the-mill Pentagon press conference in November 2005. Peter Pace, the uninspiring chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, is briefing journalists on how soldiers should react to the cruel treatment of prisoners, pointing out proudly that an American soldier's duty is to intervene if he sees evidence of torture. Then the camera moves to the far more sinister figure of Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who suddenly interrupts – almost in a mutter, and to Pace's consternation – "I don't think you mean they (American soldiers) have an obligation to physically stop it. It's to report it."

The significance of this remark – cryptically sadistic in its way – was lost on the journos, of course. But the secret Frago 242 memo now makes much more sense of the press conference. Presumably sent by General Ricardo Sanchez, this is the instruction that tells soldiers: "Provided the initial report confirms US forces were not involved in the detainee abuse, no further investigation will be conducted unless directed by HHQ [Higher Headquarters]." Abu Ghraib happened under Sanchez's watch in Iraq. It was also Sanchez, by the way, who couldn't explain to me at a press conference why his troops had killed Saddam's sons in a gun battle in Mosul rather than capture them.

So Sanchez's message, it seems, must have had Rumsfeld's imprimatur. And so General David Petraeus – widely loved by the US press corps – was presumably responsible for

the dramatic increase in US air strikes over two years; 229 bombing attacks in Iraq in 2006, but 1,447 in 2007. Interestingly enough, US air strikes in Afghanistan have risen by 172 per cent since Petraeus took over there. Which makes it all the more astonishing that the Pentagon is now bleating that WikiLeaks may have blood on its hands. The Pentagon has been covered in blood since the dropping of the atom bomb on Hiroshima in 1945, and for an institution that ordered the illegal invasion of Iraq in 2003 – wasn't that civilian death toll more than 66,000 by their own count, out of a total of 109,000 recorded? – to claim that WikiLeaks is culpable of homicide is preposterous.

The truth, of course, is that if this vast treasury of secret reports had proved that the body count was much lower than trumpeted by the press, that US soldiers never tolerated Iraqi police torture, rarely shot civilians at checkpoints and always brought killer mercenaries to account, US generals would be handing these files out to journalists free of charge on the steps of the Pentagon. They are furious not because secrecy has been breached, or because blood may be spilt, but because they have been caught out telling the lies we always knew they told.

US official documents detail extraordinary scale of wrongdoing

WikiLeaks yesterday released on its website some 391,832 US military messages documenting actions and reports in Iraq over the period 2004-2009. Here are the main points:

Prisoners abused, raped and murdered

Hundreds of incidents of abuse and torture of prisoners by Iraqi security services, up to and including rape and murder. Since these are itemised in US reports, American authorities now face accusations of failing to investigate them. UN leaders and campaigners are calling for an official investigation.

Civilian death toll cover-up

Coalition leaders have always said "we don't do death tolls", but the documents reveal many deaths were logged. Respected British group Iraq Body Count says that, after preliminary examination of a sample of the documents, there are an estimated 15,000 extra civilian deaths, raising their total to 122,000.

The shooting of men trying to surrender

In February 2007, an Apache helicopter killed two Iraqis, suspected of firing mortars, as they tried to surrender. A military lawyer is quoted as saying: "They cannot surrender to aircraft and are still valid targets."

Private security firm abuses

Britain's Bureau of Investigative Journalism says it found documents detailing new cases of alleged wrongful killings of civilians involving Blackwater, since renamed Xe Services. Despite this, Xe retains extensive US contracts in Afghanistan.

Al-Qa'ida's use of children and "mentally handicapped" for bombing

A teenage boy with Down's syndrome who killed six and injured 34 in a suicide attack in Diyala was said to be an example of an ongoing al-Qa'ida strategy to recruit those with learning difficulties. A doctor is alleged to have sold a list of female patients with learning difficulties to insurgents.

Hundreds of civilians killed at checkpoints

Out of the 832 deaths recorded at checkpoints in Iraq between 2004 and 2009, analysis by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism suggests 681 were civilians. Fifty families were shot at and 30 children killed. Only 120 insurgents were

killed in checkpoint incidents.

Iranian influence

Reports detail US concerns that Iranian agents had trained, armed and directed militants in Iraq. In one document, the US military warns a militia commander believed to be behind the deaths of US troops and kidnapping of Iraqi officials was trained by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard.

Courtesy of URL: <http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/fisk/robert-fisk-the-shaming-of-america-2115111.html>

The Changing Map of the Middle East

From Israel to Iraq, a Christian flight of Biblical proportions has begun.

by **Robert Fisk**

Tuesday, 26 October 2010 *The Independent*

In the centre of the rebuilt Beirut, the massive old Maronite Cathedral of St George stands beside the even larger mass of the new Mohammad al-Amin mosque.

The mosque's minarets tower over the cathedral, but the Maronites were built a spanking new archbishop's house between the two buildings as compensation. Yet every day, the two calls to prayer – the clanging of church bells and the wailing of the muezzin – beat an infernal percussion across the city. Both bells and wails are tape recordings, but they have been turned up to the highest decibel pitch to outdo each other, louder than an aircraft's roar, almost as crazed as the nightclub music from Gemmayzeh across the square. But the Christians are leaving.

Across the Middle East, it is the same story of despairing – sometimes frightened – Christian minorities, and of an exodus that reaches almost Biblical proportions. Almost half of Iraq's Christians have fled their country since the first Gulf War in 1991, most of them after the 2004 invasion – a weird tribute to the self-proclaimed Christian faith of the two Bush presidents who went to war with Iraq – and stand now at 550,000, scarcely 3 per cent of the population. More than half of Lebanon's Christians now live outside their country. Once a majority, the nation's one and a half million Christians, most of them Maronite Catholics, comprise perhaps 35 per cent of the Lebanese. Egypt's Coptic Christians – there are at most around eight million – now represent less than 10 per cent of the population.

This is, however, not so much a flight of fear, more a chronicle of a death foretold. Christians are being outbred by the majority Muslim populations in their countries and they are almost hopelessly divided. In Jerusalem, there are 13 different Christian churches and three patriarchs. A Muslim holds the keys to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre



A cross is decorated with lights as an Orthodox Christians in the northern Iraqi city of Arbil commemorate the Elevation of the Holy Cross on September 13, 2010,

to prevent Armenian and Orthodox priests fighting each other at Easter.

When more than 200 members of 14 different churches – some of them divided – gathered in Rome last week for a papal synod on the loss of Christian populations in the lands where Christianity began, it was greeted with boredom or ignored altogether by most of the West's press.

Yet nowhere is the Christian fate sadder than in the territories around Jerusalem. As Monsignor Fouad Twal, the ninth Latin patriarch of Jerusalem and the second to be an Arab, put it bleakly, "the Israelis regard us as 100 per cent Palestinian Arabs and we are oppressed in the same way as the Muslims. But Muslim fundamentalists identify us with the Christian West – which is not always true – and want us to pay the price." With Christian Palestinians in Bethlehem cut off from Jerusalem by the same Israeli wall which imprisons their Muslim brothers, there is now, Twal says, "a young generation of Christians who do not know or visit the Holy Sepulchre".

The Jordanian royal family have always protected their Christian population – at 350,000, it is around 6 per cent of the population – but this is perhaps the only flame of hope in the region. The divisions within Christianity proved even more dangerous to their community than the great Sunni-Shia divide did to the Muslims of the Middle East. Even the Crusaders were divided in their 100-year occupation of Palestine, or “Outremer”, as they called it. The Lebanese journalist Fady Noun, a Christian, wrote a profound article from Rome last week in which he spoke of the Christian loss as “a great wound haemorrhaging blood”, and bemoaned both Christian division and “egoism” for what he saw as a spiritual as well as a physical emigration. “There are those Christians who reach a kind of indifference... in Western countries who, swayed by the culture of these countries and the media, persuade eastern Christians to forget their identity,” he wrote.

Pope Benedict, whose mournful visit to the Holy Land last year prompted him to call the special synod which ended in the Vatican at the weekend, has adopted his usual perspective – that, despite their difficulties, Christians of the “Holy Land” must reinvigorate their feelings as “living stones” of the Middle Eastern Church. “To live in dignity in your own nation is before everything a fundamental human right,” he said. “That is why you must support conditions of peace and justice, which are indispensable for the harmonious development of all the inhabitants of the region.” But the Pope’s words sometimes suggested that real peace and justice lay in salvation rather than historical renewal.

Patriarch Twal believes that the Pope understood during his trip to Israel and the West Bank last year “*the disastrous consequences of the conflict between Jews and Palestinian Arabs*” and has stated openly that one of the principal causes of Christian emigration is “the Israeli occupation, the Christians’ lack of freedom of movement, and the economic circumstances in which they live”. But he does not see the total disappearance of the Christian faith in the Middle East. “We must have the courage to accept that we are Arabs and Christians and be faithful to this identity. Our wonderful mission is to be a bridge between East and West.”

One anonymous prelate at the Rome synod, quoted in one of the synod’s working papers, took a more pragmatic view. “Let’s stop saying there is no problem with Muslims; this isn’t true,” he said. “The problem doesn’t only come from fundamentalists, but from constitutions. In all the countries of the region except Lebanon, Christians are second-class citizens.” If religious freedom is guaranteed in these countries, “it is limited by specific laws and practices”. In Egypt, this has certainly been the case since President Sadat referred to himself as “the Muslim president of a Muslim country”.

The Lebanese Maronite Church – its priests, by the way, can marry – understands all too well how Christians can become aligned with political groups. The Lebanese writer Sami Khalife wrote last week in the French-language newspaper *L’Orient-Le Jour* – the francophone voice of Lebanon’s Christians – that a loss of moral authority had turned churches in his country into “political actors” which were beginning to sound like political parties. An open letter to the Iranian president, Mahmoud Ahmedinejad, warning him to try to turn Lebanon into a “front line” against Israel, was signed by 250 Lebanese. Most of them were from the minority Christian community.

Nor can the church ignore Saudi Arabia, where Christianity is banned as a religion just as much as the building of churches. Christians cannot visit the Islamic holy cities of Mecca or Medina – the doors of the Vatican and Canterbury Cathedral are at least open to Muslims – and 12 Filipinos and a priest were arrested in Saudi Arabia only this month for “proselytism” for holding a secret mass. There is, perhaps, a certain irony in the fact that the only balance to Christian emigration has been the arrival in the Middle East of perhaps a quarter of a million Christian Filipino guest workers – especially in the Gulf region – while Patriarch Twal reckons that around 40,000 of them now work and live in Israel and “Palestine”.

Needless to say, it is violence against Christians that occupies the West, a phenomenon nowhere better, or more bloodily, illustrated than by al-Qa’ida’s kidnapping of Archbishop Faraj Rahho in Mosul – an incident recorded in the US military archives revealed on Saturday – and his subsequent murder. When the Iraqi authorities later passed death sentences on two men for the killing, the church asked for them to be reprieved. In Egypt, there has been a gloomy increase in Christian-Muslim violence, especially in ancient villages in the far south of the country; in Cairo, Christian churches are now cordoned off by day-and-night police checkpoints.

And while Western Christians routinely deplore the falling Christian populations of the Middle East, their visits to the region tend to concentrate on pilgrimages to Biblical sites rather than meetings with their Christian opposite numbers.

Americans, so obsessed by the myths of East-West “clashes of civilisation” since 11 September 2001, often seem to regard Christianity as a “Western” rather than an Eastern religion, neatly separating the Middle East roots of their own religion from the lands of Islam. That in itself is a loss of faith.

Courtesy of URL: <http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/fisk/robert-fisk-exodus-the-changing-map-of-the-middle-east-2116463.html>

Spy Boss Defends Secrecy; Nukes Key Threat

by William Maclean, Security Correspondent

Britain's top spy, in the first public speech by a serving UK espionage chief, said on Thursday (Ed. 28 October 2010) terrorists might hit the West again "at huge human cost" but nuclear proliferation by states was a more far-reaching danger.

Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) chief Sir John Sawers, in an address to the Society of Editors media group hosted at Thomson Reuters London offices, said the risks of failure in tackling proliferation by countries like Iran "are grim."

"Terrorism is difficult enough, and despite our collective efforts, an attack may well get through. The human cost would be huge. But our country, our democratic system, will not be brought down by a typical terrorist attack," he said.

"The dangers of proliferation of nuclear weapons and chemical and biological weapons are more far-reaching. It can alter the whole balance of power in a region," said Sawers, whose century-old service is popularly known as MI6.

Sawers defended MI6's secrecy and its ties to counterparts in Muslim nations accused of poor rights records, a theme that has resurfaced in the West after the whistle-blowing Wikileaks website published secret U.S. files it said showed how coalition forces turned a blind eye to torture by Iraqi security forces.

"We are the secret frontline of our national security," he said. "Secrecy is not a dirty word. Secrecy is not there as a cover up. Secrecy plays a crucial part in keeping Britain safe."

"We have to deal with the world as it is ... We can't do our job if we work only with friendly democracies. Dangerous threats usually come from dangerous people in dangerous places."

He added that intelligence failings on Iraq before the 2003 invasion showed "politicians and officials alike" how important it was that sources of information were rigorously evaluated.

Improving intelligence performance has been a focus for the West since the September 11, 2001, attacks and the 2003 Iraq invasion, events involving profound faults in preparedness.

Former U.S. President George W. Bush launched the Iraq invasion citing a threat of weapons of mass destruction from Saddam Hussein's government. No such weapons were ever found.



SIS chief Sir John Sawers addresses a gathering in London

On Iran, Sawers said conventional diplomacy was not an adequate means of countering its nuclear ambitions: "We need intelligence-led operations to make it more difficult for countries like Iran to develop nuclear weapons."

"STAFF RISK THEIR LIVES"

Sawers, a career diplomat, had previously been the ambassador to the United Nations, the Foreign Office's political director, and also worked as an envoy in Baghdad and as foreign affairs adviser to former Prime Minister Tony Blair.

His speech is a move to more public accountability and openness at SIS, a big cultural shift for a service that 20 years ago was so secret the government would not publicly avow its existence, even if it still enjoys more anonymity than its close U.S. ally, the Central Intelligence Agency.

The pressure on intelligence officials to be more transparent has many roots -- pressure from lawmakers to prevent abuses and improve performance, public concern over surveillance by authorities, and a need by the intelligence community to make their work known so as to widen the avenues of recruitment.

On terrorism, Sawers said al Qaeda was unlikely to achieve its goals of weakening Western power and toppling moderate Arab governments. But the threat of "Islamic terrorism" was unlikely to fade away soon and reading reports of what militants were plotting was the most draining part of his job.

"Working to tackle terrorism overseas is complex, often dangerous. Our agents and sometimes our staff risk their lives."

In a passage likely to gain attention in the Middle East, Sawers said that over time the emergence of more open and responsive government in the Islamic world would "help" counter terrorism but insisting on a sudden move in that direction might make things worse.

“TORTURE IS ABHORRENT”

“If we demand an abrupt move to the pluralism that we in the West enjoy ... the terrorists would end up with new opportunities.” he said, without elaborating.

The former Bush administration often argued that terrorist organisations and their alleged state sponsors were the main opponents of democracy in the Arab world.

But Arab civil society and human rights groups say that governments friendly towards the United States are some of the most determined obstacles to democracy, repressing peaceful Islamist groups which seek power through democratic elections.

Sawers said that if SIS knew or believed its action would

lead to torture taking place, it would avoid that action, even though that allowed “terrorist activity” to go ahead.

“Torture is illegal and abhorrent under any circumstances, and we have nothing whatsoever to do with it.” he said.

The opening up of Britain’s intelligence community gathered pace in 2006 when the then-head of the MI5 domestic security service, Eliza Manningham-Buller, appeared in public to make a speech to academics and journalists at a university campus.

(Additional reporting by Keith Weir and Michael Holden, Editing by Jon Boyle)

Courtesy of URL: <http://uk.news.yahoo.com/4/20101028/tuk-mi6-boss-nukes-are-key-threat-dba1618.html>

The transcript of Sir John Sawers speech is published in full overleaf.



Grace and Little Lad jogging along the towing path

Transcript of Speech by Sir John Sawer

The Times published a reader's letter earlier this year. It read: "Sir – is it not bizarre that MI5 and MI6, otherwise known as the secret services, currently stand accused of being – er – secretive?"

I may be biased. But I think that reader was on to something rather important and most government work these days is done by conventional and transparent processes. But not all.

Britain's foreign intelligence effort was first organised in 1909, when the Secret Intelligence Service was formed.

We have just published an official history of our first 40 years. I'm sure you will all have read all 800 pages of it.

The first chief, Mansfield Cumming, used to pay the salaries of SIS officials out of his private income, dispensed in cash from a desk drawer. I'm glad to say that, even after the chancellor's statement last week, I'm not in the same position.

SIS's existence was admitted only in 1994. We British move slowly on such things.

And this, I believe, is the first public speech given by a serving chief of the British Secret Intelligence Service.

"Why now?" might you ask. Well, intelligence features prominently in the National Security Strategy and the Strategic Defence and Security Review, published last week.

We often appear in the news. Our popular name – MI6 – is an irresistible draw. We have a website, and we've got versions in Arabic and Russian. We recruit our staff openly, with adverts in the national press.

But debate on SIS's role is not well informed, in part because we have been so determined to protect our secrets.

In today's open society, no government institution is given the benefit of the doubt all the time. There are new expectations of public – and legal – accountability that have developed. In short, in 2010 the context for the UK's secret intelligence work is very different from 1994. I am not going to use today to tantalise you with hints of sensitive operations or intelligence successes.

Instead, I want to answer two important questions: what value do we get from a secret overseas intelligence effort in the modern era? How can the public have confidence that work done in secret is lawful, ethical, and in their interests?

First, how do we all fit in? The Secret Intelligence Service, MI6, operates abroad, dealing with threats overseas and gathering intelligence mainly from human sources. The

security service, MI5, works here in the UK, protecting the homeland from terrorist attack and other threats.

GCHQ produces intelligence from communications, and takes the lead in the cyber world.

These three specialised services form the UK intelligence community, and we operate in what the foreign secretary has called a networked world. Technology plays an ever growing part in our work, for SIS as well as GCHQ, and the boundary line between home and abroad is increasingly blurred.

So the three agencies work increasingly closely together, and the next five years will see us intensifying our collaboration to improve our operational impact and to save money. Yes, even the intelligence services have to make savings.

Secret intelligence is important information that others wish you not to know; it's information that deepens our understanding of a foreign country or grouping, or reveals their true intentions. It's information that gives us new opportunities for action.

We at SIS obtain our intelligence from secret agents. These are people are nearly all foreign nationals, who have access to secret information and who choose to work with us.

Our agents are the true heroes of our work. They have their own motivations and hopes. Many of them show extraordinary courage and idealism, striving in their own countries for the freedoms that we in Britain take for granted.

Our agents are working today in some of the most dangerous and exposed places, bravely and to hugely valuable effect, and we owe a debt to countless more whose service is over.

Agents take serious risks and make sacrifices to help our country. In return, we give them a solemn pledge: that we shall keep their role secret.

The information we get from agents is put into an intelligence report. The source is described in general terms. It is just that – a report. It tells us something new or corroborates what we suspect.

A report's value can be overplayed if it tells us what we want to hear, or it can be underplayed if it contains unwelcome news or runs against received wisdom.

It is a part of the picture, and may not be even wholly accurate, even if the trusted agent who gave it to us is sure that it is.

So sources of intelligence have to be rigorously evaluated, and their reports have to be honestly weighed alongside all

other information. Those who produce it, and those who want to use it, have to put intelligence in a wider context. The Joint Intelligence Committee plays a crucial role.

The Butler Review following Iraq was a clear reminder, to both the agencies and the centre of government, politicians and officials alike, of how intelligence needs to be handled. The SIS board recently reviewed our implementation of Lord Butler's recommendations, to make sure we've implemented them fully, in spirit as well as in substance.

I am confident that they have been. And we will look at the wider issues again once the Chilcott Inquiry reports.

So why do we need secret intelligence? Well, let's start with the terrorist problem.

Most people go about their daily work not worrying about the risk of a terrorist attack. That a bomb may have been planted on their route, or hostages might be seized. I'm glad they don't worry about those sorts of things: part of our job is to make people feel safe.

But those threats exist, as we're recalling now with the 7/7 inquest. That said, on any given day the chances that a terrorist attack will happen on our streets, even in central London, feel small enough to be safely ignored by the public.

You, and millions of people like you, go about your business in our cities and towns free of fear because the British government works tirelessly, out of the public eye, to stop terrorists and would-be terrorists in their tracks.

The most draining aspect of my job is reading, every day, intelligence reports describing the plotting of terrorists who are bent on maiming and murdering people in this country.

It's an enormous tribute to the men and women of our intelligence and security agencies, and to our cooperation with partner services around the world, that so few of these appalling plots develop into real terrorist attacks.

Some of these terrorists are British citizens, trained in how to use weapons, how to make bombs. Others are foreign nationals who want to attack us to undermine our support for forces of moderation around the world.

Many of the reports I read describe the workings of the al-Qaida network, rooted in a nihilistic version of Islam.

Al-Qaida have ambitious goals. Weakening the power of the west. Toppling moderate Islamic regimes. Seizing the holy places of Islam to give them moral authority. Taking control of the Arab world's oil reserves. They're unlikely to achieve these goals, but they remain set on trying, and are ready to use extreme violence.

Jonathan Evans, the head of MI5, recently described how the

threat is intensifying. Precisely because we are having some success in closing down the space for terrorist recruitment and planning in the UK, the extremists are increasingly preparing their attacks against British targets from abroad.

It's not just the border areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Al-Qaida affiliates in Yemen, Somalia and North Africa pose real threats to the UK.

From his remote base in Yemen, Al-Qaida leader and US national Anwar al-Awlaki broadcasts propaganda and terrorist instruction in fluent English over the internet.

Our intelligence effort needs to go where the threat is. One of the advantages of the way we in SIS work is that we are highly adaptable and flexible. We don't get pinned in one place.

There is no one reason for the terrorist phenomenon. Some blame political issues like Palestine or Kashmir or Iraq. Others cite economic disadvantage. Distortions of the Islamic faith. Male supremacy. The lack of the normal checks and balances in some countries. There are many theories.

I've worked a lot in the Islamic world. I agree with those who say we need to be steady and stand by our friends.

Over time, moving to a more open system of government in these countries, one more responsive to people's grievances, will help. But if we demand an abrupt move to the pluralism that we in the west enjoy, we may undermine the controls that are now in place and terrorists would end up with new opportunities.

Whatever the cause or causes of so-called Islamic terrorism, there is little prospect of it fading away soon.

SIS deals with the realities, the threats as they are. We work to minimise the risks. Our closest partners include many in the Muslim world who are concerned at the threat Al-Qaida and their like poses to Islam itself.

In the UK, the security service, MI5, leads our counter-terrorism effort. They do a superb job and SIS's work starts with the priorities that the security service sets.

It's not enough to intercept terrorists here, at the very last minute. They need to be identified and stopped well before then, which means action far beyond our own borders.

This is where SIS comes in. Over one-third of SIS resources are directed against international terrorism. It's the largest single area of SIS's work.

We get inside terrorist organisations to see where the next threats are coming from. We work to disrupt terrorist plots aimed against the UK, and against our friends and allies. What we do is not seen. Few know about the terrorist

attacks we help stop.

It scarcely needs saying, but I'll say it anyway: working to tackle terrorism overseas is complex and often dangerous. Our agents, and sometimes our staff, risk their lives.

Much intelligence is partial, fragmentary. We have to build up a picture. It's like a jigsaw, but with key sections missing, and pieces from other jigsaws mixed in.

SIS officers round the world make judgements at short notice with potentially life or death consequences.

Say an agent warns us of a planned attack. We may need to meet that agent fast and securely, to understand his intelligence more fully. To work with GCHQ who look for other signs. To work with MI5 and the police to act on that intelligence here in the UK.

Ministers and lawyers need to be briefed and consulted on next steps. We need partner agencies abroad to pool information, to monitor individuals or to detain them where there are clear, specific concerns.

Disrupting the terrorists is a painstaking process with much careful preparation, and then sudden rapid activity. Details have to be got right. It all has to be tackled fast and securely. There is little margin for error.

All this goes on 24 hours a day, every day of the year. And it keeps us far safer than we would be without it.

Proliferation terrorism is difficult enough and, despite our collective efforts, an attack may well get through. The human cost would be huge. But our country, our democratic system, will not be brought down by a typical terrorist attack.

The dangers of proliferation of nuclear weapons – and chemical and biological weapons – are more far-reaching. It can alter the whole balance of power in a region.

States seeking to build nuclear weapons against their international legal obligations are obsessively secretive about it. SIS's role is to find out what these states are doing and planning, and identify ways to slow down their access to vital materials and technology.

The revelations around Iran's secret enrichment site at Qom were an intelligence success. They led to diplomatic pressure on Iran intensifying, with tougher UN and EU sanctions which are beginning to bite. The Iranian regime must think hard about where its best interests lie.

The risks of failure in this area are grim. Stopping nuclear proliferation cannot be addressed purely by conventional diplomacy. We need intelligence-led operations to make it more difficult for countries like Iran to develop nuclear weapons.

The longer international efforts delay Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons technology, the more time we create for a political solution to be found.

Long-range strategic intelligence: the National Security Strategy which the prime minister published last week sets out the strategic direction for foreign, defence and security policy for the years ahead. Intelligence is at the heart of that strategy.

SIS has the responsibility to gather long-range strategic intelligence, to track military and economic power in other countries, and find out what they going to do with it. We try to see inside the minds of potential policy adversaries and predict their behaviour.

We have expertise on states that operate opaquely and without public accountability. We provide early warning of new weapons systems, or of major changes in policy.

Machiavelli said that "surprise is the essential factor in victory". A lot of SIS work is about making sure that the British government does not face unwelcome surprises. And that some of our adversaries do.

Cyber: My colleague Iain Lobban at GCHQ recently described the cyber threats we face in the modern world.

Attacks on government information and commercial secrets of our companies are happening all the time. Electricity grids, our banking system, anything controlled by computers, could possibly be vulnerable. For some, cyber is becoming an instrument of policy as much as diplomacy or military force.

As Iain is the first to recognise, there isn't a purely technological solution. We need to invest in technology to defend ourselves, and the government has allocated funds for that purpose in the Spending Round.

Even high technology threats have that crucial human dimension, and SIS will be gathering intelligence on individuals and states launching cyber attacks against us, to find out how they organise themselves and to develop ways to counter them.

We have already set to work. It's a big task of the future.

Supporting the military, and building security where the military are involved in a conflict, you will find SIS and GCHQ alongside them.

In Afghanistan, our people provide tactical intelligence that guides military operations and saves our soldiers' lives. Our strategic intelligence helps map the political way forward.

We are building up the Afghan security service, already probably the most capable of the Afghan security institutions, to help the Afghans take responsibility for their

own security.

Capacity building is not limited to Afghanistan. We offer training and support to partner services around the world. It wins their cooperation, it improves the quality of their work, and it builds respect for human rights.

Our government expects SIS to maintain a global reach, collecting intelligence in all areas of major British interest to reduce the risk of unpleasant surprises.

And we have our network of partners which provides us a discreet channel of communication to other governments on the most sensitive issues.

So we are a very special part of government. SIS exists to give the UK advantage. We are a sovereign national asset. We are the secret frontline of our national security.

How can the public have confidence that work done by us in secret is lawful, ethical and in their interests?

Let me explain how it all works in practice.

SIS does not choose what it does. The 1994 Intelligence Services Act sets the legal framework for what we do. Ministers tell us what they want to know, what they want us to achieve. We take our direction from the National Security Council.

As chief of SIS, I am responsible for SIS operations. I answer directly to the foreign secretary.

When our operations require legal authorisation or entail political risk, I seek the foreign secretary's approval in advance. If a case is particularly complex, he can consult the attorney general. In the end, the foreign secretary decides what we do.

Submissions for operations go to the foreign secretary all the time. He approves most, but not all, and those operations he does not approve do not happen. It's as simple as that.

There is oversight and scrutiny by parliamentarians and by judges.

The Intelligence and Security committee is chaired by Sir Malcolm Rifkind, and includes other senior politicians, many of them former ministers. They hold us to account and can investigate areas of our activity.

And two former judges have full access to our files, as intelligence commissioner and interception commissioner. They make sure our procedures are proper and lawful.

These processes of control and accountability are as robust as you will find anywhere. SIS fully supports them. We want to enjoy public confidence.

We don't operate on our own. Intelligence is a team game. If we need to track a British terrorist in another country, or stop a shipment of components for a secret nuclear programme, we need to work with services abroad.

We work with over 200 partner services around the world, with hugely constructive results. And our intelligence partnership with the United States is an especially powerful contributor to UK security.

No intelligence service risks compromising its sources. So we have a rule called the control principle – the service who first obtains the intelligence has the right to control how it is used, who else it can be shared with, and what action can be taken on it.

It's rule number one of intelligence sharing. We insist on it with our partners, and they insist on it with us. Because whenever intelligence is revealed, others try to hunt down the source. Agents can get identified, arrested, tortured and killed by the very organisations who are working against us.

So if the control principle is not respected, the intelligence dries up. That's why we have been so concerned about the possible release of intelligence material in recent court cases.

We can't do our job if we work only with friendly democracies. Dangerous threats usually come from dangerous people in dangerous places. We have to deal with the world as it is.

Suppose we receive credible intelligence that might save lives, here or abroad. We have a professional and moral duty to act on it. We will normally want to share it with those who can save those lives.

We also have a duty to do what we can to ensure that a partner service will respect human rights. That is not always straightforward.

Yet if we hold back, and don't pass that intelligence, out of concern that a suspect terrorist may be badly treated, innocent lives may be lost that we could have saved.

These are not abstract questions for philosophy courses or searching editorials. They are real, constant, operational dilemmas.

Sometimes there is no clear way forward. The more finely-balanced judgments have to be made by Ministers themselves. I welcome the publication of the consolidated guidance on detainee issues. It reflects the detailed guidance issued to SIS staff in the field and the training we give them.

Torture is illegal and abhorrent under any circumstances, and we have nothing whatsoever to do with it. If we know or believe action by us will lead to torture taking place, we're required by UK and international law to avoid that action.

And we do, even though that allows the terrorist activity to go ahead.

Some may question this, but we are clear that it's the right thing to do. It makes us strive all the harder to find different ways, consistent with human rights, to get the outcome we want.

Other countries respect our approach on these issues. Even where we find deep differences of culture and tradition, we can make progress, slowly but surely, by seeking careful assurances and providing skilled training.

I also welcome the prime minister's initiative in setting up the Gibson Inquiry into the detainee issue. If there are more lessons to be learned, we want to learn them.

And, after 9/11, the terrorist threat was immediate and paramount. We are accused by some people not of committing torture ourselves but of being too close to it in our efforts to keep Britain safe.

Let me say this: SIS is a Service that reflects our country. Integrity is the first of the service's values.

I am confident that, in their efforts to keep Britain safe, all SIS staff acted with the utmost integrity, and with a close eye on basic decency and moral principles.

So, back to that reader's letter in *The Times*.

The recent debate about secrecy reflects two concerns. First, national security, and the need for the intelligence and security agencies to work in secret to protect British interests and our way of life from those who threaten it.

And second, the need for justice – the rights of citizens to raise complaint against the government and get a fair hearing.

As a public servant, and as a citizen, I devoutly want both objectives upheld, and not to have one undermine the other.

The judges have to determine what constitutes a fair trial.

We in the intelligence and security agencies have to make sure that our secrets don't become available to those who are threatening our country. And we have to protect our partners secrets.

As the prime minister said in parliament, at present we're unable to use secret material in court with confidence that the material will be protected.

The government has promised a green paper to set out some better options for dealing with national security issues in the courts, and I look forward to that.

Part of sustaining public confidence in the intelligence

services is debate about the principles and value of intelligence work.

And the purpose of today is to explain what we in SIS do and why we do it. Why our work is important, and why we can't work in the open. A lot is at stake.

Secret organisations need to stay secret, even if we present an occasional public face, as I am doing today. If our operations and methods become public, they won't work.

Agents take risks. They will not work with SIS, will not pass us the secrets they hold, unless they can trust us not to expose them.

Foreign partners need to have certainty that what they tell us will remain secret – not just most of the time, but always.

Without the trust of agents, the anonymity of our staff, the confidence of partners, we would not get the intelligence. The lives of everyone living here would be less safe. The United Kingdom would be more vulnerable to the unexpected, the vicious and the extreme.

Secrecy is not a dirty word. Secrecy is not there as a cover up. Secrecy plays a crucial part in keeping Britain safe and secure.

And without secrecy, there would be no intelligence services, or indeed other national assets like our Special Forces. Our nation would be more exposed as a result.

Without secrecy, we can't tackle threats at source. We would be forced to defend ourselves on the goal-line, on our borders. And it's more than obvious that the dangers of terrorism, nuclear proliferation and cyber attack are not much impressed by international borders.

Ladies and gentlemen, the remarkable men and women who make up the staff of SIS are among the most loyal, dedicated and innovative in the entire public service.

We ask more of them than we do of any other public servants not in uniform. Exceptional people, doing extraordinary things for their country.

Our people can't and don't talk about what they do. They receive recognition for their achievements only within the confines of the service.

You don't know them, but I do. It is an honour to lead them.

Courtesy of URL: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/oct/28/sir-john-sawers-speech-full-text>

