



INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENT



Press Release

The Rt. Hon. Dominic Grieve QC, MP, Chairman of the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament, said today:

“The Intelligence and Security Committee has met today for the first time in this Parliament. I am honoured to have been elected by my fellow Members to Chair the Committee.

“The Committee has discussed the tragic terrorist attacks we have witnessed in the UK in recent months and expressed sympathy for the victims and their families. Internal reviews are being conducted by the intelligence Agencies and police and overseen by David Anderson. The Committee expects to receive these shortly and will then consider whether there are any aspects which require further investigation. It is important that lessons are learnt from these attacks, and our consideration of these matters will be our top priority.

“In the meantime, we will be concluding the outstanding processes necessary to publish the Committee’s 2016-2017 Annual Report. This is a substantial Report that represents 18 months of oversight of the intelligence community: we have written today to all those in Government involved to request that they ensure deadlines are met such that the Report can be published in the coming weeks. We will also be completing our Reports on the involvement of the UK Government and Security and Intelligence Agencies in detainee mistreatment and rendition, and a review of diversity and inclusion in the UK Intelligence Community - both of which, we intend to publish next year.

“Whilst any necessary Inquiry into this year’s attacks must take priority, we will also be considering issues around Russian activity against the UK which require investigation, and will separately be considering the operation of the UK’s central intelligence machinery.

“It has taken an exceptionally long time after the General Election for the ISC to be reconstituted - the effective and robust oversight of the intelligence community, entrusted to us, is too important to have been left in a vacuum for so many months. We will therefore also be considering steps to strengthen the ability of the Committee to do its work.”

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 since been reformed by the Justice and Security Act 2013.

2. The ISC 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.

4. The Committee's membership is as follows:

The Rt Hon. Dominic Grieve QC MP (Chair)
The Rt Hon. Richard Benyon MP
The Rt Hon. Ian Blackford MP
The Rt Hon. Caroline Flint MP
The Rt Hon. David Hanson MP
The Rt Hon. the Lord Janvrin GCB GCVO QSO
Mr Kevan Jones MP
The Most Hon. the Marquess of Lothian QC PC
The Rt Hon. Keith Simpson MP

5. 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 produces an Annual Report on the discharge of its functions and may also produce Special Reports on specific investigations or issues.