



INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENT

Chairman: The Rt. Hon. Sir Malcolm Rifkind, MP



Detainee Inquiry - Press Release

The Detainee Inquiry, headed by Sir Peter Gibson, has today published its report summarising the preparatory work of the Inquiry and highlighting the themes and issues which the Inquiry believes should be subject to further examination. The Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament welcomes the publication of this interim report.

The report raises important questions as to the UK Agencies' and Government's policies, procedures and conduct in relation to detainees in the decade following the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001.

The Prime Minister has asked the Committee to consider those issues identified by Sir Peter Gibson. The Committee has agreed to undertake this responsibility.

In previous Parliaments, the ISC has published reports on detainees and rendition, and submitted reports to the then Prime Minister on allegations of complicity in mistreatment of detainees, and on the Government's draft consolidated guidance on detainees. Those previous Reports were incomplete and, in some important respects, unsatisfactory since, after they had been published, new information which had not been made available to the Committee became known. At that time the intelligence Agencies were not under any statutory obligation to provide the Committee with all relevant information in their possession. They were entitled to reach their own decision as to what to provide. Since those reports were produced, the ISC has been given important new powers under the Justice and Security Act. The Agencies are now under a statutory obligation to provide the Committee with all relevant material. The Committee now has a statutory right to consider all aspects of work across the intelligence community, which is backed by the power for its staff to go into the Agencies themselves and inspect their files. These powers are already being used and will be available for all the Committee's future work. The Committee is, therefore, satisfied that the problems that occurred in the past will not, and cannot, recur.

The Committee is currently focussed on its detailed investigation into the intelligence and security Agencies' actions in relation to those charged with the murder of Drummer Lee Rigby in Woolwich. The Committee will also be undertaking a major inquiry into the balance between privacy and security.

In order to ensure that the work arising from the Gibson Inquiry receives the level of scrutiny required, the Committee has therefore requested additional resources commensurate with the task and received assurances that those will be provided. The Committee will also be given access to all of the information (including to primary material) that Government departments and Agencies had provided to the Gibson Inquiry. Once the Committee receives the Agencies' written responses to the 27 questions identified by Sir Peter and his panel, it will commence its investigation.

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament (ISC) is a statutory committee of Parliament that has responsibility for oversight of the UK intelligence community. The Committee was originally established by the Intelligence Services Act 1994, and has recently been reformed by the Justice and Security Act 2013.
2. The Committee oversees the intelligence and security activities of the UK, including the policies, expenditure, administration and operations of the Security Service (MI5), the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) and the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ). The Committee also scrutinises the work of other parts of the UK intelligence community, including the Joint Intelligence Organisation and the National Security Secretariat in the Cabinet Office; Defence Intelligence in the Ministry of Defence; and the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism in the Home Office.
3. The Committee consists of nine Members drawn from both Houses of Parliament. The Chair is elected by its Members. The Members of the Committee are subject to Section 1(1)(b) of the Official Secrets Act 1989 and are routinely given access to highly classified material in carrying out their duties. The current membership is:
 - The Rt. Hon. Sir Malcolm Rifkind, MP (Chairman)
 - The Rt. Hon. Hazel Blears, MP
 - The Rt. Hon. Lord Butler KG GCB CVO
 - The Rt. Hon. Sir Menzies Campbell CH CBE QC, MP
 - Mr Mark Field, MP
 - The Rt. Hon. Paul Goggins, MP
 - The Rt. Hon. George Howarth, MP
 - Dr. Julian Lewis, MP
 - The Most Hon. The Marquis of Lothian PC QC DL
4. The Committee sets its own agenda and work programme. It takes evidence from Government Ministers, the Heads of the intelligence Agencies, officials from the intelligence community, and other witnesses as required. The Committee is supported in its work by an independent Secretariat and an Investigator. It also has access to legal and financial expertise where necessary.
5. The Committee produces an Annual Report on the discharge of its functions. The Committee may also produce Reports on specific investigations.