

Putin was warned over Ukraine, says MI6 boss

UK spy agency also 'green spying' on world's biggest polluters and drawing on the inspiration of James Bond.



Richard Moore, 57, is the 17th “C” in the 112 years of the Secret Intelligence Service — MI6’s actual name. He is still its only member whose identity is made public. Credit: Handout.

The message was dire, straightforward, and matter-of-fact: Invade Ukraine, and you will pay “a huge price.”

According to MI6 intelligence boss Richard Moore, that was the warning sent to Vladimir Putin by the UK and the US, over a potential invasion of Ukraine.

In a wide-ranging interview on Times Radio, Moore also admitted, that MI6 agents have started “green spying” on the world’s biggest polluters to make sure

they “play fair” and keep their climate change promises.

Russia this week pulled back more than 100,000 soldiers that were positioned on the Ukraine border after concerns Putin was about to launch an invasion, the report said.

But the military equipment massed on the borders will not be returning, according to media reports.

In the first-ever interview of a current MI6 chief, Moore, whose codename is C, told Times Radio that Russia was warned there would be a stark response to an invasion of Ukraine from the west.

“The Russians are in absolutely no doubt of where the UK stands on this issue,” he said.

“And they are in absolutely no doubt of where the Biden administration stands on this issue because channels are open.”

Moore, 57, said Putin’s posturing on the Ukraine border, which was the biggest military buildup by the country since the Cold War, was to deflect from Russia’s dire economic situation, the report said.

The MI6 chief said the recent imprisonment of prominent Putin critic Alexei Navalny was another indication the Russian President was worried about his country’s economic position and how it could threaten his grip on power.

“Russia is an objectively declining power economically and demographically,” he said.

“It is an extremely challenged place. And clearly, the treatment of Alexei Navalny as we saw with the thousands of protesters on the streets of well — not just Moscow — of a number of cities shows that there is a deal of disaffection with Mr. Putin.”

Meanwhile, Moore said the Secret Intelligence Service had begun to monitor large industrialized countries in support of what he described as the “foremost international foreign policy agenda item for this country and for the planet,” SkyNews reported.

It comes as the UK prepares to host the major COP26 climate change summit later this year.

Moore told Times Radio: “Where people sign up to commitments on climate change, it is perhaps our job to make sure that actually what they are really doing reflects what they have signed up to.

“As somebody used to say — ‘trust, but verify’ ...

“On climate change, where you need everyone to come on board and to play fair, then occasionally just check to make sure they are.”

He was speaking after president Joe Biden warned world leaders that this is the “decisive decade” to avoid the worst of the climate crisis as he outlined targets for the US to halve its emissions by 2030.

Earlier this year, Moore issued a landmark apology for the ban until 1991 on gay and lesbian people working for MI6. stating that the employment restriction was “wrong, unjust and discriminatory,” The UK’s Evening Standard reported.

The spy boss stressed that the policy had meant “loyal and patriotic people had their dreams of serving their country in MI6 shattered” because of a “misguided” view that LGBT individuals would be more susceptible to blackmail.



Spy boss Richard Moore revealed the secret service will be taking inspiration from James Bond, and advertising for a ‘new Q’ tech whizz to “use and harness technology.’ Credit: Sony Pictures.

In a video later issued on Twitter, a ground-breaking move for the normally secretive spy agency, he said: “Today, I apologize on behalf of MI6 for the way our LGBT+ colleagues and fellow citizens were treated and express my regret to those whose lives were affected.

“Being LGBT+ did not make these people a national security threat. Of course not. But the ban did mean that we, in the intelligence and diplomatic services, deprived ourselves of some of the best talent Britain could offer.

“Ready to serve but denied that opportunity.”

In the revealing Times Radio interview, Moore also said the secret service will be taking inspiration from 007 himself, James Bond, and advertising for a “new Q” tech whizz to “use and harness technology,” iNews.co.uk reported.

The spy boss said the new recruit would lead its technical team – a role whose title is inspired by the gadget specialist portrayed in the James Bond films.

“In this one life imitates art,” he said. “We were reshaping it a few years ago and we couldn’t think of the right name for it and in the end we thought ‘Well, come on, let’s go for it, and so we decided to call it Q.”

Moore said he is hoping to recruit someone from an industry background, adding: “We are in an increasingly contested, difficult world where technology is making what we do for a living more of a challenge. We have to therefore use and harness technology.

“The only way we can do that, I think, is with good leadership and somebody who can help us partner with the private sector effectively.”

In the wide-ranging interview, Moore said he still gets angry over the Novichok attack in Salisbury which, he said, came close to causing “very significant casualties.”

And he revealed his agency’s concerns about the “recklessness” of the regime of Russian President Putin.

Two Russian nationals are suspected of carrying out the Novichok poisonings in Wiltshire in March 2018.

Sergei Skripal, a former Russian spy turned double agent for MI6, and his 33-year-old daughter, Yulia, survived the incident.

Sources: Times Radio, SkyNews, Evening Standard, iNews.co.uk, CityAM.com

Source:

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