**Sir Alex Younger** 

**KCMG** 

**Chief of the Secret Intelligence Service** 

In office

1 November 2014 – 30 September 2020

Elizabeth II

Theresa May

**Boris Johnson** 

Sir John Sawers

**Personal details** 

**British** 

Alexander William Younger

Sarah Hopkins (m. 1993)

University of St Andrews

Michael and St George

Companion of the Order of St

Intelligence officer

Military service

1986 - 1990

**Royal Scots** 

**Scots Guards** 

Captain

United Kingdom

Westminster, London, England

4 July 1963 (age 58)

**Prime Minister** David Cameron

Succeeded by Richard Moore

Search Wikipedia

Monarch

Preceded by

Born

**Nationality** 

Spouse(s)

Children

Alma mater

Occupation

Allegiance

Years of

service

Rank

Unit

**Awards** 

Read

Edit | View history

Q

The Free Encyclopedia

Upload file

Wikidata item

Print/export Download as PDF Printable version

0 Languages Deutsch Հայերեն Русский Suomi Edit links

Alex Younger From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Sir Alexander William Younger KCMG (born 4 July 1963) is a former career British intelligence officer for the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) who served as the Chief of the Secret Intelligence Service, [1][2] succeeding Sir John Sawers on his retirement. [3] In April 2019, the government extended Younger's contract to maintain stability through the Brexit negotiations, [4] a move which made him the longest-serving MI6 chief in 50 years. [5]

#### **Contents** [hide] 1 Early life

Article

Talk

- 2 Career
- 2.1 Military service 2.2 Intelligence work
- 3 Notable speeches and interviews
- 3.1 Russia
- 3.2 China and technology
- 3.3 Human rights 3.4 Academic freedom
- 3.5 Counter terrorism 4 Portrayal in popular culture
- 5 Personal life
- 5.1 Sailing, hiking and dogs
- 5.2 Family
- 6 Honours 7 See also
- 8 References
- 9 External links
- 10 Positions held

Early life [edit]

## heritage.[9][10]

Andrews with a degree in economics. [7][8] He married Sarah Hopkins in Borgo a Mozzano, Tuscany, in 1993. Younger takes pride in his Scottish

Younger was born in Westminster, London on 4 July 1963.<sup>[6]</sup> He was educated at Marlborough College and graduated from the University of St

# Career [edit]

# Military service [edit]

Younger was sponsored by the British Army through university. He was commissioned into the Royal Scots on 5 September 1986 as a second lieutenant (on probation).[11] As a university candidate he was a full-time student at university and trained in his spare time. On 10 December 1986, he transferred to the Scots Guards.[12][13]

On 16 June 1987, his commission was confirmed and dated to 5 September 1986; this signified the start of his full-time military service. He was

granted seniority in the rank of second lieutenant from 9 April 1983. He was promoted to lieutenant, which was back dated to 5 September 1986, and was granted seniority from 9 April 1985. [14] He was promoted to captain on 5 April 1989. [15] On 10 April 1990, he transferred to the Regular Army Reserve of Officers, thereby ending his active military service.[16]

Intelligence work [edit]

Younger joined SIS in 1991.<sup>[2]</sup> He joined the service at the same time as Richard Tomlinson, who in his book *The Big Breach*, portrayed him as "Spencer", a St Andrews graduate and former Scots Guard who was recruited while working for the Halo Trust in Afghanistan. [17] Younger served in the Middle East and Afghanistan. He became head of counter-terrorism in 2009, in which role he was involved in security for the London Olympics 2012. He became deputy director in 2012, before being nominated as chief in October 2014.<sup>[18]</sup>

"acknowledged that the list did not come from Mr Tomlinson" - Alex Younger is mentioned as having been posted to Vienna in 1995.<sup>[19]</sup> As of 2015, Younger was paid a salary of between £160,000 and £164,999 by SIS, making him one of the 328 most highly paid people in the British public sector at that time. [20] Notable speeches and interviews [edit]

In a leaked list of 160 MI6 agents - which was originally believed to have been released by Richard Tomlinson, although government officials subsequently

# MI6 headquarters at Vauxhall Cross, London

# Russia [edit]

office, Younger did not specifically name Russia, but left no doubt that this was the target of his remarks. [21][22] In 2020 Younger described continuing Russian ambition to subvert Western democratic process through disinformation, which he ascribed to Russian fear of the quality of Western institutions and alliances. He advocated strong defences but warned that we should not magnify the effect of these relatively crude and unsophisticated attacks by exaggerating their effect. Nor should Western democracies allow these attacks to diminish their own responsibility for dealing with the things that caused division in their own countries. "The Russians did not create the things that divide us, we did that to ourselves". [23] China and technology [edit]

the premium that the Chinese Communist Party placed in preserving their interests. He said that this would have significant security consequences that that the West should anticipate and organise against. But it should also recognise the need for coexistence given that two value systems were like to occupy one planet for the foreseeable future. He also called for the West to refocus on its own strengths: the quality of its alliances and innovation, rather than simply lamenting the rise of a competitor. [23]

#### In an October 2020 interview with Angelina Jolie in *Time* magazine, Younger voiced fears that the international consensus on human rights norms had broken down. It was now up to like-minded liberal democracies to create consequences for the worst violators. Separately, he acknowledged that Afghanistan's future had to be determined by politics but warned that the country had changed

Human rights [edit]

and that the Taliban should understand that Afghans, particularly women, would have no tolerance for a reversion to the way things were. [25] Academic freedom [edit]

In December 2018 Younger gave a rare speech at the University of St Andrews, making emphasis of the need for fourth-generation espionage and fusing human skills with technical innovation.

#### This was the second public speech in the four years since his appointment as chief of the MI6.<sup>[26]</sup> During the speech Younger addressed the case of Matthew Hedges, a British university student who was arrested in the UAE. Younger said he was perplexed by what has happened and that there were some frank conversations ahead between Britain and the UAE. [27] Hedges was later

pardoned by UAE President Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan and reunited with his wife in the UK. [28] Counter terrorism [edit] In September 2020, speaking to the Financial Times, Younger was asked if the UK had wrongly prioritised counter terrorism at the expense of coverage of Russia and China. Younger said that he

supported the government's very low tolerance for instability driven by terrorism because it was such a gross violation of social norms. He described the recent destruction of the ISIS caliphate in

On 16 February 2019, when interviewed by the British press, Younger was asked about the wives of British ISIS fighters stuck in Syria after the fall of the caliphate. He acknowledged their plight, but warned that such people would have acquired skills and connections that made them dangerous to the public. Home Secretary Sajid Javid later chose to strip Shamima Begum, who had married an ISIS fighter, of her British citizenship, leaving the future of her and her son unclear. [30] Richard Barrett, who is a former director of global counter-terrorism at MI6, told the press that Begum should be given a chance to rebuild her life with her son. He also suggested it would be unreasonable to expect the Syrian Defence Force to look after her indefinitely.<sup>[31]</sup> Barrett stated that British society should be strong enough to reabsorb her. He said the immediate reaction of the British government "has been a complete lack of concern for her plight". [32]

### Ralph Fiennes plays Younger's fictional counterpart "M" in No Time to Die, a 2020 James Bond film. In August 2019 Younger and his colleagues visited a James Bond film set at Pinewood Studios in Buckinghamshire, where he shook hands with Fiennes and other actors. [33]

Portrayal in popular culture [edit]

Personal life [edit]

# Sailing, hiking and dogs [edit]

Family [edit] Younger has three children with his wife. On 30 March 2019, Younger's son, Sam, was killed in a motoring accident in Stirlingshire. [36]

Syria as a "High Point", but he warned that terrorism had now become more autonomous and spontaneous, and remained lethal. [29]

## Honours [edit] Younger was appointed Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George (CMG) in the 2011 Birthday Honours and Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George (KCMG) in the

dogs.[34][35]

2019 Birthday Honours for services to the United Kingdom. [37]

#### Mansfield Cumming Sidney Reilly

See also [edit]

- William Melville
- Charles Cumming
- References [edit] 1. ^ "Appointment of the new Chief of the Secret Intelligence

#### BBC News. 3 October 2014. Retrieved 3 October 2014.

3. ^ MacAskill, Ewen; Norton-Taylor, Richard (26 June 2014). "MI6 chief Sir John Sawers to step down" . The Guardian.

Service (MI6)" . GOV.UK. Press releases. Her Majesty's

Government. 3 October 2014. Retrieved 3 October 2014.

- Retrieved 5 July 2014. 4. A Evans, Michael (13 February 2019). "MI6 chief Alex Younger set to stay in post over Brexit fears" ☑. *The Times*.
- 5. ^ Coughlin, Con (12 April 2019). "Alex Younger agrees to become the longest serving MI6 chief in 50 years" ☑. The Telegraph. ISSN 0307-1235 degree P. Retrieved 9 June 2019.

ISSN 0140-0460 degree . Retrieved 9 June 2019.

- 6. ^ "Index entry" ☑. FreeBMD. ONS. Retrieved 3 December 2018. 7. ^ "MI6 'C' Delivers Rare Public Speech at St Andrews
- 8. ^ Pettifor, Tom (8 December 2016). "Everything you need to
- know about Britain's top spy Alex Younger as he warns of ISIS threat" . Daily Mirror. Retrieved 9 December 2016. 9. A "Younger, Alexander William", Who's Who 2014, A & C
- Black, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing plc, 2014 10. ^ Younger, Alexandra (14 February 1994). "Wilder shores of love: Five couples who went abroad to get married tell their stories to Alexandra Younger" . The Independent. Retrieved
- 12 December 2016. 11. ^ "No. 50733" ☑. The London Gazette (Supplement). 1 December 1986. p. 15534.
- January 1987. p. 1079.

12. ^ "No. 50813" d. The London Gazette (Supplement). 26

This page was last edited on 14 October 2021, at 21:41 (UTC).

Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.

14. ^ "No. 50965" ☑. The London Gazette (Supplement). 15 June 1987. p. 7669. 15. ^ "No. 51696" ☑. The London Gazette (Supplement). 10 April

13. ^ "No. 50907" ☑. The London Gazette (Supplement). 1 May

1987. p. 5856.

- 1989. p. 4292. 16. ^ "No. 52138" d. The London Gazette (Supplement). 15 May
- 1990. p. 9158. 17. ^ Tomlinson, Richard. *The Big Breach* (PDF). p. 31.
- Retrieved 27 February 2019. 18. ^ Evans, Michael; Haynes, Deborah (3 October 2014). Games anti terror chief Alex Younger named as Britain's nev

op spy". The Times. Retrieved 3 December 2018.

- 19. ^ Du Chateau, Carroll (30 June 2000). "Outcast: the spy who wants to spill the beans" ☑. The New Zealand Herald. Retrieved 16 April 2015.
- 20. ^ "Senior officials 'high earners' salaries as at 30 September 2015 - GOV.UK" . www.gov.uk. 17 December 2015. Retrieved 11 March 2016.
- 'fundamental threat' to Europe, says MI6 chief" delay. The Guardian. Retrieved 9 December 2016.

21. ^ MacAskill, Ewen (8 December 2016). "Hostile states pose

- 22. ^ Noack, Rick (10 January 2018). "Everything we know so far about Russian election meddling in Europe" de The Washington Post. Retrieved 11 November 2018.
- 23. A a b "Alex Younger: 'The Russians did not create the things that divide us — we did that "₺. www.ft.com.
- 24. ^ "BBC News: Huawei: 'Deep concerns' over firm's role in UK 5G upgrade" ☑. BBC News. 27 December 2018.

- December 2019. 27. ^ "Alex Younger: MI6 chief 'perplexed' over Matthew Hedges
- divide us we did that'"

  ☑. www.ft.com. 30. ^ "ISIS 'jihadi brides have connections and skills to be very
- 2019.
- says as IS school girl makes plea to come home" d. Retrieved 29 August 2019.
- 32. ^ "Former MI6 director says Shamima Begum should be allowed home" delay. Retrieved 29 August 2019.
- 34. ^ "MI6: Alex named as new head" ☑. Retrieved 30 August 2019.
- Retrieved 30 August 2019.
- 37. ^ "No. 59808" . The London Gazette (Supplement). 11 June 2011. p. 3.

## MI6 chief Alex Younger: Enemies in 'perpetual confrontation' Sky News December 2018 • "UK is in technological arms race with its foes, warns MI6 chief Alex Younger" - video , Nick Hopkins, *The Guardian*, 3 December 2018

External links [edit]

The Irish Times | Alex Younger ☑

Preceded by

• "James Bond is both a blessing and curse, says spy chief Alex Younger" - video The Guardian, 8 December 2016

- Positions held [edit]
- **Government offices**

#### Sir John Sawers November 2014-October 2020 **Richard Moore United Kingdom intelligence agencies** V •T •E Portals: **United Kingdom** Biography London

Royal Scots officers | Scots Guards officers | Alumni of the University of St Andrews | People from Westminster

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia

**Chief of the Secret Intelligence Service** 



In 2016 Younger said cyber-attacks, propaganda and subversion from hostile states pose a fundamental threat to European democracies including the UK. In a rare speech by an MI6 chief while in In December 2018, Younger raised concerns about Huawei's role in the UK's new 5G mobile network. [24] In 2020 he forecast continuing ideological divergence between the West and China given

Younger enjoys mountain hiking and sailing just like Sir Mansfield Cumming, Royal Navy officer who lived on a boat in Southampton before becoming the head of MI6 in 1909. He has three

25. A "Angelina Jolie Talks to Outgoing MI6 Chief About Fighting" Misinformation and Life as a Spy" ☑. *Time*. Retrieved 6 January 2020. 26. ^ "MI6 Chief gives a rare speech" ☑. BBC News. 28

estate" d. Bbc.co.uk. Retrieved 2 April 2019.

Succeeded by

Categories: 1963 births | Living people | People educated at Marlborough College | Chiefs of the Secret Intelligence Service | Knights Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George

[show]

Powered by

MediaWiki