

Evans named new MI5 chief



A new head of MI5 has been appointed by the Home Secretary.

Jonathan Evans, 49, the current deputy director-general of the Security Service, will take over as director-general next month.

He will succeed Dame Eliza Manningham-Buller, who announced last year that she would be leaving the role in April after about four years in charge.

Mr Evans' appointment was made by John Reid, with the agreement of Prime Minister Tony Blair.

"The Home Secretary, with the agreement of the Prime Minister, has today appointed Jonathan Evans, currently the deputy director-general of the Security Service, to be director-general of the service in succession to Dame Eliza Manningham-Buller," a statement said. "The appointment will take effect from April 8, 2007."

As head of MI5, Mr Evans will be responsible for leading the battle against terrorism within the UK. Mr Evans, a classics graduate from Bristol University, joined the Security Service in 1980, working on counter-espionage investigations.

He moved in 1985 to protective security policy, advising departmental security officers on the protection of classified information. He then worked on implementing policy changes as part of Sir Anthony Duff's modernisation of the Service.

Since then, his main focus has been counter terrorism, both international and domestic. In the late 1980s and 1990s he spearheaded the fight against Irish republican terrorism. Since 1999, he has been directly involved in combating the threat from Islamic extremism and international terrorism.

In 2001 he was appointed to the Security Service's management board as director of international counter terrorism - 10 days before the 9/11 attacks. He became deputy director general of MI5 in 2005.

The profile of MI5 has changed hugely in the last few years since the days when the name of its director general was not even publicly known. It has had a growing public profile - particularly since the July 7 London bombings in 2005, the first mass casualty suicide attack in the UK. In a speech last year, Dame Eliza warned that MI5 was investigating around 30 serious plots to attack the UK.

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