

Belhaj and Boudchar: Litigation Update

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12:21:00

The Attorney General (Jeremy Wright)

With permission, Mr Speaker, I would like to make a statement. In 2012, Mr Abdul Hakim Belhaj and his wife, Mrs Fatima Boudchar, brought a claim against the United Kingdom Government and two individuals: the right hon. Jack Straw, the former Foreign Secretary; and Sir Mark Allen, a former director at the Foreign Office. The claimants alleged that the UK Government were complicit in their abduction, detention and rendition to Libya in 2004, and in the treatment they suffered at the hands of others. Mrs Boudchar was pregnant at the time.

The claimants' case, in outline, is that in early 2004, they were detained and forcibly conveyed through a number of jurisdictions by others, ultimately to be handed over to the Libyan regime of which Mr Belhaj was an opponent. During this period, they were subjected to a harrowing ordeal that caused them significant distress. Mrs Boudchar was released from detention in Libya in June 2004 and gave birth shortly afterwards. Mr Belhaj was not released until March 2010

The claims against Jack Straw and Sir Mark Allen were withdrawn on 3 May 2018. Today, I can announce to the House that, following mediation, the UK Government have reached a full and final settlement of Mr Belhaj's and Mrs Boudchar's claims. I pay tribute to the constructive way in which Mr Belhaj and Mrs Boudchar have approached the mediation. This has been a long-running and hugely complex piece of litigation that has been difficult for all individuals involved as parties.

As we have seen in recent years, there remains a considerable international threat to the UK and our allies. It is important that the Government, and the security and intelligence agencies, are able to respond properly to keep our country safe, but it is also important that we should act in line with our values and in accordance with the rule of law. That means that when we get things wrong, it is right and just that we acknowledge it, compensate those affected and learn lessons. I believe this is such a case.

The settlement of this claim has been agreed out of court. The main elements of the agreement I can report to the House are as follows. First, no admissions of liability have been made by any of the defendants in settling these claims. Secondly, the claimants have now withdrawn their claims against all the defendants. Thirdly, the Government have agreed to pay Mrs Boudchar £500,000; Mr Belhaj did not seek and has not been given any compensation. Finally, I have met Mr Belhaj and Mrs Boudchar—indeed, Mrs Boudchar is

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present in the Gallery to hear this statement—and the Prime Minister has now written to them both to apologise.

I think it right that I should set out to the House the terms of that apology in full:

“The Attorney General and senior UK Government officials have heard directly from you both about your detention, rendition and the harrowing experiences you suffered. Your accounts were moving and what happened to you is deeply troubling. It is clear that you were both subjected to appalling treatment and that you suffered greatly, not least the affront to the dignity of Mrs Boudchar, who was pregnant at the time. The UK Government believes your accounts. Neither of you should have been treated in this way.

The UK Government’s actions contributed to your detention, rendition and suffering. The UK Government shared information about you with its international partners. We should have done more to reduce the risk that you would be mistreated. We accept this was a failing on our part.

Later, during your detention in Libya, we sought information about and from you. We wrongly missed opportunities to alleviate your plight: this should not have happened.

On behalf of Her Majesty’s Government, I apologise unreservedly. We are profoundly sorry for the ordeal that you both suffered and our role in it.

The UK Government has learned many lessons from this period. We should have understood much sooner the unacceptable practices of some of our international partners. And we sincerely regret our failures.”

I hope that the Government’s acknowledgment of these events in those unequivocal terms, and the apology they have each been given, will be of some comfort to Mr Belhaj and Mrs Boudchar. As the Prime Minister observed in her letter to them both, the Government have learned lessons from this period.

These events took place in the period after the 11 September 2001 attacks. It was a period in which we and our international partners were suddenly adapting to a completely new type and scale of threat. It is clear, with the benefit of hindsight, that the Government, the agencies and their staff were, in some respects, not prepared for the extreme demands suddenly placed on them. The unacceptable practices of some of our international partners should have been understood much sooner.

The Government have enacted reforms to ensure that the problems of the past will not be repeated. We have made it clear that Ministers must be consulted whenever UK personnel involved in a planned operation believe that a detainee is at serious risk of mistreatment by a foreign state. We have also improved Parliament's ability to oversee the actions of the agencies through the Justice and Security Act 2013.

The Intelligence and Security Committee is a Committee of Parliament and is fully independent of Government. It has a statutory right to review past intelligence operations, and the Committee and its staff have direct access to agency papers. These reforms mean that the framework within which the UK now operates is very different from that in the early 2000s.

I end by reiterating that vital work is done to keep us safe and that we aspire to the highest ethical standards. When those standards are not met, it is right that we apologise, that we compensate those who have suffered as a result, and that we make whatever changes we can to avoid the same thing happening again. That is the approach we have now taken in this case and, as such, I commend this statement to the House.

Mr Speaker

I thank the Attorney General for that statement, which very properly will have been heard by Mrs Boudchar and a great many others.

12:29:00

Nick Thomas-Symonds (Torfaen) (Lab)

I am grateful to the Attorney General for the statement and for advance sight of it.

Mrs Boudchar is indeed in the Public Gallery, and I am sure the whole House will sympathise with her and with Mr Belhaj. They suffered appalling treatment at the hands of others. What happened to them both is deeply disturbing, and I can only hope that the settlement of the legal case allows some closure on a terrible set of events.

The Prime Minister has written to Mr Belhaj and Mrs Boudchar to apologise for the appalling treatment they suffered. She was entirely right to do so and to accept, unequivocally and unreservedly, the failings on the part of the UK Government at that time. I, of course, agree with the Attorney General that our security and intelligence services carry out great work in helping to make us all safe, but the rule of law must always be respected and must always guide the Government's actions. Our security and intelligence services must be properly overseen. When things do go wrong, it is right to acknowledge that in very clear terms, to do what can be done to make recompense, and to learn lessons going forward. The Attorney General's statement rightly raised problems regarding information sharing, the need for more

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actions to reduce the risk of mistreatment, and missed opportunities to alleviate suffering. We can and must do all that we can to stop this happening again.

The relationship between our intelligence and security services and Government is now subject to a different framework, which is a welcome step forward. The statutory rights of the Intelligence and Security Committee, independent of Government, to review past intelligence operations and to have direct access to agency papers are important. It is crucial that Ministers will be consulted whenever UK personnel are involved in a planned operation and believe that a detainee is at serious risk of mistreatment by another state. I appreciate that the Attorney General is, understandably, limited in what he can say openly, but I would ask for an assurance that such consultation with Ministers will be detailed, considered and informed by as much information as can be reasonably made available to them at the time.

Will the Attorney General assure me that we will always be vigilant in ensuring that the framework within which our intelligence and security services operate is robust and always shaped by our values of the rule of law, liberty and human rights? After all, it is only by behaving according to those standards ourselves that we can stand up for those values all around the world.

The Attorney General

I thank the hon. Gentleman for his remarks and for the tone of them. He is right to say that one thing we should seek to achieve, not least for Mr Belhaj and Mrs Boudchar, is the ability for them to have closure and to move on with their lives. He is also right to say that the framework in place for the future must be properly robust and ensure that this kind of thing does not happen again. He asked me about consultation with Ministers on questions of this nature. I am sure he will be aware of the consolidated guidance published by the coalition Government in 2010, which of course we keep under review. It indicates clearly that when it comes to the treatment of detainees and information obtained from them, there are clear expectations of the intelligence agencies; where necessary, they should refer matters to Ministers; and when they do so Ministers should be properly informed of the background to the decisions they are being asked to take.

The hon. Gentleman is, of course, also right to say that the framework that surrounds all of these activities must be fundamentally based on our values, one of which is the capacity of this Government or any Government to accept where mistakes have been made and apologise for them.

Mr Kenneth Clarke (Rushcliffe) (Con)

As chairman of the all-party group on extraordinary rendition, may I unreservedly welcome this statement and the tone of it, and congratulate the Prime Minister and the Attorney General on producing it? My main regret is that it has taken so many years to produce it. These events took place in 2004, and as long ago as 2013 Mr Belhaj offered to settle this case for £3 compensation and an apology—that was rejected. The whole thing has now reached a much better resolution, and my right hon. and learned Friend has expressed all

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the sentiments we all feel about proper standards in the service. Does he accept that we now need to move quickly to the most important thing, which is to be reassured that nothing of this kind is likely to happen again and that our intelligence services will not get embroiled in such serious breaches of human rights?

The Intelligence and Security Committee is shortly to produce a report that covers these matters. Will my right hon. and learned Friend therefore assure me that it will be followed by a ministerial statement which will set out as clearly as is possible, given the security problems, the facts that the Government are now prepared to disclose as to how this happened and, more importantly, how future rules and the consolidated guidance are to be so revised that we can be reassured that for the foreseeable future it is highly unlikely that the British will ever be involved in such an embarrassing situation?

The Attorney General

I am grateful to my right hon. and learned Friend for that, and I share his regret that it has taken this long to resolve the matter. He may know that in recent months—and it has been recent months—the Prime Minister has asked me to look in particular at this case and to lead the mediation process that recently concluded. What needed to be done here was apparent to me very quickly following my involvement in the case: there needed to be a resolution of this matter and an apology. Although, as he knows, this is an immensely complex matter, legally, factually and in many other ways, it is extremely welcome that we have been able to resolve matters as we have.

In so far as reassurance for the future is concerned, my right hon. and learned Friend has heard me say something about, and of course he knows about, the changes that have been made, since the incidents I have described, to the systems that we apply here. He knows from his experience in government—I have certainly found this in mine—that the way in which decisions of this nature are taken is now fundamentally different from the way in which they previously were, and that provides us with some reassurance. He also mentions the ISC report, which we await. I hope he will be reassured to know that, as far as I know, the Committee has been provided with the information that it has asked for in relation to this case—I know the Committee will ask again if there is more that it requires. When it has produced its report, the Government will of course seek to respond in a meaningful way to it.

Joanna Cherry (Edinburgh South West) (SNP)

It is a pleasure to see you in the Chair, Mr Deputy Speaker. I thank the Attorney General for the tone of his statement and for generously giving me advance sight of it. His statement acknowledges that a previous UK Government were complicit in the abduction, detention and rendition to Gaddafi's Libya of a man who was an opponent of that vile regime. That is particularly shocking to us when we remember that the blood of so many innocent civilians, including British civilians, was on Gaddafi's hands. The extraordinary rendition of Mrs Boudchar makes this even worse, particularly as she was pregnant at the time. I pay tribute to her fortitude in pressing this claim and in being here today.

The UK Government's complicity in these events is shameful and is a gross breach of international humanitarian law, human rights and the rule of law. I am pleased that the Attorney General has acknowledged that lessons must be learned and sought to give us some reassurance for the future. May I ask him three questions? Will he specifically assure the House that such an occurrence could not take place again under a UK Government? Will he assure this House that in future information will not be shared with so-called "international partners" who flout international law and human rights? Can he tell us whether the investigations that have gone into settling this claim have uncovered whether what happened was part of the dark side of Tony Blair's deal in the desert with Gaddafi in 2004?

The Attorney General

May I start at the end, but first express my gratitude to the hon. and learned Lady again for her remarks and the tone of them? She will understand that I cannot comment in detail about the position on the behaviour of the former Prime Minister and his Government. I am sure she will expect that Tony Blair has been told about the outcome of this process, and that is the case, but I cannot comment further on what happened during the course of his Government.

The other two questions the hon. and learned Lady asks are about the future, and she raises concerns that the whole House will have about how certain we can be that this will never happen again. The best that I can do is to restate the points that I have made about the changes that have occurred. She will be conscious of the substantial difference that the changes that I have described have made, not just to the processes that the Government apply in cases such as this but to the approach that they take to them. Formality needed to be brought back into these processes, and it is now there. The hon. and learned Lady will know that as Attorney General I am now a full member of the National Security Council; for me, that is a clear indication of the seriousness with which the Government take the questions of legality and the rule of law that must of course be at the heart of these judgments.

On the broader picture, the hon. and learned Lady will recognise that it is vital that the British Government and their agencies are able to recover intelligence that enables us to keep the British people safe, and it is difficult to give the absolute assurances that she seeks. The best that any Government can do is put in place the processes and practices that mean that the right values are applied to the judgments that we have to take, including in what are very difficult cases. I hope I have been clear that on this occasion we did not get those judgments right. We must do better in future.

Mr Andrew Mitchell (Sutton Coldfield) (Con)

My right hon. and learned Friend has done exactly the right thing today and has cleared up a disgraceful incident, which was of course not of this Government's making. He has also underlined the debt that we owe to the men and women of the security and intelligence services, who almost always conduct themselves with complete propriety and effectiveness. The lesson from all this is surely that the officials who help us to stay safe and who defend

our country in the shadows must never play fast and loose with human rights and international humanitarian law, which are the rocks on which the safety of us all depends.

Will my right hon. and learned Friend ensure that he sends to his opposite number in Washington the relevant details of this issue in respect of Gina Haspel, whose hearing for the role of CIA director is currently taking place? She was involved in the management of the black site in Thailand at which Fatima Boudchar was held and so grievously mistreated.

The Attorney General

I am grateful for my right hon. Friend's opening comments. I am sure he will understand that I do not wish to be involved in the processes of the appointment of the new director of the CIA. Nevertheless, he asks perfectly reasonably that there is contact with our international partners about this case, and that where we can we give information about it and about the way in which we have chosen to deal with it. Of course, we must also give the clearest possible signal to all our allies and those with whom we deal about what our standards are, what we expect and what we will not accept.

Mr George Howarth (Knowsley) (Lab)

I congratulate the Attorney General on the statement and the sensitive way in which he put the argument.

First, I was a member of the Intelligence and Security Committee for 11 years, and in the period leading up to the 2010 election the Committee did a substantial amount of work on what consolidated guidance should look like. In the event, the coalition Government issued a completely different set of consolidated guidance. Will the Attorney General undertake to look at the work that was done by the Committee to see whether any additions can be taken from it?

Secondly, I am aware that, as has already been conceded, there were failures of record keeping and failures on the part of the agencies in respect of the way ministerial authorisations were sought at that time and in those sets of circumstances. I am aware that there have been improvements since then, but will the Attorney General undertake to keep both of those things under review? They are important and I suspect that they played a part in this particular case.

The Attorney General

I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his comments. On his first point, he is right that consolidated guidance should be kept under review. As I indicated to the shadow Solicitor General, the hon. Member for Torfaen (Nick Thomas-Symonds), we will certainly seek to do that. The hon. Gentleman will know that the current ISC inquiry on detainees will, we hope, feed into a proper look again at whether the consolidated guidance is in the right place. It is worth making the point, which the hon. Gentleman will recognise from his experience of

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these matters, that the UK is unusual in the publication of such guidance. It is of course important that we recognise our failures on a day like this, but it is also important that we recognise where we lead the world, and there are some aspects in which we do. It is important not just that this information is available to those who participate in the work of the intelligence agencies, but that the public can see it and that the kind of debates we are having can be held in public.

On the hon. Gentleman's second point, he will understand that Jack Straw, who was Foreign Secretary at that time, was an individual defendant in this case. I have made it clear that the claim against him has been dropped and there is no further pursuit of those allegations. I understand that Jack Straw will make his own statement later today. The points I have made are about the system more broadly, as are the points made by the hon. Gentleman. In relation to the system more broadly, it is important that we make what changes we can to ensure that we have the safeguards that we need to get as close as we can to a position in which we can answer the questions that the hon. and learned Member for Edinburgh South West (Joanna Cherry) asked earlier, in the most absolute terms that we can give.

Robert Neill (Bromley and Chislehurst) (Con)

I very much welcome the statement and congratulate the Attorney General on it and on the way he has handled this difficult and sensitive matter. It is right that the Prime Minister has responded promptly in the terms in which she has.

Will the Attorney General confirm not only that we are resolute in the maintenance of our adherence to all international and domestic legal standards and rules in this matter, but that in any revision of the consolidated guidance and any other procedures going forward, the involvement in a full sense of the Law Officers, and the full and complete documentation of all advice from the Law Officers to other members of the Government and to any operational agencies, will remain a central feature of the decision-making process?

The Attorney General

I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his kind words. I can give him that reassurance. I indicated one element in which that reassurance manifests itself—full membership of the National Security Council for the Attorney General, which is a significant change—but there are others. I hope that I speak for my hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor General in saying that we believe that our participation in these decisions is where it should be. We have the opportunity to get our points across and will make sure that that continues to be the case.

Mr Alistair Carmichael (Orkney and Shetland) (LD)

I thank the Attorney General for advance sight of the statement and commend him for what he described as his role in bringing this case to a conclusion, albeit that it really should have come to a conclusion some years ago.

Before we rush to congratulate ourselves on getting to this point, we must not lose sight of the fact that this case and the al-Saadi case came to light only because somebody happened to find papers in Gaddafi's palace in the days following the collapse of his regime. Surely, justice should never rely on events as arbitrary and random as that. If we are now to restore confidence in the proper working of our intelligence services, will the Attorney General carry out the public consultation on the consolidated guidance that the intelligence services commissioner has recommended?

The Attorney General

I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for his comments. He has taken a considerable interest in this case and I pay tribute to him for his continued attention to it.

On the right hon. Gentleman's second point, as I mentioned, the consolidated guidance is a public document, which of course permits the public to comment on it. In my view, that is as it should be. As he has heard me say, we will continue to look at whether the guidance is in the right place. I believe that we will be particularly spurred into that by the upcoming ISC report. I hope that the right hon. Gentleman and other members of the public will have the opportunity to make their views known.

On the right hon. Gentleman's first point, I think he and I are entirely in agreement that prevention is better than cure. It has been difficult to cure this case. I hope I have made it clear that we have done our best to resolve the case in a satisfactory fashion, but that is extremely difficult to do. It is far better to avoid such incidents occurring in the first place. It is about a system change and a culture change that brings that about, and I believe that in recent years—not least, may I say, under the coalition Government of which the right hon. Gentleman was a distinguished member—we have seen those changes.

Victoria Prentis (Banbury) (Con)

I thank the Attorney General for his statement today. I worked on this case in my previous role as a Government lawyer, as of course have many Government lawyers over the years, and even though there are clearly no winners today, I ask him to join me in praising the work of lawyers in the Treasury Solicitor's Department and the Security Service lawyers who themselves provide a barrier, where one is needed, in the difficult balancing act between the rule of law and protecting national security. However, I ask him to tell us what lessons have been learned with regard to our ability to speed up litigation, because this matter has gone on for far too long. I thank him for getting personally involved in the mediation and for going to carry out that mediation himself.

The Attorney General

I am grateful to my hon. Friend. She is right that a huge amount of work has been put into this case by lawyers on all sides, and very few people register that fact when the case is concluded, however it comes to be concluded. As a fellow lawyer, she will agree with me that it is always better to resolve cases outside the courtroom if one can. It seemed to me

that there was a clear imperative in this case to do exactly that. It was, in my view, in nobody's interest for this case to continue through the courts and to drag out the difficulties that it had caused to all concerned. I am delighted to see that it has been resolved. That, of course, has been a team effort, and I hope very much that this will enable us to draw a line under this incident, recognising as I do that there are lessons to be learned for the future.

Andy Slaughter (Hammersmith) (Lab)

This has been a shameful episode. The Attorney General is right to express his sympathy and thanks to Mr Belhaj and Mrs Boudchar. He should perhaps extend his sympathies to other victims of rendition such as the al-Saadi family, and his thanks to those who have represented them, such as the Reprieve organisation and Leigh Day solicitors, often in the face of great hostility from some politicians and sections of the press. This case has also shone a light on the Justice and Security Act 2013. The right hon. and learned Member for Rushcliffe (Mr Clarke) took that Act through the Commons. I led the Opposition in Committee, and we expressed grave concerns about the ambit of that Act and the extension of closed material procedures. The Belhaj case over the past five years has justified those criticisms. Is this not the time to review that Act and the extent of closed material procedures, particularly if they look like they will encroach on criminal as well as civil proceedings?

The Attorney General

The hon. Gentleman heard me say that the process of resolving this case has taken considerable effort by not just the claimants themselves and others in Government, but lawyers on both sides, and I am happy to repeat that. In relation to closed material proceedings, I am not sure that I would go as far as he does; I do not believe that this case demonstrates the lesson that he draws from it. I hope he will forgive me if I do not return to the arguments of 2013 around the Bill, not least because I wish to preserve the sanity of my right hon. and learned Friend, the Father of the House.

Sir Edward Leigh (Gainsborough) (Con)

The Minister says that he should not criticise the Blair Government, but we can. Has any apology been given this morning from Mr Blair for rendering an opponent of a murderous regime into the hands of that regime? I doubt whether any apology has been given, any more than an apology has been given over Iraq. Further to that, the British Government have, quite rightly, given an apology. The British taxpayer is now paying considerable amounts of compensation, and quite rightly, too. One might ask: what compensation has this murderous former Libyan Government given to the poor people who died in the Lockerbie incident?

The Attorney General

My hon. Friend will be aware that the House is discussing just that matter later this afternoon. He will also know that the Government have not diminished their efforts to secure proper compensation in those cases. He knows—he has done it with me—that we have spent a good deal of time over the previous decade or so criticising the Blair Government, but my purpose today is to resolve the individual case that I have reported to the House. It

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seems to me a principle worth defending that the Government as an institution should take responsibility for what has happened here. In relation to the behaviour of individuals who were Ministers at the time or indeed civil servants, it is a principle worth defending that the Government continue to take responsibility for their actions. That is the best way to resolve cases of this nature.

David Evennett (Bexleyheath and Crayford) (Con)

I welcome my right hon. and learned Friend's statement and apology today and congratulate both him and the Prime Minister on bringing a dignified end to this long-running case. Will he reaffirm that it is crucial that we always strike the correct balance between counter-terrorism and security and acting in accordance with the rule of law and, of course, our British values?

The Attorney General

I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. It is important that we continue to strike that balance, and where we get it wrong, we say so.

Alex Chalk (Cheltenham) (Con)

I am very grateful to the Attorney General for his dignified and direct statement. It is absolutely right in these very troubling circumstances that the Government do not seek to cavil or equivocate. On two occasions in his statement, he referred to the unacceptable practices of international partners. Can he say anything more about what can be done to ensure that those do not persist in the future, and that if they do, the British Government play no part in them?

The Attorney General

I am grateful to my hon. Friend. He will recognise that some of the changes that have been made since this incident have, I hope, encouraged us to ask better questions and to ask them more persistently. I made reference to the consolidated guidance, of which he will know, and, in relation to documents such as that, we make it very clear that intelligence operatives should ask questions, before information is handed over, about what will be done with that information and what may then happen. Therefore, we do need to see better questions asked more repeatedly, and that, I believe, is one of the changes that is occurring.

Mr Philip Hollobone (Kettering) (Con)

If there was a failure of the intelligence services under the Tony Blair Government then it is right that an apology should be made. However, my constituents in Kettering will be stunned by the scale of the compensation; half a million pounds is a sum to which they could never aspire. I would like to know how that sum was arrived at. I believe that I heard the Father of House correctly when he said that there was an earlier opportunity to settle this case without that scale of compensation. Can the Attorney General update the House on that?

The Attorney General

There certainly have been other efforts made to resolve this matter. They have not been successful for a variety of different reasons. The resolution of the case on this occasion did, as I said in my statement, involve some compensation to Mrs Boudchar. I hope my hon. Friend will understand that many of the details of that settlement are confidential and I cannot discuss them in the House, but he has my assurance that, conscious as I am of the need to ensure that no further taxpayer money was spent that did not need to be spent, I would have needed to satisfy myself that compensation of this nature was appropriate. Again, I do not wish to go into the detail of what happened to Mrs Boudchar. She has said some of that herself, and it is in the public domain, but I am afraid that the necessity of compensating for what happened to her is, in my view, beyond doubt and is part of the appropriate approach that the Government now need to take.

Maggie Throup (Erewash) (Con)

I welcome today's statement and I trust that it will bring some closure to all those concerned. Will my right hon. and learned Friend indicate whether an assessment has been made, or will be made, of the impact that this settlement will have on intelligence sharing going forward?

The Attorney General

As I said earlier, the need to continue to share intelligence is vital. If we are to keep the British people safe from what are growing and more and more disparate threats, the flow of intelligence needs to continue, but none of that must be at the expense of the core values by which the United Kingdom lives. Therefore, we must strike the balance to which other Members have referred between continuing to deal with intelligence as my hon. Friend describes and making sure that our standards are maintained.

Kevin Foster (Torbay) (Con)

I welcome the tone of the Attorney General's statement. For me, the key lesson from this is that those who argue that the ends justify the means in relation to our national security are mistaken. What are the key lessons that the Attorney General and the Government have taken from this case?

The Attorney General

My hon. Friend sums up one of those lessons well. It is important that, taking from what has happened here, we understand that system changes need to be made, and behavioural and cultural changes need to take place, some of which, in my view, are well under way. However, none of us should be complacent about them and we should all be vigilant to ensure that we continue to apply our values. My hon. Friend is right, too, that if we allow our values to erode, then so shall our influence around the world.