

Saturday 27 August 2011
FOR IMMEDIATE USE

PAKISTAN'S ISI COMES UNDER SPOTLIGHT AT THE BOOK FESTIVAL

Author Kamila Shamsie and the Guardian's foreign correspondent Declan Walsh discussed the current state of Pakistan today at the Book Festival in one of a series of events examining Revolution in the 21st Century, the theme for this year's Festival.

In an event chaired by Guest Selector Allan Little, the two writers discussed a range of topics including the role of the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency in harbouring Osama Bin Laden. "I wasn't surprised when I heard that he was in Pakistan" said Shamsie, with Walsh commenting that certainly Bin Laden had "some sort of support network" inside Pakistan, and that the tribal hills of Pakistan were now Al-Qaeda's HQ. "The ISI is Pakistan's most important lever of power, when not shooting a gun," said Walsh, who went on to say that the agency also acts to "implement foreign policy"

Discussing the stability of the country Shamsie joked, "We had our revolution four years ago – didn't you notice?" but admitted that "I don't stay up at night worrying about an Islamic revolution" with both authors agreeing that a division in the Army would be the biggest concern, describing the institution as a 'state within a state.'

When asked by Little if at times Pakistan had similarities with East Germany with neighbours informing to the state, Shamsie replied 'yes', but then went on to say that the ISI were not all knowing but did create a feeling of paranoia amongst many people.

Tomorrow at the Book Festival, leading Chinese academic Wang Hui and scholar Robert Bickers will be joined by author Chan Koonchung to debate the possibility of a political, social and technological revolution in China in the context of the Arab Spring, in an event chaired by Allan Little.

- ENDS -

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT FRANCES SUTTON, PRESS MANAGER:

frances@edbookfest.co.uk / Tel: 0131 718 5654 / Mob: 07841 579481

THE WORLD, IN WORDS

CHARLOTTE SQUARE GARDENS
EDINBURGH
www.edbookfest.co.uk
13 – 29 AUGUST 2011

NEWS RELEASE



in association with

theguardian

For Further information please contact
Harrison Kelly, Press Officer
Edinburgh International Book Festival
harrison@edbookfest.co.uk or 0131 718 5638

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT FRANCES SUTTON, PRESS MANAGER:

frances@edbookfest.co.uk / Tel: 0131 718 5654 / Mob: 07841 579481

The Edinburgh International Book Festival Ltd is a Scottish charity (SC010120) and a limited company (registered in Scotland no 79939) and has its registered office at 5A Charlotte Square, Edinburgh, EH2 4DR.