



INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENT



CHAIRMAN: THE RT. HON. SIR MALCOLM RIFKIND, MP

Statement on Redactions to the US Senate Intelligence Committee Report

On 9 December 2014, the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI) published the Executive Summary of its Report on the CIA's Detention and Interrogation Program, and Minority Views. This Committee subsequently announced that it would be investigating what redactions the UK requested to be made to these documents, and whether or not they were justified on grounds of national security.

We have since been given access to all the primary material held by the UK Agencies (MI6 and MI5) concerning their dealings with the CIA on redactions to the Senate report. Our staff have been into the two Agencies and inspected the relevant files. We have questioned the heads of the Agencies directly. Our findings are set out below.

- It has been alleged that the UK may have requested redactions to the Senate report to conceal evidence of UK complicity in the mistreatment of detainees. From the evidence we have seen and heard, we conclude that these allegations are unfounded.
- The UK Agencies did request redactions to the primary material which was used by the Senate Committee when drafting its full report. We have seen these requests and can confirm that all were directly related to national security interests. They do not concern UK involvement or complicity in, or awareness of, the mistreatment of detainees.
- The CIA themselves proposed redactions to the Executive Summary and Minority Views relating to UK intelligence material, to which the UK Agencies agreed. From the evidence we have seen, the CIA proposals related directly to national security interests, and the UK Agencies did not request any additional redactions to these documents. However that evidence is limited. We note that the UK Agencies were at no stage provided with the draft reports. Rather they were given sight of heavily-edited extracts, which they could not retain. We have seen the Agencies' internal file notes, but not the specific redactions proposed by the CIA. Subsequently, the Senate Committee objected to some of the CIA's proposals, and there therefore needed to be further consultations between the CIA and the UK Agencies about the redactions previously discussed.

These conclusions relate to the very specific question of what redactions the UK Agencies requested to the SSCI Executive Summary and Minority Views. They do not have any bearing on the more critical question of any complicity by the UK security and intelligence Agencies in the mistreatment of detainees, and do not pre-empt our wider Inquiry into those matters, which will continue in the next Parliament. Given the focus of our work on the redactions requested by the UK, we have not sought information directly from US sources at this stage. That may be necessary in the future, as we pursue our wider Inquiry.

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 is taking forward the work begun by Sir Peter Gibson – whose interim report was published in December 2013 – to examine the possible involvement of the UK security and intelligence Agencies in torture or mistreatment. This includes whether the UK may have acted upon information gained as a result of torture or mistreatment, and the extent of UK association with, and knowledge of, the operations of other intelligence services who may have been engaged in such activities.
4. The documents released by the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence on 9th December 2014 can be found at:
<http://www.intelligence.senate.gov/study2014.html>
5. The ISC statement released on 17th December 2014 regarding the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Report can be found at:
<http://isc.independent.gov.uk/news-archive/17december2014>
6. 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, QC, 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

Ms Fiona MacTaggart, MP

The Rt. Hon. George Howarth, MP

Dr Julian Lewis, MP
Lord Lothian, QC, PC

7. 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.
8. The Committee produces an Annual Report on the discharge of its functions. The Committee may also produce Reports on specific investigations.