

THE SECRET INTELLIGENCE SERVICE (SIS)

A History of the Secret Intelligence Service

The origins of the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) lie in the decision made by the Committee for Imperial Defence in 1909 to create a Secret Service Bureau. This date marks the first time when Britain had a formally established and permanent intelligence service. But the history of British intelligence organisations, engaged in foreign intelligence collection and in the interception of mail and messages, goes back at least to the second half of the 15th Century. Thomas Cromwell ran secret agents in Europe on behalf of Henry VIII. Sir Francis Walsingham developed expertise in secret interception, as well as maintaining a network of fifty secret agents abroad while Private Secretary to Elizabeth I.

The immediate background to the 1909 decision to establish the new Bureau was the threat of Germany's military and naval expansion, together with sensational newspaper coverage of German espionage activity in the UK. The Bureau's dual tasks were to counter foreign espionage in the United Kingdom (the Home Section) and to collect secret intelligence abroad on Britain's potential enemies (the Foreign Section). The Home Section was eventually transformed into the Security Service (MI5) and the Foreign Section became the Secret Intelligence Service (sometimes referred to as MI6).

About the Secret Intelligence Service

The Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), often known as MI6, collects Britain's foreign intelligence. The Service is based at Vauxhall Cross in London. Its Chief is Sir John Sawers. SIS provides the Government with a global covert capability to promote and defend the national security and economic well-being of the United Kingdom.

SIS collects secret intelligence and mounts covert operations overseas. The Intelligence Services Act 1994 directs SIS to obtain and provide information relating to the acts and intentions of persons overseas.

- in the fields of national security with particular reference to the government's defence and foreign policies;
- in the interests of the economic well-being of the UK; and
- in support of the prevention or detection of serious crime.

The Intelligence Services Act 1994 likewise directs SIS to perform other tasks, enabling the Service to conduct covert operations and to act clandestinely overseas in support of British Government objectives.

The collection of intelligence by SIS is in accordance with the requirements and priorities established by the Joint Intelligence Committee and approved by British Government Ministers.

SIS uses human and technical sources to meet these requirements, as well as liaison with a wide range of foreign intelligence and security services.

To fulfill these obligations SIS works closely with the other British intelligence and security agencies (the Security Service and GCHO¹), the Armed Forces, the Ministry of Defence, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Home Office, HM Revenue and Customs and other UK law enforcement agencies and government departments.

Abridged from
<http://www.sis.gov.uk/output/Page79.html>
12 June, 2007; 2:31 p.m.

¹ GCHQ - Government Communications Headquarters;

Exercises

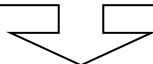
I Match the words/phrases 1-13 with their definitions a-m.

1. <i>origin(s)</i> D	a. competence; ability;
2. <i>to run</i> (to run someone or something) C	b. income;
3. <i>collection</i> E	c. to be in charge of sth; to take someone secretly and illegally into a country or area; to smuggle;
4. <i>interception</i> G	d. the beginning of sth; source;
5. <i>on behalf of</i> H	e. the act of getting sth or sb;
6. <i>coverage</i> J	f. concerning; about
7. <i>capability</i> A	g. the act of catching between starting point and destination;
8. <i>to obtain</i> L	h. for a person or as a representative of a person;
9. <i>reference</i> (with reference to) F	i. hidden; secret;
10. <i>Act</i> M	j. the reporting in a newspaper or magazine, or on television or radio;
11. <i>clandestine</i> I	k. contact; connection; cooperation and exchange of information between different organisations;
12. <i>liaison</i> K	l. to get or to achieve sth;
13. <i>revenue</i> B	m. law;

Definitions taken from
Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary
Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English by AS Hornby

II What are the most appropriate objects of the following verbs?

<u>verbs</u>	<u>objects</u>
<i>to make</i>	<i>certain tasks</i>
<i>to be engaged in</i>	<i>obligations</i>
<i>to intercept</i>	<i>a decision</i>
<i>to run</i>	<i>foreign intelligence collection</i>
<i>to establish</i>	<i>covert operations</i>
<i>to counter</i>	<i>mail/messages</i>
<i>to collect</i>	<i>secret agents</i>
<i>to mount</i>	<i>a new Bureau</i>
<i>to perform</i>	<i>certain requirements</i>
<i>to conduct</i>	<i>foreign espionage</i>
<i>to meet</i>	<i>covert operations</i>
<i>to fulfil</i>	<i>secret intelligence</i>



to make a decision
to be engaged in foreign intelligence collection
to intercept mails/messages
to run secret agents
to establish a new Bureau
to counter foreign espionage
to collect secret intelligence
to mount covert operations
to perform certain tasks
to conduct covert operations
to meet certain requirements
to fulfil obligations

III Look carefully at the following verbs, notice the difference in spelling, explain the difference in meaning and fill in the gaps with the most appropriate form of the given verbs.

N.B.

Infinitive	Past Tense	Past Participle	Pres. Participle
<i>to lie</i>	<i>lied</i>	<i>lied</i>	<i>lying</i>
<i>to lie</i>	<i>lay</i>	<i>lain</i>	<i>lying</i>
<i>to lay</i>	<i>laid</i>	<i>laid</i>	<i>laying</i>

1. A German politician has warned that the CIA informant Curveball could go to jail after telling the Guardian that he **LIED** about Saddam Hussein’s bioweapons capability in order to “liberate” Iraq... Politicians in Iraq called for Curveball’s permanent exile following his admission and poured scorn on his claim to want to return to his motherland and build a political party. “He is a liar, he will not serve his country,” said one Iraqi MP...In his adopted home of Germany, MPs are demanding to know why the German secret service paid Curveball £2,500 a month for at least five years after they knew he **HAD LIED** ... The MP said he would table a question to the Bundestag demanding to know whether the German secret service knew that Curveball **WAS LYING** before the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. Schröder famously refused to join the “coalition of the willing” who took part in the second Iraq war.

Abridged from
<http://noworldsystem.com/2011/02/18/agent-who-lied-about-wmd-in-iraq-faces-jail-sentence/>

16 May, 2011; 15:12 p.m.

2. Mrs. Mostyn **LAY** in bed rigid. She **HAD LAIN** like this all night, while her husband had slept beside her... The night before they had quarrelled. They had said unforgivable things.

Then Mr. Mostyn had gone to sleep, while Mrs. Mostyn **HAD LAIN** awake rigid. She had been like this for six or seven hours: she did not count the two or three she had been asleep... When Mr. Mostyn woke he remembered the night before and he was amazed at having had a good night's sleep. He could feel his wife **LYING** rigid beside him. He knew that she would have been lying like this for hours and would be waiting for him to wake so that she could hurt him...

Abridged from
A Morning in the Life of Intelligent People
 by Nicholas Mosley

<http://pi.library.yorku.ca/ojs/index.php/public/article/viewFile/30281/27815>
 16 May, 2011; 15:53 p.m.

3. It is Ney Year's Eve. My five-year-old daughter wants to **LAY** everything on the table for dinner. Last week she **LAI**D forks and knives incorrectly, so she has to be careful now. Tonight she **IS LYING** plates and napkins first, and then the silverware.

IV Choose the most appropriate adjective from the box to complete the sentences.

<i>covert</i>	<i>secret</i>	<i>economic</i>	<i>national</i>	<i>foreign</i>
---------------	---------------	-----------------	-----------------	----------------

1. The Secret Intelligence Service collects Britain's **FOREING** intelligence.
2. They must provide important information in the field of **NATIONAL** security.
3. The Service mounts **COVERT** operations overseas.
4. They cooperate with a range of foreign **SECRET** services.
5. **ECONIMIC** well-being of the United Kingdom is one of their priorities.

V Complete the following sentences.

1. The Secret Intelligence Service was

2. It is based at

3. The main objective of SIS is

4. The Intelligence Services Act

5. SIS cooperates closely with

VI Supply the missing words.

1. As Britain's **SECRET** service, SIS provides the British **GOVERNMENT** with a global covert capability to promote and **DEFEND** the national security and economic **WELL-BEING** of the United **KINGDOM**.
2. SIS operates world-wide to **COLLECT** secret foreign intelligence in support of the British Government's policies and **OBJECTIVES**.
3. Regional instability, **TERRORISM**, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and illegal narcotics are among the major challenges of the 21st century.
4. SIS assists the government to meet these **CHALLENGES**. To do this effectively SIS must protect the secrets of its **SOURCES** and methods.

VII Answer the questions.

1. When was the first British intelligence service established and what was its name?
2. What were the immediate causes for the Committee for Imperial Defence to establish such an organisation?
3. What were the Bureau's main tasks?
4. How was this Bureau later transformed?
5. Give a short profile of the Secret Intelligence Service.

VIII Role cards.

Official visit of the Chief of the Secret Intelligence Service

You are the Chief of the Secret Intelligence Service and you have been invited by the Faculty of Security Studies to visit their institution, meet the faculty and students and tell them something about your institution (its origins, structure, functions)

Former MI6 member

You are a former MI6 intelligence officer who was recruited by the secret service during the Cold War. Tell the students how you joined the Service and how it looked like working for the secret service.

Job interview

You have just graduated from the Faculty of Security Studies and are currently looking for a job with the Security Service. How would you persuade your superiors that you are the right person for the job (how well informed are you, what are your qualities, your special interests...)?

N.B:

In order to prepare any of these roles, use the text above, the presentation on the National Intelligence Machinery (previous lesson) and the enclosed material (1.2 *MI6 text*, and 1.3 *Undercover in MI6*). Students are invited to prepare these roles and contact me via my mail dnejkovic@gmail.com and earn some additional points. Student assignments will be posted on our Seesaw learning platform.

MY WORDLIST