



Dr Steve Hewitt: Terrorism and intelligence gathering

Steve Hewitt talks about his research

Duration: 3:01 mins.

I'm Steve Hewitt, a senior lecturer in American and Canadian Studies. I'm a historian by training and my research pertains to security and intelligence. Originally that involved studying the history of Canadian policing, specifically the world-famous Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and I've done a couple of books and a number of articles on that particular force.

Since coming to Birmingham my research has become broader, transnational and also more contemporary. I've got a number of different interests but primarily at the moment my main interest is in counter-terrorism. I'm looking specifically at the US in terms of counter-terrorism as part of the so-called war on terror, but also more recently looking at British counter-terrorism, domestic counter-terrorism again in the context of the so-called war on terror.

I had a book out three years ago giving a contemporary history of what's been going on in the UK in terms of counter-terrorism and terrorism since 9/11, but also attempts to offer historical context to current events. Something the media frequently doesn't do and to show basically that Britains been dealing with counter-terrorism going back to the 19th century - and that's something I'm also interested in pursuing in the future in terms of my research, but also continuing looking at the American angle, again in the context of counter-terrorism but also continuing to work on Canada in security and intelligence including Canadian counter-terrorism, but also continuing to look at state surveillance. I've published in this area.

One of the things that really interests me is not what we call technological surveillance, people would know this as CCTV cameras, which in Britain are on pretty much every street corner, I'm interested in human intelligence. My most recent book is called *Snitch* - the history of the modern intelligence informer, and looks at the use of informers historically by intelligence agencies, by police forces and looking at these informers to go after what the state has labelled subversion, so in the context of the Cold War that was spying on Communist parties.

I'm also interested in the use of informers in, again, the current so-called war on terror, because, and I think this is little recognised outside counter-terrorism circles, about how important human intelligence is. The media, the movies, they like to use the importance of technology - the sexy spy satellite, again the CCTV cameras, but it's actually the human intelligence - people inside the terrorist groups, infiltrating from the outside in or recruited already because they're already inside these groups who are the key in terms of the counter-terrorism efforts at dealing with the current threat of terrorism in our society