

# SCRUTINY

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## NEW D NOTICE GAG

**A new extension to official censorship has been agreed by 10 editors and four Permanent Secretaries. The government's D Notice Committee has agreed to ask other journalists to curb their reporting of intelligence activities, nuclear weapons establishments, and contingency plans for the military takeover of civilian resources. The new Notices have just been circulated by the Ministry of Defence**

THE THREE amended D Notices, and an earlier alteration made in 1984, have extended the area in which journalists are asked to apply self censorship to cover:

- Details of military plans to take over hospitals, transport, food and fuel supplies, or conscript civilian labour; even if these resources are to be handed over to United States forces;
- Photographs or diagrams of the movement of nuclear weapons, which could include cruise missile convoys;
- Any photographs of intelligence agents, whether or not involved in domestic political surveillance.

Both the D Notice system and the Notices themselves have been widely criticised. When the *New Statesman* criticised the attempted wide reach of the system in 1980, the House of Commons Defence Committee held an inquiry and would have voted for the abolition of the system but for the last-minute attendance and voting of two Conservative MPs who did not listen to the evidence.

The Defence Committee inquiry nevertheless found that many newspapers disregarded D Notices. The then editor of the *Sunday Times*, Harry Evans, said that the system was 'an anachronism and counter-productive' and 'a massive irrelevance now'. Both the *Guardian* and the *Observer* had lost their D Notices. The editor of the *Spectator* had loyally burnt all of his Notices.

But the Defence Ministry has

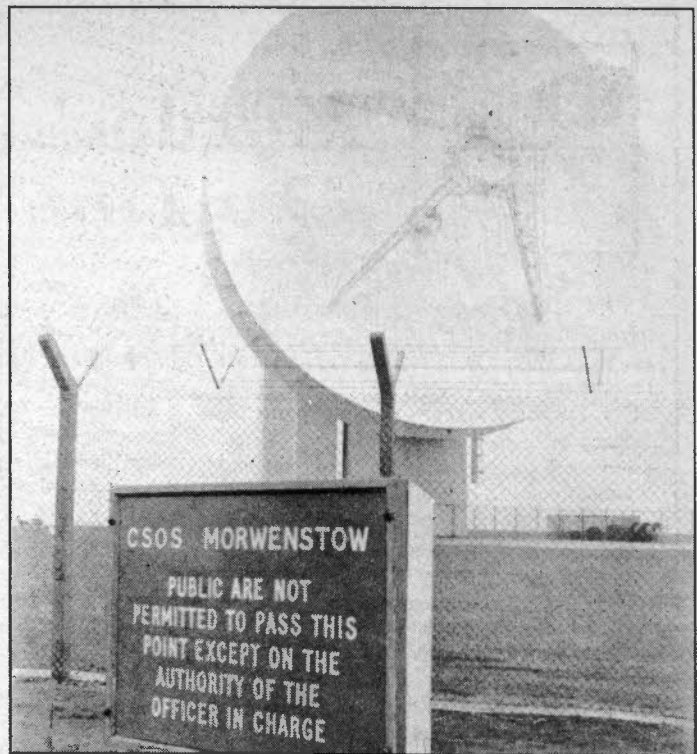
quietly been trying to rehabilitate the system. The D Notice on 'Defence Plans', last issued in 1982, now includes a ban on reporting 'plans for the allocation, handling and deployment... of civil resources in support of the Services to meet particular hostile situations, and other contingency plans'. The Secretary to the D Notice Committee, Major General Patrick Kay, confirmed that this would cover details of recent secret agreements with the US to allocate British civilians, hospitals and road and rail transport to the US during a war crisis — first revealed by the *New Statesman* (6 and 13 September 1985). General Kay agreed that these articles included material covered by the amended D Notice, but claimed that changes were planned earlier.

Another D Notice change requests editors not to publish photographs of people working for British intelligence agencies, because they could become terrorist targets. Kay agreed that this change was aimed at the *New Statesman*, and other papers such as the *Sunday Times*, who have recently published such pictures.

The third change was first made in May 1984. This asked editors not to publish pictures of nuclear weapons convoys or establishments involved in nuclear weapons production. This change also followed *New Statesman* reports of the movements of nuclear weapons by road convoy, to and through cities such as Glasgow, Carlisle, and Leicester.

D Notices have no legal force. Since 1968, no action has ever followed violation of the terms of a D Notice. Last year, for example, Yorkshire TV hired a huge mobile crane to peer over layers of ministry fences and film the inside of the Aldermaston nuclear weapons design centre and the Burghfield bomb factory. The film was transmitted in its recent documentary, *Britain's Bomb*, despite the D Notice.

Front bench defence spokespersons Denzil Davies (Labour) and Paddy Ashdown (Liberal) both condemned the move. It was, said Ashdown, another component of the government's 'prison of secrecy'. Both parties plan to end the D Notice system. ●



Multinational intelligence in action. GCHQ's satellite spy station at Morwenstow near Bude, Cornwall, is jointly equipped, financed and run with the US. It intercepts messages from Western commercial satellites. Using tapping centres like Bude, GCHQ has, on behalf of the US, targeted and copied the private communications of prominent citizens, such as radical actress Jane Fonda and baby expert Dr Benjamin Spock, an anti-Vietnam War activist.

## Global spy network exposed

**COMPLETE AND DETAILED organisational charts of the secret services in Britain, Canada, the United States, Australia and New Zealand, have been published together for the first time. A new book by American and Australian intelligence specialists, published last week, reveals and documents the extensive links between the intelligence agencies of the English-speaking powers — and highlights the dangers of these links to civil liberties and political accountability.\***

The first major treaty, called BRUSA (Britain-USA) linked the electronic eavesdropping establishments in Britain and the United States during the Second World War. BRUSA was augmented by the secret 1947 agreement UKUSA, which binds the Sigint (signals intelligence) organisation of each country into a single global eavesdropping system.

Britain also controls a subsidiary Sigint organisation, also set up in 1947, and now called the Commonwealth Sigint organisation. In the 1950s, after the UKUSA agreement was signed, a further series of secret intelligence-sharing treaties, called AUSCANZUKUS (Australia-Canada-New Zealand-UK-US), were signed between the five countries. These include agreements to share codes and

cyphers, as well as the results of old-fashioned human spying. The threat to cut off this massive secret exchange has often been used by civil servants in Britain and Australia to persuade new governments to temper defence or foreign policies thought to be unacceptable to the US.

The most dangerous aspect of these links is that the agencies, acting together, present 'a constant threat that [the international English-speaking security and intelligence community] might consider its interest to transcend those of any member nation. Judicial investigations of internal security agencies, which have taken place in each of the AUSCANZUKUS countries except Britain, have established evidence of serious lawbreaking by intelligence agencies.

Quoting from top secret Australian documents, whose publication the Australian government has repeatedly tried to suppress, the authors also reveal the workings of the top echelon of British intelligence. This is the Permanent Under Secretaries' Committee on Intelligence Services.

PSIS conducts an 'annual review of intelligence', and approves the future budgets and five-year plans for MI5, the Special Intelligence Service, GCHQ and the military intelligence services. PSIS's senior official is the Co-ordinator of Intelligence in the Cabinet Office, whose other tasks include a duty to 'generally advise and encourage the intelligence community'. ●

\* *The Ties that Bind*, Jeffery T Richelson and Desmond Ball. George Allen and Unwin, £19.95.