

Richard Dearlove

Sir Richard Billing Dearlove KCMG OBE (born 23 January 1945) is a retired British intelligence officer who was head of the British Secret Intelligence Service (MI6), a role known informally as "C",^[1] from 1999 until 6 May 2004. He was head of MI6 during the invasion of Iraq. He was criticised by the Iraq Inquiry for providing unverified intelligence about weapons of mass destruction to the Prime Minister, Tony Blair.^[2]

He is currently Chairman of the Board of Trustees of University of London. He was previously Master of Pembroke College, Cambridge from 2004 to 2015.

Early life

Dearlove was born at Gorran Haven, Cornwall,^[3] the son of Jack Dearlove, a 1948 Olympic silver medallist in rowing.^[4] He received his early formal education at Monkton Combe School near Bath, Somerset, and the Kent School in Kent, Connecticut. He graduated from Queens' College, Cambridge with a Master of Arts degree in History.^[5]

Career

HM's civil service

Dearlove joined MI6 in 1966 and was posted to Nairobi in 1968.^[6] In 1984, he was appointed an OBE. After being posted to Prague, Paris and Geneva, he became head of Washington station in 1991,^[6] director of personnel and administration in 1993 and director of operations in 1994.^[6] Dearlove was appointed chief of MI6 in 1999,^[6] by Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, following David Spedding's August 1999 retirement from the position.^[7] Dearlove facilitated publication of the Mitrokhin Archive, under Project Jessant.^[7] In 2001, he was appointed Knight Commander of Order of St Michael and St George (KCMG).^[8]

His tenure as head of MI6 saw many events for the Service as well as tension with the Government over the evidence for war on Iraq. It has been suggested that many within the intelligence community were uneasy that their qualified judgements on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction were presented as

<div><div> </div>Sir</div>	
<div><div> </div>Richard Dearlove</div>	
<div>KCMG OBE</div>	
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Born	<div>Richard Billing Dearlove</div> 23 January 1945 <div> Gorran Haven, Cornwall, England, United Kingdom</div>
Nationality	British
Alma mater	Queens' College, Cambridge
Occupation	Intelligence officer
Awards	 KCMG <div> OBE</div>
Espionage activity	
Allegiance	 United Kingdom
Service branch	Secret Intelligence Service (SIS/MI6)
Service years	1966–2004
Rank	Chief of SIS/MI6

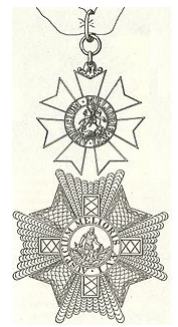


hard facts in various dossiers (e.g. September Dossier & The Dodgy Dossier aka Iraq Dossier). In July 2002, Dearlove privately told ministers that in the US "intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy".^[9]

The official Chilcot Report published in 2016 criticised Dearlove for presenting so-called "hot" intelligence about alleged weapons of mass destruction provided by an Iraqi with "phenomenal access" to high levels in the Iraqi government directly to Prime Minister, Tony Blair, without first confirming its accuracy.^[10] The investigators found that references to this intelligence in government reports were over-certain and did not adequately stress uncertainties and nuance. The informant was later found to have been lying. The Chilcot report stated that "personal intervention [by Dearlove] and its urgency gave added weight to a report that had not been properly evaluated and would have coloured the perception of ministers and senior officials".^[11] The day after the report was published, Blair conceded that he should have challenged such intelligence reports before relying on them to justify military action in Iraq.^[12]

University administrator

Dearlove was elected Master of Pembroke College, Cambridge, on 1 August 2004.^[6] He accepted an invitation to become the Chairman of Trustees of the Cambridge Union Society in 2006.^[3] As Master of Pembroke, Dearlove was *ex officio* chairman of the board of Trustees of Pembroke House, a community centre in Walworth, London, via the college's patronage of the advowson of St Christopher's, Walworth (CofE).^{[13][14]} He is to this day the President of Pembroke College Boat Club.^[15]



KCMG Badge
and Breast
Star

In February 2008, Dearlove gave evidence at the inquest of Princess Diana's death, responding to Harrods owner Mohamed al-Fayed who said that MI6 had murdered Diana.^[6]

Dearlove is a signatory of the Henry Jackson Society principles.^[16] He is also a "senior advisor" to the Monitor Group – a consultancy and private equity firm which has been implicated in undertaking PR work for Libya and Muammar Gaddafi.^{[17][18]} In April 2013, it was announced that Dearlove joined the advisory board of Ergo, an intelligence and advisory firm.^{[19][20]}

On 15 February 2011, Dearlove gave a talk at the Cambridge Union Society, taking as his theme the question of how much secrecy the UK needs: "The short answer to that question is that it needs some but actually not as much as you think."^{[21]:2:48} He said he "would definitely draw a parallel at the moment between the wave of political unrest which is sweeping through the Middle East, in a very excited and rather extraordinary fashion, and also the Wikileaks phenomenon",^{[21]:3:25} but added later, in connection with the way technological advances was altering the norms of civic and private life, commenting on WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, that "the Assange story, as such, is ultimately a distraction. He's a very undignified flag-carrier, in my opinion, for a very important issue."^{[21]:11:50}

In 2012, Dearlove took a sabbatical from Cambridge University to write an account of events leading up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq from his perspective at MI6, including coverage of the production of the so-called "dodgy dossier". Publishing such an account would be unprecedented for a former Chief of the Secret Intelligence Service. He may release this now that the Chilcot Inquiry findings have been published in 2016.^[22]

On 7 July 2014, in a lecture at the Royal United Services Institute, Dearlove argued that the government and media had exaggerated the Islamist terrorism threat to the UK, giving extremists publicity counter-productive to UK interests.^{[23][24]}

In 2015, Dearlove retired as Master of Pembroke College.^[25] He is non-executive chairman of Crossword Cybersecurity plc.^[26]

Political views

On 16 May 2016, Dearlove gave a public lecture televised by the BBC on contemporary mass foreign migration and its effects upon the European continent. In its text he stated that the governments of Europe were facing a "sea change" in their politics, and if they did not get control and prevent ongoing mass migration of peoples from Africa and Asia into Europe they would find themselves "at the mercy of a populist uprising, ... which is already stirring," and that the oncoming 2016 United Kingdom European Union membership referendum was the first manifestation of it.^[27] He stated further that foreign mass migration's geopolitical impact upon Europe, if it was not prevented, was set to reshape its political landscape as those of its citizens who feel their interests are threatened asserted their influence.^[28]

On 8 June 2017, Dearlove intervened on the day of the 2017 UK general election in *The Daily Telegraph* saying "how profoundly dangerous it would be for the nation if Jeremy Corbyn becomes Prime Minister."^[29]

On 29 November 2018 Dearlove co-signed an open letter, published in a British national newspaper, condemning Prime Minister Theresa May's negotiated Brexit withdrawal agreement after the 2016 Referendum on the issue, as the matter was passing through the House of Commons to be voted upon. In its text he stated that the Withdrawal Agreement as negotiated undermined MI6's nationally independent global intelligence power.^[30] In a published response, dated the same day, May's office issued a public rebuttal to the letter's content, singling out Dearlove personally from the named list of several signatories to the open letter, and stating that the Withdrawal Agreement "absolutely does not" compromise the national independence of the UK's intelligence capacity.^[31] In early December 2018 Dearlove, in a jointly authored text with Major-General Julian Thompson, published on the website 'Briefings for Brexit' an extensive reply to May's statement entitled 'The Prime Minister is misleading the country on defence and security', citing a 'worryingly poor understanding of the issues' by her office.^[32]

On 8 January 2019, Dearlove sent a letter co-signed by Field Marshal Lord Guthrie to all Chairs of Conservative Party Parliamentary Constituency Associations with sitting Members of Parliament stating that the passage through the House of Commons of the Brexit withdrawal agreement contained decisions which fundamentally undermined the integrity of the Defence of the Realm, and requested that they take measures to discourage their parliamentary representatives from voting for it in the Commons. The letter as an alternative advocated the case upon national security grounds that the United Kingdom should fully withdraw from the European Union without an Intergovernmental relationship between the two persisting after the process.^{[33][34]}

On 16 May 2019 Dearlove characterised Huawei's role in the British 5G network as "an unnecessary risk" as it could give the Chinese government a "potentially advantageous exploitative position".^[35] On 17 January 2020, as U.S. President Donald Trump was held to be bluffing by the EU Trade

Commissioner Phil Hogan over the incompatibility of Five Eyes and Huawei, Dearlove said Huawei posed a security threat "without question... It's a capability in the bank that China will use if it needs to... If the Chinese state says to Huawei 'jump' the company can't turn round and say 'no'."^[36]

On 3 June 2020 Dearlove stated in a podcast interview that the Coronavirus disease 2019 began 'as an accident' either in the Wuhan Institute of Virology lab or in the Wuhan Centre for Disease Control.^[37]

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External links

- *Debrett's People of Today* (<http://www.debretts.com/people/biographies/browse/d/22856/Richard%20Billing+DEARLOVE.aspx>)
 - "Richard Dearlove Asked About Iraq War Intelligence at Chatham House" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KZKswvFedoM>)
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