

Mr Michael Gibson
Senior Assistant Clerk to the Committee,
Intelligence and Security Committee,
35 Great Smith Street,
London SW1P 3BQ

13th March 2015

Dear Mr. Gibson

In the absence of the Committee having a Chair, I am writing to you.

I note in the Committee's report "*Privacy and Security: A modern and transparent legal framework*" published yesterday that you quote my colleague Emma Carr in the following terms:

Chair: If evidence emerged through bulk interception that even you acknowledged had led to terrorists being arrested or prevented from carrying out their objectives, are you saying that, as a matter of principle, you believe so strongly that bulk interception is unacceptable in a free society that you would say that that was a price we should be willing to pay, rather than allowing intelligence agencies to use bulk interception methods?

Isabella Sankey: Yes.

Dr Metcalfe: Yes.

...

Chair: And that is the view of your colleagues as well?

Emma Carr: Yes.

The uncorrected evidence as taken during the evidence session, which is available on your website shows that the exchange has been misrepresented in your report. A key section from Dr Metcalfe as denoted by ... is missing, which is clearly material to the discussion and – most importantly – Emma's response.

Dr Metcalfe: Yes. Just as you would solve a lot more crimes if you had CCTV in everyone's houses, and if you opened everyone's mail and e-mail and read it on a daily basis. Yes, you would solve a lot more crimes and a lot more terrorists would be in jail; that would be a good thing, but it would be bad for our society as a whole.

Chair: And that is the view of your colleagues as well?

Emma Carr: Yes.

At yesterday's press conference on the report, Ms Blears stated "as you'll see in the report, some of our witnesses considered that it is preferable to allow some terrorist attacks to happen rather than to allow any form of bulk interception." Had the full exchange been published it would be clear that my colleague did not subscribe to that point of view and that she was agreeing with the comments made by Dr Metcalfe who spoke immediately before her.

That the reporting of this edited exchange has been encouraged in today's national newspapers with headlines announcing that liberty groups including Big Brother Watch believe terror attacks are "the price of freedom" or a "price worth paying" is frankly an attempt to undermine, discredit and damage our organisation's reputation.

Encouraging the view that we simply answered "yes" to questions from the Chair is both improper and false.

Moreover, any fair minded person watching the video of the session would see that the proceedings were somewhat confused with people speaking over one another and with the qualified responses the Chair had indicated would be permitted being cut off in their prime.

I would ask that in light of this misrepresentation an immediate correction be made to the report and a press release be issued notifying everyone that the correction has been made. In view of the urgency of this situation the letter will be published on our website and issued to the press this afternoon. I expect to receive a response from you by the end of business today.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. Samson', written in a cursive style.

Renate Samson
Chief Executive