

Daily Mail

COMMENT

The paper that helps Britain's enemies

FORGET hacking voicemails or slipping payments to officials for stories that may or may not be in the public interest.

Set to one side even (dare we say it?) this paper's provocative headline 12 days ago, questioning how a long-dead Marxist, who wanted to smash all the traditions and institutions which make Britain British, could be said to love his country.

By any objective yardstick, don't such crimes and controversies pale beside the accusation levelled against the Guardian on Tuesday by the new head of MI5?

Indeed, it is impossible to imagine a graver charge against a newspaper than that it has given succour to our country's enemies and endangered all our lives by handing terrorists 'the gift they need to evade us and strike at will'.

Yet so said Andrew Parker, in his first speech as our spy chief, which yesterday was significantly endorsed by No10.

So isn't it staggering that the BBC, after spending all last week trumpeting Ed Miliband's attack on this paper over our charge that his father's Marxist views validated one of the most evil regimes in history, could hardly bring itself for much of yesterday to report Mr Parker's devastating indictment of the Guardian?

The problem, and it's worse under the new director general, is that a wall of prejudice surrounds Broadcasting House - a belief that the Right merits relentless attack, while the BBC's soulmates on the liberal Left must always be protected.

Let us be clear. The Mail has never believed that MI5 and GCHQ deserve unquestioning support.

In this column, we were highly critical of their demands for the power to detain suspects without trial for 90 days.

We led the charge against MI6's cosiness with Labour over the dodgy dossier on Iraq. And we have opposed secret courts and the so-called snoopers' charter.

But at the same time, we accept that the security services would be guilty of dereliction of duty if they failed to monitor those who pose a threat to the UK.

And we have always argued that a line needs to be drawn between the civil liberties we treasure and the interests of national security.

We believe the Guardian, with lethal irresponsibility, has crossed that line by printing tens of thousands of words describing the secret techniques used to monitor terrorists.

Such is certainly the view of UK national security adviser Oliver Robbins, who says the paper has 'already done real damage', while the information it still holds is likely to 'lead directly to widespread loss of life'.

Indeed, so incendiary are these documents that British agents have had to be moved for their protection.

Yet, almost as astonishing as the BBC's reticence, the editor of the Guardian now says he will continue to release the material, arguing that he will take care to publish nothing that endangers lives.

But how, in the name of sanity, can he know? He's a journalist, not an expert on security.

As for his paper's attack on us over the Labour leader's father, let us say something in Ralph Miliband's favour.

True, he hated so much about this country that he wanted a workers' revolution to overturn everything from the monarchy to parliament, property rights and the common law. And, yes, his ideas chimed more with Stalin's than with Churchill's during the Cold War.

But he fought for Britain in the war. And never once, as far as we are aware, did he give practical help to our enemies.

Nor was he ever accused by the head of our security services of putting British lives at risk.

Isn't that a great deal more than can be said for the Guardian?