

## Credo

INTERVIEW BY ADAM JACQUES

PHOTOGRAPH BY GAUTIER DEBLONDE

# Robert Baer

Former CIA officer, 56

## *I believe...*

**Spies are somewhere between accountants and a minor secretary** in terms of importance at Whitehall. When I was in the CIA I had the illusion that I was making a difference, then I realised that was just a juvenile folly.

**The vast majority of people in the Middle East just want to be left alone.** The people who care about destroying the West are such a small minority they're not even worth talking about.

**Al-Qa'ida has gone through its cycle of violence** in Iraq. The will has gone for now, but not because more Americans are patrolling the streets of Baghdad. People just looked around and saw the

violence didn't get them anything.

**Ninety nine per cent of espionage is dealing with confidence men** who are bringing you stories they are trying to sell – either for political reasons or money.

**The car bomb is undefeatable.** You and I could close down London's financial district tomorrow and there's nothing the police could do. The technique is easy to learn, the material easy to obtain, and it's easy to carry out.

**The torture scandal is the CIA's biggest mistake.** It is remarkable that they stole Chinese torture techniques, put them in a manual and used them in Iraq and everywhere else they could.

**Iran doesn't really care about a nuclear bomb** right now, simply because they've won in the Gulf.

**An anti-intellectual streak runs through the US:** 18 per cent of Americans believe the sun revolves around the earth. And sadly those people vote and procreate.

**As you get older, it's harder to keep up your vices.** I've given up smoking Cuban cigars and I used to be able to drink two bottles of wine in an evening and not be the worse for it. I can't even drink now. ■

*Robert Baer's film 'Car Bomb' will be screened on Channel 4 in two parts, tonight and on 3 August, at 8pm*

