


[Select Committee on Foreign Affairs](#) [Written Evidence](#)

Memorandum from Dr Martha Mundy

I should like to bring to your attention the article inserted below and attached from Asia Times. The following questions must be considered with regard to the intelligence concerning weapons of mass destruction on the basis of which the UK government decided to go to war against Iraq.

- (1) What part of this intelligence resulted from work of intelligence agencies/agents of HM Government?
- (2) What part of this intelligence resulted from work of intelligence agents/agencies of the US Government?
- (3) What part of this intelligence resulted from work of intelligence agents/agencies of the Israeli Government?

In short what was the division of labour between these agencies and to what extent does the UK retain sufficient independence from the interests/institutions of these two powerful countries in the Middle East to make independent decisions based on its own intelligence?

The attached article raises a series of major issues about the relation between HM intelligence services and the Israeli intelligence services.

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Annex

ASSASSINATION AND THE LICENSE TO KILL, *ASIA TIMES*, 13 JUNE 2003

The world of counter-terrorism is certain to take a further step into the downward spiral of hit-teams and assassination as Western intelligence services try to find the means to defeat al-Qaeda and its myriad extremist offshoots. The US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Britain's M16 (the secret service branch dealing with matters outside the British Islands), freed of many of the political and legal

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shackles imposed in the latter years of the Cold War, are expanding their covert capability and the means to use "executive action", a euphemism for assassination, to defeat the greatest threat to democracy since the collapse of communism. The main source of the experience and influence on operational tactics is perhaps one of the more surprising aspects of these developments.

Israel has played a significant and largely secret role within the dark world of Britain's covert operations against terrorist groups. As long ago as the early 1970s Rafael Eitan, the then head of the Israeli hit-squad known as the "Kidon" toured Northern Ireland and later the Special Air Services (SAS) base in Hereford, England. Rumor has it that Eitan was less than impressed with British training, tactics or their "kill" rate. Within months of his visit there began a number of fundamental changes in security policy and operations in the county. More SAS were to be there and a number of specialized anti-terrorist groups would eventually be formed, ranging from the 14th Intelligence and Security Company, once described as the "thinking man's SAS" to the Mobile Reconnaissance Force or MRF which would later become the Force Reconnaissance Unit (FRU). The FRU was to be later involved in the targeting of suspected Republicans for assassination by the infamous Loyalist death squads in Northern Island.

Indeed, Britain's overall counter-terror organization was held in such poor esteem by the experienced Israelis that Israel's intelligence service Mossad's Kidon hit-team took the law into its own hands by assassinating two of the Palestinian terrorists suspected of involvement in the Black September Massacre at the 1972 Munich Olympics. One was found dead in his London hotel room, while the second fell under the wheels of a car in High Holborn, much to the annoyance of MIS (the security service dealing with counter espionage against British organizations by foreign powers, including counter-terrorism) and the fury of Whitehall. The 1988 killing of three Irish Republican Army (IRA) members in Gibraltar by the SAS was reportedly viewed as a bungled operation by Mossad who had originally tracked the Irish terrorists who they suspected of running guns from Lebanon. Wishing to avoid further problems with London by not attempting to kill or capture them on British soil, the surveillance operation was handed over to MIS, and of course later to the SAS, whose heavy-handed approach finally prevented interrogation of the suspects.

Britain's tough new approach owes much to Israel Under Prime Minister Tony Blair, Britain's official approach is far more cooperative and Mossad have apparently met with little opposition to their clandestine center operating in London with some 15 intelligence officers and two or three members of the Kidon. The Israelis are thought to have a hit list of around 50 Islamic and Palestinian terrorists believed to be currently living in Britain. Most of these

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radicals are, to use Israeli parlance, to be "disposed of" and it is believed that a number have either fled the country or have gone under deep cover in consequence. According to Gordon Thomas, one of the world's leading experts on Israeli and British intelligence in particular, the highly effective Kidon is directly controlled by Mossad. It has some 38-40 highly trained assassins and includes at least four women. They operate throughout the world and wherever a potential or actual threat exists to the interests of Israel or its people. David Kimche, a 30-year veteran of Mossad and its deputy until his resignation in 1980, was largely responsible for the formulation of the Kidon philosophy that it must be "Israel first, last and always".

It is this deadly capability that both the CIA and now M16 are apparently seeking to emulate as they face the growing menace of Islamic terrorism. Though the CIA has a long track record of assassinations, its claws were drawn by successive US administrations with their fear of damaging publicity and international anger, ending with a legal ban on such action which has only recently been lifted. Britain on the other hand has no such legal complications as long as the killing takes place on foreign soil. Under the Intelligence Services Act of 1994, M16 officers have immunity from prosecution for crimes committed outside Great Britain. Although The Criminal Justice Bill of 1998 makes it illegal for any organization in Great Britain to conspire to commit offences abroad, Crown agents still have immunity. With the end of World War II the SOEs (Special Operations Executive) undoubted ability in both subversion and assassination was absorbed into the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), and for many years afterwards Britain is believed to have made regular, if sparing use of assassination to further its foreign policy aims.

A return to old ways for Secret Intelligence Service?

George Young in 1956, at the time the deputy chief of M16, quite openly advocated the killing of the Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser, and in September 1960 a senior Foreign Office official, Howard Smith, who was later to become the director general of MIS, argued in an official document for the assassination of the young Congolese leader Patrice Lumumba. "I see only two possible solutions to the (Lumumba) problem. The first is the simple one of ensuring (his) removal from the scene by killing him."

Closer to home, the Littlejohn brothers were recruited in 1972 by John Wyman of MI6, who handled a number of agents in Northern Ireland and paid them substantial sums of taxpayers' money to infiltrate the IRA and to act as agent provocateurs, organizing and conducting bank robberies and bomb attacks in the Republic of Ireland. Wyman told them that there was "going to be a policy of political assassination" for which they were to make themselves available. "If I was told about any illegal act before it happened, I

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would always discuss it with London. I was always told to go ahead," said Kenneth Littlejohn, who went on to claim that the MI6 officer told him, "If there is any shooting, do what you've got to do." Wyman indeed gave the Littlejohns a list of IRA leaders to assassinate; these included Seamus Costello, Sean Qarland and Sean McStiofain. After Littlejohn passed on the name of Joe McCann, a leading Republican, to his MI6 handler, McCann was shot dead by British paratroopers a few days later as he walked, apparently unarmed, through the Belfast market area.

In more recent times, the maverick former MIS officer David Shayler and Richard Tomlinson of MI6 have both vigorously argued that Britain's intelligence services had attempted to assassinate Libya's Colonel Muammar Gaddafi in February 1996 and had planned a similar fate for both the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein in 1991 and Serbia's Slobodan Milosovic in 1992. Whatever one may think of such claims, there is now at least official confirmation from the Steven's Inquiry into the "Shoot to Kill" policy in Northern Ireland that British security officials were indeed deeply involved in the assassination of a number of Catholics in the province.

The Guardian on April 28, 2001 headlined its article "Sinister role of secret army unit: Police investigate claims of collusion with paramilitaries" describes the organizations involved in covert British operations in Ireland. "The FRU was one of three army-sponsored undercover intelligence squads in Northern Ireland. The others were 22 Squadron SAS and 14 Company. The FRU, which was set up in Northern Ireland in 1980, dealt with recruiting and handling agents in paramilitary organizations." 14 Company specialized in surveillance while 22 SAS undertook "executive actions". "That means they killed people," said an army source. Many outside observers remain convinced that this is merely the tip of an iceberg and much is still being hidden by an ongoing official coverup.

The SAS can provide the skills

Another in-built advantage for the SIS is that they have a number of SAS personnel trained to work with the intelligence service and always available for any of its needs. This group is known as the "Increment" and is used for assassinations, sabotage or other dangerous jobs, such as arresting war criminals in the Balkans, says James Dunnigan, the renowned author of *How to Make War* (now in its fourth edition), adding that every SIS station chief has a direct line to the SAS headquarters at the Duke of York's Barracks in West London and a good working relationship with these covert action experts. The "Increment" also works closely with yet another shadowy SIS group called the UKN, a highly specialist surveillance team. Ex-SAS mercenaries have also been blamed for several assassinations on the African continent and a purported former member of the regiment,

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Tyrone Chadwick, was imprisoned in South Africa after admitting to a London-based journalist his and other former SAS mercenaries' leading role in several murders during the apartheid era, according to a commentary on the Strategy Page in June 2003.

The SIS has developed a reputation for going outside the agency and its military executive arm to hit some targets. Friendly foreign intelligence agencies have been used on a number of occasions and MI6 has shown a willingness to "sub-contract it to Mossad", according to a former British agent quoted by Peter Hillmore and Ed Vulliamy in "Spies: the Beautiful and the damned" (The Observer, October 12, 1997), adding that the assassination in Belgium of the British inventor of the Iraqi "Supergun", Gerald Bull, is widely believed to have been just such an act. And speculation still surrounds the "suicide" of Jonathan Moyle, the 28-year-old editor of the British trade journal Defence Helicopter World in March 1990—he was found hanging in a closet in a hotel room in Santiago, Chile. Intelligence sources have long suggested that there was a, so far unproven, SIS involvement in Moyle's death as his "Iraqgate" investigations were believed to be uncovering highly embarrassing facts for the senior management at Century House, then the headquarters for M16 and the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher.

British spooks regain a license to kill

Last year Israel's Prime Minister Ariel Sharon appointed General Meir Dagan, his friend and close colleague, to head Mossad. Security sources confirm that Dagan, a noted hawk, had served in the 1970s as head of the "Rimon" undercover anti-terrorist unit which is widely suspected of killing militants wanted by Israel. Following his retirement from the army in 1995, Dagan became Mossad's deputy chief. His appointment and past track record suggest that while the Sharon government may be publicly willing to sign up to President George W Bush's road map for Middle East peace, it will be allied to a deadly new secret campaign to destroy the terrorist infrastructure and eliminate its leadership. Leading Israeli politician Moshe Arens says, "Dagan is one of the old Sharon's assets. They got to know each other 33 years ago when Sharon, then head of Southern Command, cleared Gaza of `terrorists'. Dagan led a commando unit called `Rimon' which was known, how shall I put it, for its unconventional methods." Dagan is known to be keen to promote the Israeli way of dealing with terrorism, and quickly paid an official visit to the CIA director George Tenet in September last year before his promotion had even been confirmed. According to usually reliable intelligence sources, it can be taken as highly significant that the CIA formally established an assassination team in November, less than two months later. This may be seen as not only a positive US response to the sharing of Israeli experience and expertise, but also as a direct result of the recent lifting of the US presidential ban on "executive action" following the al-Qaeda attacks

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of September 11, 2001.

Dagan and Mossad's growing influence on the Western intelligence community was further strengthened by meetings held in Britain in January of this year with Eliza Manningham Buller, the director general of MI5 and more importantly with Richard Dearlove, chief of the Secret Intelligence Service. It now seems likely that in the wake of these discussions Britain's MI6 was further encouraged to rebuild its muscle power through the expansion of its Special Operations Directorate to include a genuine anti-terrorist "Hunter-Killer" capability.

Though "C", the head of the MI5 has been traditionally able to call on the services of the SAS and the "Increment", a small special forces unit dedicated to secret intelligence, an ever increasing number of covert and potentially politically explosive operations required the use of contracted "retired" officers operating within commercial paramilitary companies; organized crime assets or even "friendly" foreign intelligence agencies such as Mossad. The SIS has now apparently decided, presumably with full approval of the Joint Intelligence Committee and the Cabinet Office, that it must have its own operatives to do much of the "dirty work" in future. In common with their colleagues at the CIA, the senior management at Vauxhall Cross are now busily returning the service to the bad old days of "political action" and assassination as the official, though of course deniable, policy for dealing with external threats.

Contacts within the Intelligence communities both in the UK and the US strongly advised AFI Research not to run this piece on assassination. However, we consider that such a response merely gave added credence to the suggestion that in the future the British authorities may indeed be prepared to use more "positive" methods, under certain circumstances, in dealing with both external and very probably, internal "enemies of the state". It now seem almost certain, therefore, that a limited number of selected and highly trained M16 officers have once again been given a "license to kill", and perhaps very largely because of the experience and influence of the Israeli secret service.

(AFI Research, a leading source of specialist intelligence, defence, terrorism, conflict and political analysis)

Richard M Bennett

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