

UK spy chief's family details posted on Facebook

July 5 2009, By JILL LAWLESS , Associated Press Writer

(AP) -- He's the spy who came in from the beach.

Holiday snapshots and family details about the newly appointed head of Britain's MI6 intelligence agency have been removed from a Facebook page after a newspaper told the government about them.

Pictures from the [social networking](#) Web site published in the Mail on Sunday newspaper show John Sawers posing with his children, wearing a Santa hat and playing Frisbee on a beach.

The paper said the information was posted by Sawers' wife on her [Facebook](#) page. It included vacation photos, details about the couple's three children and the location of their London home.

Shelley Sawers' page has been removed from the site, although a cached page can still be viewed that shows a picture of the spy chief's wife.

Some politicians called the details a security lapse - but others said they revealed nothing but a few mildly embarrassing domestic details.

"It's not a state secret that he wears Speedo swimming trunks," said Foreign Secretary David Miliband. "For goodness' sake, let's grow up."

The Foreign Office would not comment further on the case.

But Conservative lawmaker Patrick Mercer, who heads Parliament's

counterterrorism subcommittee, said the revelations left Sawers open "to criticism and blackmail."

John Sawers, 53, was named last month as the new head of the Secret Intelligence Service, or MI6, Britain's foreign intelligence agency. A former spy, diplomat and foreign policy adviser to ex-Prime Minister Tony Blair, he is currently Britain's ambassador to the United Nations.

He is due to take up his new post in November.

Until the 1990s, the identity of the MI6 chief, known as C, was kept secret. Until 1992, Britain's government refused even to confirm the organization's existence.

Authorities have gradually become more open about MI6 and its domestic sister service MI5 in a bid to shed the agencies' cloak-and-dagger image and attract a wider range of staff.

Liberal Democrat foreign affairs spokesman Edward Davy called for an inquiry into the lapse.

"Normally, I would welcome greater openness in government for officials or politicians, but this type of exposure verges on the reckless," he told the Mail on Sunday.

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