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Rt Hon Sir Malcolm Rifkind MP
House of Commons

Dear Sir Malcolm,

Submission to the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament

As a former MP who had front bench responsibilities for Northern Ireland and later for Home Office matters including legislation on terrorism, I welcome the Privacy and Security Inquiry and regard its work as particularly important.

The balance between security and privacy is complex and we have to find the right principles to guide us. That will not be an easy task!

I look forward to reading the report of the Inquiry. I do not wish to make a lengthy submission and only wish to make the following short comment:

1. The advances of technology are so rapid that we need to find a way in which Parliament can ensure that Acts like the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act of 2000 do not become rapidly out of date. The solution may be a standing committee charged with reviewing relevant Acts of Parliament to ensure they are technologically relevant and robust. I believe this applies to other Acts of Parliament and not just to Acts dealing with security matters.
2. Acts of Parliament dealing primarily with security matters should be reviewed to ensure that new technology is appropriate to the principles that balance the need to protect citizens and the right of privacy. There are several committees of the House that can address this important balance. I believe that we need a mechanism where these committees can have joint sessions from time to time to consider the tension that exists between the need for security and the need to protect privacy and human rights.

I hope these short comments are helpful and wish you success in your endeavours.

Yours sincerely,

Lord Soley of Hammersmith

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