

---

19 August 2014

### ESPIONAGE AT THE EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL BOOK FESTIVAL

Richard J Aldrich, Professor of International Security at Warwick University, spoke to Guardian journalist and author Luke Harding about the history of the Joint Intelligence Committee this morning, in the first of a series of events at the Edinburgh International Book Festival today that explore spying and surveillance.

Talking about his latest book, *Spying on the World*, Richard gave an illuminating insight into the history of the J.I.C, which has provided intelligence for the British government since the 1930s. He discussed the relationship between intelligence services and politicians, describing Prime Ministers past and present as 'customers' of intelligence, each with their own approaches to using the information provided.

He also discussed the failures of the committee to predict events such as the Argentinian invasion of the Falklands in 1982 and the now notorious dossier on Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq. He explained that the costly underestimation of Saddam Hussein's chemical weapon capabilities in the Gulf War prompted global intelligence agencies to support claims made about WMD in Iraq in 2002, for fear of getting it wrong a second time. He also talked about the revolution in intelligence that occurred at the end of the Cold War, moving from a culture of 'need to know' to one of 'need to share' as advances in technology prompted organisations like GCHQ and the NSA to take a more holistic approach to gathering information.

On privacy Richard noted that so much information is now monitored by intelligence services that 'privacy is on the way out, it's in the intensive care room.'

Luke Harding discussed his book, *The Snowden Files*, later on today and will be taking part in Dialogue 9: Surveillance and the Self with Josh Cohen, author of *The Private Life: Why We Remain in the Dark*.

-ends-

For further information please contact:

Frances Sutton, Press Manager, Edinburgh International Book Festival

0131 718 5654 or [frances@edbookfest.co.uk](mailto:frances@edbookfest.co.uk)

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT FRANCES SUTTON, PRESS MANAGER:

[frances@edbookfest.co.uk](mailto: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.