

Security in a Small Nation Scotland, Democracy, Politics

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Scotland, Democracy, Politics

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6. ‘Hardly a Moment’s Discussion’? Intelligence and the Scottish Referendum¹

Sandy Hardie

This chapter offers an account of ‘intelligence’ in the Scottish Referendum, the first occasion on which the subject had featured in a British political contest. It documents and assesses the strategic dimension in UK national security, its visibility to voters, the presentation and impact of arguments for and against separate arrangements, and the professional and political constraints on the Yes and No camps. Press coverage emerges as reasonable and fair if largely reactive, while the broadcasters were distinctly cautious, and overall treatment of the cyber threat to an independent Scotland was inadequate. The chapter concludes with a forward look to the likely profile of intelligence in the event of a second referendum.

1 My thanks to the organisers of the CeSeR launch conference ‘The Future of Security Research: Multidisciplinary Perspectives’ for their kind invitation to speak, and to participants for a stimulating panel discussion. This essay was produced on the basis of the public record, personal recollections, and meetings with a wide range of campaign participants, observers and former national security practitioners, to all of whom I am grateful for sharing knowledge and perspectives.

'In the debate about Scotland's future, there has hardly been a moment's discussion about how best to protect Scotland's security in the event of independence'. Such was Sir Menzies (now Lord) Campbell's conclusion just two weeks before the referendum.² Was he right? Two years on, with a possible second referendum a live issue, the profile of 'intelligence' in the campaign calls for review.

This was the first political contest in Britain in which intelligence had featured as an issue. There was no precedent either in time of national crisis or in the post-war process of de-colonisation.³ At Westminster, following 'avowal' of the agencies in 1994, intelligence had largely been a bipartisan matter.⁴ The workings of the intelligence community and its performance in the run-up to the war in Iraq had of course been the subject of unprecedented public scrutiny in the Butler Review of 2004. Yet when questioned by the Foreign Affairs Committee on the intelligence implications of Scottish separation, a Foreign Office minister observed 'it is one of the frustrating things as a minister that you cannot rightly talk about this'.⁵ He was voicing a continuing, and generally shared, constraint on open exchange. But given the profound implications of separation for future security on both sides of the border, the intelligence dimension simply had to be acknowledged and addressed.⁶ In addition, the prospect of a new security apparatus alongside the recently-centralised Scottish police authority raised major issues around oversight and civil liberties, and these too called for public

2 Menzies Campbell, 'Sir Menzies Campbell: We Are Safer Together', Scottish Liberal Democrats, 5 September 2014, http://www.scotlibdems.org.uk/intervention_from_intelligence_chief_shows_we_are_safer_together

3 For the immediate pre-war period, however, Churchill's 1939 speech in the House of Commons praising SIS as 'the finest service of its kind in the world' and warning Chamberlain and Halifax against ignoring its product, stands out: see Richard Aldrich and Rory Cormac, *The Black Door: Spies, Secret Intelligence and British Prime Ministers* (London: HarperCollins, 2016), pp. 83–84.

4 'Avowal': a standard term for the process of acknowledging the existence of the intelligence agencies, represented by the Intelligence Service Act.

5 Richard Lidington, cited in Foreign Affairs Committee, *Foreign Policy Considerations for the UK and Scotland in the Event of Scotland Becoming an Independent Country, Sixth Report of Session 2012–2013* (London: HMSO, 2013), Ev. 66, Q 341., <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmfaff/643/643.pdf>

6 Just one commentator challenged this proposition at the time: Alex Massie, 'Theresa May's Grubby Little Warning: An Independent Scotland Will Be out in the Cold', *Spectator*, 29 October 2013, <http://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2013/10/theresa-mays-grubby-little-warning-independent-scotland-will-be-left-out-in-the-cold/>

scrutiny and submission to the voters. I took part in the No campaign through 2013 and 2014 as a Scot living in Scotland, and as a former foreign service officer. The questions to be addressed in what follows arise from that experience, and its pro-Union perspective. How visible was the strategic intelligence dimension to Scottish voters? How were the issues and arguments presented, and what impact did they have? What constraints were in play? And how well was the public served by media coverage?

At the outset, public interest in intelligence appeared to be low. On the central campaign battleground it was eclipsed by the more visible and emotive matters of the armed forces, Trident, and NATO membership. Campbell himself conceded that there probably weren't many votes in intelligence and security issues. Yet that assumption seems not to have been tested with campaign focus groups. And for what it may be worth, the *Sunday Express* of 7 September 2014 listed 'British Intelligence' seventh out of '25 things we'll miss in independent Scotland'; then again, on 19 September, the *Scottish Daily Mail* put 'intelligence services' sixth in its list of the 'twenty real reasons' No-voters wanted to keep the Union 'but are too polite to admit'.⁷ Whether 'quiet No-voters' had a larger appetite for the subject than campaign managers were prepared to admit is now beyond verification, but by 18 September there was at least some sense that security and intelligence had edged out of the shadows and into the light.

The first effort to get to grips with the subject came from Westminster. The Foreign Affairs Committee (FAC) opened their hearings in late 2012;⁸ their report, published on 1 May 2013, offered what is still the most thoughtful exploration of the wider-world dimension to Scottish separation; the likely threat environment; the correlation of external intelligence work and domestic security; the infrastructure requirements of an independent Scotland; and the question of assistance from the rUK. Expert witnesses argued that a Scottish administration would need a new, independent intelligence and security infrastructure, and would

7 Borland, Ben, '25 Things We'll Miss Independent Scotland' [sic], *Scottish Express*, 7 September 2014, pp. 38–39; Jonathan Brocklebank, 'Fear and Laughing in the Ad Campaigns as We Reveal What Really Drove Better Together', *Scottish Daily Mail*, 19 September 2014, pp. 14–15.

8 Foreign Affairs Committee (2013).

face substantial set-up costs and formidable technical challenges over an extended timeframe. They foregrounded cyber security (the threats of cyber espionage, fraud, and potential sabotage), but they suggested that, within the field of cryptography, there was no certainty that even a small-scale ('mini-GCHQ') project would be feasible.⁹ Nobody denied Scottish capacity to put some sort of infrastructure in place, given time, resources, effective direction and the good will of partners, but new structures could not replicate the levels of protection afforded by MI5, MI6 and GCHQ, and the ability of a Scottish government to protect its citizens at home and abroad would likely be diminished.

Oral and written evidence stressed the objective rUK interest in helping develop Scottish capabilities, and one submission argued that close institutional cooperation between the rUK and Scotland would be needed if the present UK National Security Strategy itself was to be implemented effectively.¹⁰ But witnesses also stressed that bilateral assistance would be contingent on the conditions and mood of separation, including the defence and external approach of an independent administration.¹¹ Policy on Trident, and its impact on the NATO alliance (US perceptions in particular), would bear upon rUK attitudes and interests. For its part, the FAC acknowledged that the rUK could well have an interest in advising and assisting an embryonic Scottish intelligence community, not least given the risk that under-investment could result in perceptions of Scotland as a 'weak link' in counter-terrorism and cyber defences and as the easy way to attack the rUK, with loss of security on both sides of the border.¹² But it concluded that 'it remains unclear how much support the rUK might be willing *or indeed able* to give and what impact this might have on its other foreign policy priorities, budgets and resources'.¹³ Here was a warning that the rUK's perception of its own interests would be conditioned by existing alliances as well as by reformulated requirements in relation to the British land mass, and that the quality of start-up assistance to Scottish agencies would be determined in the light of the strategic situation in its entirety and not by Scottish considerations, however immediate,

9 *Ibid.*

10 *Ibid.*, Ev 86 (Dr Malcolm Chalmers), Ev 92 (Dr Daniel Kenealy).

11 *Ibid.*, Ev 25–31.

12 *Ibid.*, Ev 31, Para 125, citing Sir David Omand (Q154).

13 *Ibid.*, p. 54 (my emphasis).

alone. In adding 'or indeed able', the FAC hinted at constraints on rUK freedom of action. The point was made more explicitly by the former Director of GCHQ, Sir David Omand, commenting on GCHQ's 'deep technical assessment':¹⁴

Whether an independent Scotland would benefit from that, and from the American underpinning of it is a bigger question about the relationship in the whole intelligence sphere between an independent Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom and, indeed, the United States.

In other words, the rUK would be unable, on its own authority, simply to pass on the technical or intelligence products of its strategic alliance with the US. A good deal of later discussion, it might be added, focussed on whether Scotland might join the Five Eyes intelligence alliance (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, UK and US).¹⁵ However, early Scottish accession to this group, and its security protocols, was never a realistic prospect and arguably served as a distraction from more immediate issues, including cooperation with the principal European agencies (the latter, for their part, seem to have shown scant awareness of what was afoot in Scotland until well into 2014).

On what the Chair rightly described as 'a very important occasion', the FAC took evidence from Nicola Sturgeon, the then Deputy First Minister (DFM), in Edinburgh on 28 January 2013. The SNP had resolved in October 2012 that 'a cyber security and intelligence infrastructure to deal with new threats and protect key national economic and social infrastructure' should be maintained, and now, the FAC was seeking a closer view of Scottish Government (SG) proposals.¹⁶ Sturgeon envisaged a Scottish threat environment broadly familiar from the UK's current National Security Strategy (NSS): 'cyber threat, international terrorism [...] global instability and failed states, serious international organised crime'.¹⁷ She did not suggest, as others were, that a distinctive

14 *Ibid.*, Ev 25.

15 See for example Rob Dover, 'Cutting the Ties That Bind? Intelligence in an Independent Scotland', *PSA Political Insight*, 4 November 2013, <https://www.psa.ac.uk/insight-plus/blog/cutting-ties-bind-intelligence-independent-scotland>

16 [N.a.], 'In Full: SNP Resolution on Nato', 16 July 2012, <http://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/in-full-snp-resolution-on-nato-1-2414919>

17 Foreign Affairs Committee (2013), Q309. Cf. HM Government, *A Strong Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The National Security Strategy* (2010), http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20121015000000/http://www.direct.gov.uk/prod_consum_dg/groups/dg_digitalassets/@dg/@en/documents/digitalasset/dg_191639.pdf

external posture would lead to reduced levels of threat. She spoke of 'independent domestic intelligence machinery [...] sitting alongside our police service', but questions as to an external intelligence capability were parried by reference to a 'substantial piece of work' then under way.¹⁸ SG understanding of how Scottish intelligence-gathering might relate to the acknowledged international dimensions of the threat environment was not further probed. Rather, the DFM referred to future 'shared arrangements' with the rUK: but what she (or those who compiled her brief), understood by this was quite uncertain.¹⁹ It was thus left unclear whether the SG actually envisaged shared responsibility for the security of Scotland in the period following 24 March 2016. Her performance drew sharply critical comment from Baroness Ramsay, a former senior officer of MI6.²⁰

To her credit, Sturgeon had offered to come back to the FAC for detailed discussion of the SG's preparatory work, which would be published 'in the lead-up to and in the White Paper'.²¹ In the event, no separate publication took place. In response to a Freedom of Information (FOI) request, I was informed that 'a public statement, paper or event on Defence and Security (and external affairs in general) was initially scheduled for April 2013, then rescheduled to follow Mr Brown's [Keith Brown, MSP, the then SG Secretary for Transport and Veterans Affairs] House of Commons defence committee appearance on 2 July.²² Official records do not discuss why the paper was not published'. The successive postponements disclosed in this response suggest emerging SG/SNP awareness of a major weakness in the area of national security and they point to a political decision taken around mid-2013 to bury Defence and Security proposals within the White Paper, thereby

18 Foreign Affairs Committee (2013), Ev 62.

19 *Ibid.*

20 Meta Ramsay, 'Security Service Can Take Nothing for Granted', *Scotsman*, 17 February 2013, <http://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/meta-ramsay-security-service-can-take-nothing-for-granted-1-2795918>

21 Foreign Affairs Committee (2013), Ev 62.

22 In response to a request for a meeting with Scottish Government officials, I was told by telephone on 7 October 2015 that SG ministers' positions on security and intelligence remained unchanged from those set out in Chapter 7 of the White Paper of November 2013 (cited below, n. 29). I regret that this opportunity for a closer, more developed, approach to SG thinking was passed up. The SG's response to an FOI request on issues arising from Nicola Sturgeon's evidence to the Foreign Affairs Committee in January 2013, communicated in a letter dated 23 December from the SG Safer Communities Directorate, is reproduced in the main text.

limiting exposure. At all events, the failure to publish in advance of the White Paper, together with the FAC's own failure to follow up the DFM's offer of further discussions on intelligence and security matters, meant that no Scottish leader was again to face purposeful questioning on SG proposals or on the 'substantial piece of work' to which Sturgeon referred. Indeed the exchange with the FAC marked the closure of the SG's active engagement in public discussion of the subject. And in that respect certainly, Campbell was right.

A sceptical FAC drew its own conclusions. Here is what it said:

By the Scottish Government's own assessment, in the event of independence Scotland would need both internal and external security and intelligence capabilities to deal with the many diverse potential threats it believes it could face. Yet Scotland has no external intelligence structure to build upon. With just a year to go before the referendum takes place [in fact, over fifteen months], it is not at all clear that the Scottish Government has a costed and coherent vision of the security and intelligence infrastructure it needs to put in place to protect Scottish citizens, business and economic interests.²³

A further conclusion foreshadowed what was to become fertile ground for pro-Independence counterclaims that the UK Government was bluffing on the key issue of future set-up support and intelligence-sharing:

[...] there appears to be a working presumption on the part of the Scottish Government that the rUK would fill the intelligence shortfall that would emerge in the short term, but possibly over a longer time frame too. The basis for this position is not at all clear. Scotland would undoubtedly remain of strategic interest to the rUK and in the vast majority of cases it is likely that it would be in the rUK's interests to assist Scotland.

The FAC report received fair exposure in pro-Union parts of the Scottish press. Sturgeon called it 'partisan', with 'rare examples of even-handedness', and claimed that the FAC's aim was 'to undermine the case for independence'.²⁴ By contrast, the Foreign Secretary

²³ Foreign Affairs Committee (2013), Para 137.

²⁴ Severin Carrell, 'Scottish Independence Quest Hampered by Policy Gaps, MPs Say', *Guardian*, 19 July 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2013/may/01/scottish-independence-hampered-policy-gaps>; Matt Chorley and Alan Roden, 'Voters Need Facts About Scottish Independence, Hague Says as MPs Warn Rest of the UK's Global Reputation Is at Stake', *Daily Mail*, 1 May 2013, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2317689/Voters-need-facts-Scottish-independence-Hague-says-MPs-warn-rest-UKs-global-reputation-stake.html>

William Hague noted, not without humour, ‘the dependence that an independent Scotland would still have on rUK’.²⁵ Intelligence and security, in other words, both exemplified a fundamental ambiguity in the SNP’s conception of ‘independence’ later noted by (Yes-voting) Iain Macwhirter and (No-voting) Alex Massie:²⁶ its attempt to square sovereignty with a network of continuing dependencies on its large neighbour.

The FAC added this observation on voter-awareness: ‘it is crucial that the Scots are aware that the rUK’s intelligence and security help would be discretionary, based on self-interest and could not be taken for granted’. Unsurprisingly, there were large gaps in Scottish public awareness of intelligence matters, and it was the UK Government’s responsibility to put the facts before the voters. Whitehall had the benefit of a body of research into communicating strategic issues around national security to the public.²⁷ Of course, ‘communications’ in a divisive campaign was a quite different proposition from building public trust in a national security strategy. Yet Whitehall’s experience of what might be said about security and resilience, in what level of detail, by whom and to which constituencies was certainly relevant to the referendum campaign.

A major cross-Whitehall effort, co-ordinated by the Cabinet Office, went into a briefing package published in October 2013.²⁸ This was the product of extended drafting and a sharply defined internal debate that prompted the intervention of Danny Alexander, now in command of the tactical interface between coalition and campaign. From the London

25 HM Government, *Sixth Report from the Foreign Affairs Committee of Session 2012–13: Foreign Policy Considerations for the UK and Scotland in the Event of Scotland Becoming an Independent Country. Response from the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. Cm. 8644* (London: HMSO, 2013), https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/210012/30944_Cm_8644_Web_Accessible.pdf, para 20.

26 Cf. Iain Macwhirter, *Disunited Kingdom: How Westminster Won a Referendum but Lost Scotland* (Glasgow: Cargo Publishing, 2014); Alex Massie, ‘Why I Am Voting No’, *Spectator*, 9 September 2014, <http://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2014/09/why-i-am-voting-no/>

27 R. Mottram, ‘Protecting the Citizen in the Twenty-First Century: Issues and Challenges’, in *The New Protective State: Government, Intelligence and Terrorism*, ed. by Peter Hennessy (London and New York: A&C Black, 2008), pp. 42–65 (pp. 61–63).

28 HM Government (2013). The account that follows is based on private information from various sources.

perspective, the published document represented a preference for factual presentation over sharper, more confrontational, lines of approach. *Scotland Analysis: Security* laid out the machinery and its underlying principles in fine detail, largely eschewing hype.²⁹ One of a series of thirteen papers rolled out as sceptical commentary on separation, and as a resource to inform discussion, it made no pretension to direct voter-appeal. However, its core message was an unambiguous constitutional reality: as a separate state, Scotland would have sovereign responsibility for its own security.

This meant that Scotland would necessarily cease to participate in the near-seamless arrangements that join MI5 and the National Crime Agency to the external operational work of MI6 and GCHQ. It could not expect others to be proactive on its behalf. rUK and Scotland would no doubt work together, to mutual self-interest: but no external liaison, however close, could replicate the intimacy and immediacy of integration within the United Kingdom. In short, if the Scots were to choose separation, they could not still 'share' as though separation had not happened: 'two countries, one system', to reverse Deng's characterisation of the Hong Kong settlement, was not a constitutional option for the security of a dis-integrated country.³⁰ Such was the united view of the coalition government, though individual emphases varied from time to time. The Foreign Secretary put it thus:³¹ 'Although it is likely that Scottish and rUK interests would largely coincide in this area [...] Scotland would lose access to the many benefits that it currently derives from being part of the UK'. Implicitly responding to criticism of Better Together negativity, the Prime Minister was to go further in May 2014, conceding that an independent Scotland would 'of course' have a share of defence and security resources.³² But that is to run ahead of the story.

William Hague had taken the wider-world arguments for the Union to Edinburgh in June 2013 and had touched on the intelligence services

29 HM Government (2013).

30 Deng Xiaoping, 'One Country, Two Systems' (22 June 1984), <http://en.people.cn/dengxp/vol3/text/c1210.html>

31 HM Government (2013), Para 20.

32 [N.a.], 'The Pros and the Cons of Negativity', *Herald*, 16 May 2014, http://www.heraldsotland.com/opinion/13160648.The_pros_and_the_cons_of_negativity/

as ‘some of the most capable and professional [...] in the world’.³³ But the task of presenting *Scotland Analysis: Security* in Edinburgh fell to the then Home Secretary, Theresa May. Given her lead on Counter-Terrorism, and the paper’s emphasis on the protection of people, property and prosperity, this made sense; despite divided ministerial responsibilities for the agencies, it served to underline the strategic integration of external and domestic capabilities with policing across the UK. Arguably, too, it made political sense to detach what was said about the external agencies from considerations of Britain’s place in the world, an arena where Nationalist accusations of post-imperial hubris carried undeniable appeal in the long, fractious aftermath of the Iraq war.³⁴

Yet Theresa May could have been forgiven for apprehension as she travelled north on 29 October. What Alex Salmond had called the ‘phoney war’ was at an end, and with the advent of Autumn the big beasts were locking horns.³⁵ Visiting Conservative ministers were already fair game for SNP accusations of ‘lecturing the Scots’ (primed by the new Secretary of State for Scotland Alistair Carmichael’s not very private admonitions to his coalition colleagues).³⁶ A recent addition to the politics of security was the disclosure of UK/US intercept capabilities by the rogue National Security Agency contractor, Edward Snowden, later to be elected Rector of Glasgow University (*in absentia*). Moreover, as the Foreign Secretary had found in June, dotty allegations of MI5 pro-Union ‘dirty tricks’ could still command headlines, a minor symptom not just of fringe paranoia but of popular distrust of Westminster and all

33 William Hague, ‘Foreign Secretary’s Speech: The United Kingdom: Stronger Together’, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Gov.uk, 20 June 2013, <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/foreign-secretarys-speech-the-united-kingdom-stronger-together>

34 Cf. Harry Reid, ‘Decent Case for a Scots Foreign Policy’, *Herald*, 2 October 2012, http://www.heraldsotland.com/opinion/13075312.Decent_case_for_a_Scots_foreign_policy; Harry Reid, ‘Case for Knowing Our Place in the World’, *Herald*, 26 August 2014, http://www.heraldsotland.com/opinion/13176691.Case_for_knowing_our_place_in_the_world/

35 Jason Cowley, ‘Alex Salmond: “This Is the Phoney War. This Is Not the Campaign”’, *New Statesman*, 25 June 2013, <http://www.newstatesman.com/2013/06/phoney-war-not-campaign>

36 Magnus Gardham, ‘Carmichael Tells Cabinet Not to Give Lectures on Independence’, *Herald*, 11 October 2013, http://www.heraldsotland.com/news/13126815.Carmichael_tells_Cabinet_not_to_give_lectures_on_independence/

its works.³⁷ In a further illustration of the febrile atmosphere, the then Chief Constable of Police Scotland Sir Stephen House declined to meet the Home Secretary in the course of her visit.³⁸

Here, at all events, was the set-piece Edinburgh presentation of national security issues as seen from London. Print and broadcast coverage was extensive and largely factual, though it added a harder, 'Scotland to be frozen out', edge to what was actually said. Headlines focused on counter-terrorism and narcotics, with cyber security some way back. Given Scottish sensitivities, however, there was always a risk that the effort to inform would be spun as London didacticism, that questions addressed to the SG would be heard as threats, even that acknowledgement of likely co-operation might be dismissed as condescension. The challenge of bringing this occasion off was underlined in the acerbic comments of the Scotland editor of *The Spectator*. Intelligence, Alex Massie claimed, was a 'bother-with-it-later' item to be addressed as and when independence materialised.³⁹ Was Theresa May, he asked, trying to persuade '[t]he poor sap who might vote Yes but can be security-theatred into voting No?' More predictable was the SNP response, voiced by Christine Grahame: 'This is Project Fear at its worst — trying to politicise issues of security and anti-terrorism in this way is the height of irresponsibility'.⁴⁰

Were the Archangel Gabriel to have materialised in Surgeon's Hall that day, one suspects he'd have been charged with scurrilous scaremongering and talking down Scotland. Even so, it's worth pausing to ask how a presentational remix might have fared.⁴¹ Suppose, for the sake of

37 [N.a.], 'UK spies "not trailing SNP"; Hague dismisses "Scots paranoia"', *Daily Star*, 21 June 2013; Paula Murray, 'MSP Margo Convinced MI5 Spying in Nat Camp', *Scottish Sunday Express*, 23 June 2013; cf. Jonathan Brown, 'SNP Veteran Blames MI5 for Trolling over Independence', *Independent*, 14 June 2014; Tom McTague, 'One in Four Scots Believe UK Spies Are Working against Independence', *Daily Mail*, 8 September 2014, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2747809/One-four-Scots-believe-British-spies-secretly-working-against-Yes-independence-campaign.html>

38 Private information.

39 Alex Massie, *Spectator*, 29 October 2013.

40 Cited from Richard Ford, 'SNP Accuses May of Scaremongering', *The Times*, 30 October 2013.

41 For relevant reflections on George Osborne's presentation of the currency issue, see David Torrance, *100 Days of Hope and Fear: How Scotland's Referendum Was Lost and Won* (Edinburgh: Luath Press Ltd, 2014), p. 113.

argument, that the Home Secretary had foregrounded common security interests, accentuated continuity, conceded the likelihood of purposeful engagement and a measure of technical support, and then registered the constraints on the rUK and the practical challenges that would confront the architects of a new security apparatus. A case could certainly have been made for some such approach. But the political assessment, at least in retrospect, was that the SNP/SG would have pocketed the first half and ignored the qualifications (much as it did with selective quotation from *Scotland Analysis: Security* in the White Paper).⁴² Furthermore, from the pro-Union perspective, it would have spun any such soft-sell as evidence that Westminster was bluffing, and bluffing also on the central campaign issues. Be that as it may, claims that the UK Government position was pre-negotiation posturing were in my view wide of the mark.⁴³ In mid to late 2013, Scottish independence following a Yes vote was a hypothetical situation which UK ministers did not expect to arise. No substantive departmental or agency work was done to anticipate this eventuality. The cabinet ruling (late 2012-early 2013) against contingency planning was observed, though subject to parliamentary criticism (to be repeated during the EU referendum) from Lord Hennessy.⁴⁴ Whether the ruling was entirely appropriate within the intelligence and security community, given what would have been at stake, was and is open to question. In any case, it can be assumed that in the run-up to the vote heads of agencies were aware of the issues that would arise, and of immediate actions that would need to be taken, had London's anticipation of a No vote been proven misguided. But it would be wrong to suppose that contingency thinking informed the Home Secretary's presentation on 29 October. This was no pre-negotiation posture, because no requirement for negotiating positions had been anticipated.

Around this time, two Scottish universities made welcome interventions: the Edinburgh Economic and Social Research Council series 'Security in Scotland, with or without Constitutional Change' had

42 Scottish Government (2013), pp. 264–65.

43 Cf. Andrew W. Neal, 'Comment: Scotland Wouldn't Be Out of Security Loop', *Scotsman*, 11 November 2013, <http://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/comment-scotland-wouldn-t-be-out-of-security-loop-1-3184490>

44 Lord Hennessy of Nympsfield, *Lords Hansard, Col. 1361–1451* (London: HMSO), <https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201314/ldhansrd/text/140130-0001.htm#14013072000875>. Mark Carney revealed in August 2014 that the Bank of England had drawn up contingency plans in the event of a Yes vote.

kicked off at Holyrood on 4 October, and the Glasgow conference 'Global Security, National Defence, and the Future of Scotland', followed on 8–9 November. Each initiative offered a forum for exchange, questioning, and exploration, and each put appreciably more information into the public domain. And yet, discussion overall remained distinctly asymmetrical: publication of the White Paper had been delayed until St Andrew's Day, and SG officials were understandably keeping a low profile.

In compiling the White Paper, the SG was obliged rapidly to develop policies in 'reserved' subject-areas of which it had no experience in government.⁴⁵ National security, including intelligence, was one such area. Even allowing for absence of expertise, the route by which the SG arrived at its proposal is oddly opaque. An endnote on methodology refers to 'a range of expert inputs'.⁴⁶ Informal feelers had gone out to the intelligence community in London, to former practitioners, and to Euro-structures in Brussels, and one or two unofficial advisory engagements took place in Scotland.⁴⁷ There were contacts, too, with academic specialists, and no doubt the websites of European agencies were trawled for data and ideas,⁴⁸ but the process as a whole remains to be documented. Chapter 7 advanced a proposal for a 'single security and intelligence agency' that would embrace cyber security as well as counter-terrorism.⁴⁹ It was claimed that this arrangement would 'avoid any barriers between different agencies', and it may be that the authors had in mind the scale of overall effort that might be required to protect a population of just five million.⁵⁰ But it represented an unusual (perhaps

45 Torrance (2014), p. 17.

46 Scottish Government (2013), p. 639.

47 Private information.

48 David Leask, 'Scottish Civil Servants Probe Plans for "Nordic" Intelligence Services after Independence', *Sunday Herald*, 28 July 2013, http://www.heraldsotland.com/news/13115795.Scottish_civil_servants_probe_plans_for__Nordic_intelligence_services_after_independence/; Scottish Government (2013), pp. 639, endnote 284. The White Paper lists, as international comparators 'studied', Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland. It is unlikely that SG officials were briefed by any service of the countries listed.

49 Scottish Government (2013), pp. 261–67.

50 Cf. the claim by Allan Burnett that 'UK security is a long way from being perfect. Multiple organisations fight for power and influence and inappropriate UK Government interference is rife'. As evidence for this nonsense, he cited the UK Border Agency (not, of course, a security agency). [N.a.], 'Former Senior Police Officers Clash on Independence Security Report', *STV News*, 26 October 2013, <http://stv.tv/news/politics/245660-graeme-pearson-and-allan-burnett-clash-on-independence-security-report/>

unique) concentration of functions, professional cultures and personal authority, one that historically had been rejected for the UK agencies.⁵¹

More conspicuously, Chapter 7 failed to define either a strategic role for the new agency or a Scotland-specific context in which it would exercise its functions. The 'functions' themselves were a list of activities, not a statement of the responsibilities that the agency would exist to discharge. The issue of external intelligence gathering was ducked. As for cyber security, it was stated that 'our strategy will be to protect Scotland from attack': an aspiration, not a strategy. The assumption of 'joint working' with the rUK remained without definition. On the civil liberties front, no case was presented for placing the full panoply of state investigative capabilities under the same political authority as Police Scotland, and the authors attracted further flak with a pictorial mock-up of a future personal data retention system.⁵²

This was an unhappy compilation. Mired in detail, it failed to provide a persuasive strategic narrative and it offered instead an easy target for opponents of independence. It all suggested that the SG leadership had learned little from public discussion of Scottish security over the previous twelve months. They had failed to take on board the magnitude, costs, and urgency of the security challenge they had set themselves. Behind closed doors, it must be added, one or two senior figures gave an impression of almost wilful refusal to acknowledge threat realities, not least in the domain of electronic and cyber-attack.⁵³ The fragility of the entire Chapter 7 edifice was encapsulated in the assertion that a new capability would be up and running by 'day one of independence', 24 March 2016: this was an undertaking which could not have been delivered even had rUK assistance been instantly negotiated and as rapidly deployed.⁵⁴

51 See, e.g., Keith Jeffery, *M16: The History of the Secret Intelligence Service 1909–1949* (London and New York: A&C Black, 2010), pp. 595–616; Aldrich and Cormac (2016), pp. 158–59.

52 Cf. Mark Howarth, 'SNP under Fire over "ID Register" Plans', *Scottish Daily Express*, 24 January 2015; Scottish Government (2013), p. 262.

53 Private information.

54 Scottish Government (2013), p. 262. The phrase first appears in Nicola Sturgeon's evidence to the Foreign Affairs Committee (2013), p. 62.

The sceptical, but largely wait-and-see tone of specialist comment shifted to outright hostility.⁵⁵ This surfaced in the House of Lords debate on Scotland on 30 January.⁵⁶ Hostile media comment spiked in March 2014 around a major intervention by the Scots-born architect of the UK counter-terrorism strategy, David Omand, who suggested that the White Paper showed a 'basic misunderstanding of intelligence'.⁵⁷ Simultaneously, an analysis by the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) more or less advised the SG to scrap their proposals and start again. Two months later, RUSI's Director General, Professor Michael Clarke, observed that 'an independent Scotland without an effective intelligence agency will be a very attractive niche for terrorists and organised crime'.⁵⁸

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- 55 For earlier comment, see Peter Jackson, 'How an Independent Scotland Can Run Its Own Intelligence Service', *Sunday Herald*, 30 June 2013, <http://www.pressreader.com/uk/sunday-herald/20130630/281560878374529>; John Holmes, 'A Note by the Director "the Future of Scotland: International Implications and Comparisons — the Ditchley Foundation"', Ditchley Foundation, July 2013, <http://www.ditchley.co.uk/conferences/past-programme/2010-2019/2013/the-future-of-scotland>; Sandy Hardie, 'The SNP Have Set Themselves Major Challenges to Make Scotland Secure', *Herald*, 8 November 2013, <http://www.pressreader.com/uk/the-herald/20131108/282243778354838>; David Omand, 'Keynote Speech: Thinking Strategically About Security', in *Glasgow Global Security Network International Conference 2013* (Glasgow University, 8 November 2013).
- 56 See Lord Browne of Ladyton, *Lords Hansard* (London: HMSO, 30 January 2014), <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201314/ldhansrd/text/140130-0001.htm>; Baroness Neville-Jones, *Lords Hansard* (London: HMSO, 30 January 2014), <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201314/ldhansrd/text/140130-0001.htm>
- 57 Ben Riley-Smith, 'Head-to-Head: How the SNP and Sir David Omand Disagree on Intelligence', *Telegraph*, 13 March 2014, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/scottish-independence/10694066/Head-to-head-how-the-SNP-and-Sir-David-Omand-disagree-on-intelligence.html>; Ben Riley-Smith, 'Scotland 'More Vulnerable' after Independence under Alex Salmond's Security Plans', *Telegraph*, 13 March 2014, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/scottish-independence/10694022/Scotland-more-vulnerable-after-independence-under-Alex-Salmonds-security-plans.html>
- 58 Charlie Edwards, Clare Ellis, and Calum Jaffray, *Scotland's Blueprint for a Security and Intelligence Agency: An Initial Assessment* (London: RUSI, 2014); Riley-Smith, *Telegraph*, 13 March 2014; Kerry Gill, 'Think-Tank Warns Separate Scotland Could Be "Soft Underbelly" for Anti-UK Terror', *Daily Express*, 15 May 2014, <http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/475986/Think-tank-warns-separate-Scotland-could-be-soft-underbelly-for-anti-UK-terror>; A less critical account is offered by the summary of a discussion held on 31 January in the University of Edinburgh: Andrew W. Neal, *The Threat Environment of the UK and Scotland in the Context of the UK National Security Strategy* (Edinburgh: Centre on Constitutional Change, 2014).

The SNP, SG and Yes Scotland proceeded to form a kind of defensive triangle that displayed impressive discipline under sustained assault. Waves of criticism were met by steady return fire along the lines of: ‘Scotland will have/could develop first class security arrangements’; ‘Scotland will get rid of Trident, will not wage illegal wars, and will therefore face reduced levels of threat’; ‘Scotland has the skill base on which to build effective cyber and counter-terrorist defences’; ‘Scotland will be welcomed as a trusted intelligence ally’. Mr Allan Burnett, a former Assistant Chief Constable deployed by Yes Scotland as their expert spokesman, had claimed in June 2013 that the UK Government had cut off debate on post-independence intelligence sharing by refusing to discuss the matter.⁵⁹ Wisely, the SNP had not pursued this particular line of defence, for by then or soon after, the leadership evidently recognised its vulnerability on intelligence and security and retreated into damage-limitation mode: contain exposure; repeat assurances; play the critic, not the ball. But Burnett’s mirror-imaging claim that Westminster had closed down debate had an ironic sequel in a BBC interview with the then Chief Constable which generated the headline ‘Police discuss post-Yes intelligence and security sharing’.⁶⁰ This was not the only occasion on which a policy-light area was disguised by the suggestion that contingency discussions with London were indeed under way.⁶¹

The SG could have made a more persuasive presentational case than it did. It might have been better advised to acknowledge the challenges, the likely dependencies and the requirement for a sincere bilateral effort to create a security architecture that would ensure continued mutual protection. It might even then have reached out to Scottish security

59 David Leask, ‘Former Security Chiefs Clash over How an Independent Scotland Could Protect Itself from Terrorism’, *Sunday Herald*, 30 June 2013; For comment on SNP ‘closing down discussion on mass collection of data’ from the civil liberties perspective, cf. Henry Porter, ‘All We Ask Is for Transparency to Inform the Surveillance Debate’, *The Observer*, 3 November 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/nov/03/nsa-surveillance-security>

60 Reevel Alderson, ‘Scottish Independence: Police Discuss Post-Yes Intelligence and Security Sharing’, *BBC News*, 20 March 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-26651783>; cf. also ‘Talks Take Place on Shared Intelligence after “Yes” Vote’, *The Times (Scotland)*, 21 March 2014.

61 Cf. James Titcomb, ‘Bank of England Flatly Denies Scottish Currency Talks’, *Telegraph*, 14 August 2014, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/currency/11034881/Bank-of-England-flatly-denies-Scottish-currency-talks.html>

practitioners who, irrespective of their views on independence, could have helped sustain public and agency confidence if independence had materialised. As it was, SG messaging was badly flawed both in tone and in substance. Part of the problem was the absence of a senior advisor with genuine, up-to-date experience of strategic intelligence.⁶² This was more than a matter of presentation: it placed a question mark over the quality of advice reaching SG/SNP leaders, and their willingness to listen. The *Financial Times* was not alone in concluding that 'the deception in the Nationalist campaign lies in the assertion that everyone else would bend to Edinburgh's will and allow Mr Salmond to dictate his own terms'.⁶³ The risks were self-evident: lacking a first-hand sense of the threat environment, the SNP might really believe that Scotland could (in the *FT's* phrase) 'inoculate itself against the harsh realities of the wider world'; and lacking sufficiently robust advice on the practicability of their own intelligence proposals, they might have come to believe that Scottish technical and personnel resources were more sophisticated than is the case, and that for any skill shortfall they could depend on the enthusiastic support of the rUK and other governments.⁶⁴ The *FT's* emphasis on the personality of the then First Minister was telling: herein, it seemed, lay the prospect of miscalculation, or else (what would have amounted to the same thing) of preparedness to take a strategic gamble on public security against the prize of a popular majority on 18 September. As the polls narrowed, the spectre of an extended and messy transition, with diminished security defences on both sides of the border, started to move beyond the realm of the hypothetical.

Yet the UK Government did not press any 'weak link' line of argument.⁶⁵ This, it was judged, would have played into the SNP claim that the rUK would have to fall in with 'shared arrangements'. Nor

62 Dame Mariot Leslie, a former Director-General Defence and Intelligence at the FCO who declared herself a Yes supporter in early September 2014, confined her public comments to Scotland's prospects for NATO membership: Tom Peterkin, 'Scottish Independence: "Scots Welcome in Nato"', *Scotsman*, 3 September 2014, <http://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/scottish-independence-scots-welcome-in-nato-1-3529122>

63 Philip Stephens, 'Alex Salmond Brushes Aside the Foreign Policy Facts for Scotland', *Financial Times*, 16 September 2014, <https://www.ft.com/content/44607564-3d8b-11e4-b782-00144feabdc0>

64 *Ibid.*

65 It was however echoed in May 2014 by Professor Michael Clarke, Director-General of RUSI, cited in Gill (2014).

would the agencies have wished to draw further hostile attention to hypothetical vulnerabilities. In the event, the intelligence debate went quiet over the summer of 2014. In the background lay reluctance in London to take this most sensitive subject, alongside confidential capabilities and relationships, into the campaign bear pit (certainly, it would have been out of place in the televised Darling-Salmond debates). Again, there would have been no appetite among Whitehall officials for making life more difficult for SG counterparts, especially at a time when UK inputs into security arrangements for the Commonwealth Games (starting on 23 July), already the subject of intensive discussion, were being implemented. In Glasgow, the Better Together website carried items on national security, but there were gaps in coordination, and neither the political leadership nor campaign staff seemed comfortable with a subject that they felt was better left to 'experts'. Consequently, in Blytheswood Square and the Savoy Centre, it languished until a Better Together sub-group, 'Forces Together', embracing defence, security and intelligence, sought to re-focus interest.

In September, just two weeks before the vote, two interventions summed up the 'intelligence' case for retaining the Union. In the first, Sir David Omand focused on cyber security and added this: 'as a Scot, I want security for Scotland. So were independence to come, it must leave the people on both sides of the border no less secure than today, at no greater cost. The SNP White Paper is fundamentally flawed on how either part of that condition could be achieved'.⁶⁶ By way of response, Allan Burnett was quoted as saying 'Sir David is wrong and this is another example of Project Fear at its worst — trying to politicise issues of security and anti-terrorism in this way is the height of irresponsibility'.⁶⁷ The second intervention, by Sir John Scarlett, former Chief of MI6, followed the next day, 5 September. He too questioned the White Paper proposals and then reflected on the wider world: 'we live in unstable times. We must follow and understand jihadi extremism and related terrorist threats; deep-rooted regional instability; the policies

66 [N.a.], 'Scottish Independence Cyber Plans "Flawed"', *Scotsman*, 4 September 2014, <http://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/scottish-independence-cyber-defence-plans-flawed-1-3530887>

67 Cited from [n.a.], *Scotsman*, 4 September 2014. Compare Christine Grahame's identical response to Theresa May, in Richard Ford, 'SNP Accuses May of Scaremongering', *The Times*, 30 October 2013.

and ambitions of authoritarian states; the ever-present threat of inter-state conflict, including now on our own continent on the borders of our NATO alliance. And all this against the background of rapid economic, demographic, social and technological change and fundamental shifts in the global balance of power'.⁶⁸ The two interventions prompted further statements from Menzies Campbell, Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson, and Shadow Defence Minister, Gemma Doyle.⁶⁹ The Prime Minister added a reference to 'some of the best security and intelligence services anywhere in the world' at the end of the NATO conference in Wales.⁷⁰ Yet perhaps for reasons to do with the preservation of broadcast 'balance', Omand and Scarlett did not achieve the extended replay by the BBC and STV that might have opened out their arguments to a larger audience.

In undertaking this review, I had the impression that there really had been 'hardly a moment's discussion'. And indeed so far as SNP/SG engagement was concerned, Menzies Campbell was right. But my title acquired its question mark when a trawl turned up rather more coverage than I had been aware of at the time. The Scottish press has taken a good deal of flak in recent years for declining standards of journalism.⁷¹ It is true that the most significant interventions on the subject of intelligence came through London-based papers and their Scotland correspondents. Much Scotland-based coverage spiked around political and media inputs that originated south of the border. The SG's defensive posture could, and should, have been probed more deeply and directly from Edinburgh and Glasgow. Yet print and online media interest was quite widespread, with informative coverage from unexpected quarters: the Aberdeen *Press and Journal*, for example, and

68 John Scarlett, 'A Yes Vote Brings Grave Security Dangers', *The Times*, 5 September 2014, <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/columnists/article4197050.ece>

69 Gemma Doyle: quoted in Ben Riley-Smith, 'Scotland Would Be less Protected after Independence under SNP's Intelligence Plans, Former MI6 Head Warns', *Telegraph*, 5 September 2014, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/scottish-independence/11077028/Scotland-would-be-less-protected-after-independence-under-SNPs-intelligence-plans-former-MI6-head-warns.html>; 'Davidson Slams SNP Defence Plans', *Evening News*, 4 September 2014, http://www.eveningtimes.co.uk/news/13290481.Davidson_slams_SNP_defence_plans; Campbell (2014).

70 Rob Reid, 'Scotland Will Be Safer in Dangerous World by Remaining with UK Says David Cameron', *Daily Record*, 5 September 2014, <http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/politics/scotland-safer-dangerous-world-remaining-4172507>

71 See, for example, Macwhirter (2014), pp. 72–95.

the *Sunday Post* in particular.⁷² The overall impression is one of fair, if largely reactive, press reportage, but of a subject the broadcast media found almost too hot to handle.⁷³

By 18 September, then, there had been rather more public discussion of ‘intelligence’ than Menzies Campbell allowed. But there is a king-sized qualification on cyber security. On any professional analysis, the most immediate threat confronting an independent Scotland on 24 March 2016 would have come from cyber-attack, and not from terrorism. This threat had been covered in *Scotland Analysis: Security* (though it lost visibility amidst a plethora of detail); it was underlined in Omand’s interventions; and an outstanding presentation to the second Edinburgh ESRC seminar in January 2014 was available online in summary form.⁷⁴ One mainstream Scottish journalist made the connection between cyber-attack and the ‘business voter’,⁷⁵ and BBC Scotland carried a short piece, pairing Allan Burnett and myself. Astonishingly, however (given the availability of Scottish expertise), no media outlet offered anything like ‘the plain man’s guide to cyber and the Indy-vote’.

Cyber-spying, along with long-range cyber-crime, is moving with an exponential growth in technical sophistication.⁷⁶ The capacity to discover, diagnose and take counter-measures, which underpins an effective cyberspace strategy, requires technological resources of a high order, together with a rapid response capability and robust international collaboration. Within the UK, this capability resides with GCHQ. This is why the UK Government can claim a competitive security edge for the

72 To the academic commentaries already listed, add Professor Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones’ thoughtful reflections on Scottish expertise in intelligence gathering: Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, ‘Masters of the Spying Game’, *Scotsman*, 8 May 2013, <http://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/rhodri-jeffreys-jones-masters-of-spying-game-1-2922226>

73 For a survey of press coverage (pro- and anti-independence and neutral), see David Patrick, ‘Bought and Sold or Hype in Bold? Newspaper Framing of the Scottish Independence Debate’, Scottish constitutional futures forum (15 September 2014), <http://www.scottishconstitutionalfutures.org/OpinionandAnalysis/ViewBlogPost/tabid/1767/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/4255/David-Patrick-Bought-and-Sold-or-Hype-in-Bold-Newspaper-Framing-of-the-Scottish-Independence-Debate.aspx>

74 Neal, pp. 8–9.

75 Terry Murden, ‘Comment: More Needed to Tackle the Cost of Cybercrime’, *Scotsman*, 12 June 2014. Mr. Murden, then Business Editor of *The Scotsman*, was unable to follow this through, for unconnected reasons.

76 On cyber-crime, see Sir David Omand, ‘The Dark Net: Policing the Internet’s Underworld’, *World Policy Journal* (Winter 2015), <http://www.worldpolicy.org/journal/winter2015/dark-net>

UK as business location and as a destination for foreign investment. For an independent Scotland, critically dependent as its economy would be upon innovative technology, this was not a luxury. Nor could the loss of GCHQ capability have been made good by commercial products, however persuasive the sales pitch. For families dependent for employment in, for example, pharmaceuticals, offshore hydrocarbon technology, or advanced IT products, the present level of protection of intellectual property within UK cyberspace — though admittedly far from perfect — is of a higher order than anything in Europe, and for that reason it remains a must-have. In its absence, Scottish firms would face a growing incidence of unseen penetration of their systems, to be spotted only when something very like their products appeared on foreign competitors' websites. At that point, Alex Massie's derisive slogan, 'Vote No to remain beneath the GCHQ umbrella', might have seemed not so very far from reality.

That the price of independence would have included at least the partial loss of GCHQ/UK protective support for Scottish jobs and prosperity was not at all clear to voters. We in the No campaign had not succeeded in getting that story across, and in retrospect, the national security debate had not moved beyond the familiar images of terrorist outrage to the more potent, more immediate, yet less visible threat of the cyber-spy. If the cyber debate were to be re-run, with the lessons of some high-profile lapses in corporate security in view, growing public awareness of the costs of cyber-crime, and renewed focus on the threat presented by China and Russia, the level of coverage might be very different.

Yet two years on, with the rise of so-called Islamic State and the spread of domestic radicalisation, the counter-terrorist environment too has changed. The use of Belgium as an operating base by those responsible for the Paris shootings of November 2015 and for the terrorist attacks of March 2016 in Brussels itself have served notice that no country, however remote from the geopolitical epicentre in the Middle East, can assume it will remain immune to the new levels of threat.⁷⁷ In a broadcast response that attracted the headline 'Independent Scotland "would have better intelligence services than MI5"', says Alex Salmond', the former First Minister predictably sought to play down domestic

⁷⁷ See Chapter 5, pp. 138–40, for a discussion of the Belgian comparison.

implications.⁷⁸ Symptomatic of renewed public interest in the politics of security, however, was the prominence of European intelligence cooperation as an issue in the EU referendum of June 2016.⁷⁹ In contrast to Scotland in 2014, political figures were prepared to engage (whether or not they knew very much about what they were saying). Meanwhile former heads of agency, in public disagreement as to the likely impact of Brexit, were given air time by the BBC, as was an American perspective from Mike Hayden, former Director of the National Security Agency and of the CIA.

A second independence referendum, should one materialise, would take place in quite different circumstances from the first. With changes in political leadership, the UK's departure from the EU, and a fast-developing threat environment, the tone and content of a renewed intelligence and security debate would likely move on. This would no longer be unknown public-political territory. A wider range of external perspectives might be on view, and might also (with the arrival in Edinburgh of Russia's *Sputnik* 'news' agency) embrace that of Mr Putin.⁸⁰ The SNP, through its presence at Westminster and its representation on the Intelligence Services Committee and the FAC, would have the advantage of closer engagement with national security issues (and the SG could quietly jettison Chapter 7). The media, print and broadcast, with the benefit of their 2014 experience, might set about drilling into the issues and questioning the principals with renewed vigour; and in putting out facts and findings, they could help voters take a second, better informed, look at the intelligence dimension of separation.

By way of conclusion, I would recall the odd mixture of business-as-usual and political touchiness surrounding security and Scotland in 2014, sharpened as it was by the Commonwealth Games. UK specialists, drawing on the 2012 Olympics, worked with Scottish authorities through the long lead-up to ensure the all-round security of the event and the

78 John Ashmore, 'Independent Scotland "Would Have Better Intelligence Services Than MI5", Says Alex Salmond', *Holyrood*, 24 March 2016, <http://www.holyrood.com/articles/news/independent-scotland-would-have-better-intelligence-services-mi5-says-alex-salmond>

79 The topic features briefly in Craig Oliver, *Unleashing Demons: The Inside Story of Brexit* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2016), p. 220.

80 Kenny Farquharson, 'Putin Is Gatecrashing Scotland's House Party', *The Times*, 12 August 2016, <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/putin-is-gatecrashing-scotlands-house-party-ml5r9n5p9>

safety of the participants. These joint efforts were not acknowledged by the SG, which went to some lengths to minimise public awareness of its reliance on national assets.⁸¹ By late August, it would have been open to the UK Government to celebrate the combined endeavour: a triumph for Glasgow and Scotland, quietly secured. That nothing of the sort was proclaimed is a reflection of the professional reticence of those most closely engaged. But more than that, London's silence was a gesture of respect for Scottish colleagues whose lot it was to work on as public servants, in the eye of the campaign storm.⁸²

81 Private information.

82 On this general subject, see Matt Foster, 'Civil Service "Should Remain Unified" Says Senior Scottish Government Official', *Holyrood*, 5 October 2015.

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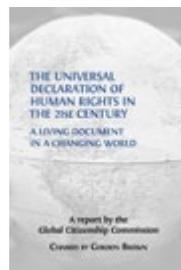
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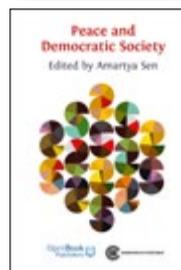
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Security in a Small Nation provides an illuminating analysis of the politics of security. Its authors reflect on a number of related issues including international comparisons, alliances, regional cooperation, terrorism, intelligence sharing, democratic oversight, and media coverage. It has a particular focus on what security means for small states and democratic politics.

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