



INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENT



PRESS NOTICE FOLLOWING THE COMMITTEE'S MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER

The Rt Hon. the Lord Beamish PC, Chairman of the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament (ISC), has today provided the following press notice on behalf of the Committee:

“The Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament (ISC) fulfils an important and unique role in providing the only effective Parliamentary oversight of the Intelligence Community. The Committee met the Prime Minister today: the first such meeting in over ten years. The Committee welcomed the meeting, which marks a very positive reset in the relationship between the Government and the ISC, and looks forward to future such meetings.

The Committee also welcomed the Prime Minister’s recognition that the ISC’s independence must be beyond question and that the Government will explore all options to ensure independence in its current and future work.

The Committee agreed with the Prime Minister that the UK’s national security apparatus has changed considerably over the last ten years and welcomed the Prime Minister’s agreement to the extra resources the Committee needs to carry out its statutory obligations, recognising the importance of the Committee’s work. The Committee and the Prime Minister also committed to working together to ensure the scope and remit of the ISC enables it to fulfil its vital oversight role.

These are very positive steps toward significant change which will make Parliamentary oversight of this crucial area stronger, and enhance public confidence in the vital work of the UK Intelligence Community.”

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The Committee has explained the issues with its governance:

“Intelligence and security matters are increasingly devolved to policy departments, but these departments have not been added to the Committee’s MoU. This runs counter to the clear undertaking given by the Government to Parliament during the passage of the Justice and Security Act 2013 that “the ISC should have oversight of substantively all of central Government’s intelligence and security activities to be realised now and in the future”. This also fails adequately to reflect the recognition in the MoU itself, agreed by the Prime Minister, that “the ISC is the only Committee of Parliament that has regular access to protectively marked information that is sensitive for national security reasons” and that “only the ISC is in a position to scrutinise effectively the work of the Agencies and of those parts of Departments whose work is directly concerned with intelligence and security matters ”. ([ISC Annual Report 2022-2023](#), pp. 15-17)

2. The Committee has explained the issues with its remit:

“The root of the problem lies in the control exerted over the Committee’s staff and resourcing by the Cabinet Office - despite the Committee overseeing substantive parts of the Cabinet Office. That, self-evidently, should not be the case. An oversight body should not sit within, and be beholden to, an organisation which it oversees.” ([Press Notice Covering the Work of the Committee](#), 1 May 2025)

3. The Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament (ISC) is a statutory committee of Parliament. It is a Committee of both Houses.
4. The Committee has responsibility for oversight of the intelligence and security activities of the UK Government. Established by the Intelligence Services Act 1994, it was reformed, and its powers significantly reinforced, by the Justice and Security Act 2013.
5. The Committee oversees the policies, expenditure, administration and operations of the UK Intelligence Community. This includes the intelligence Agencies - MI5, SIS (the Secret Intelligence Service or MI6) and the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) - as well as: the Joint Intelligence Organisation and the National Security Secretariat in the Cabinet Office; Defence Intelligence in the Ministry of Defence; Homeland Security Group in the Home Office; and the National Cyber Force.
6. The Committee consists of nine Members drawn from both Houses of Parliament, and appointed by Parliament, with the Chair being elected by its Members. The Committee was reconstituted in December 2024, following the July 2024 General Election, and its Members are:

The Rt Hon. the Lord Beamish PC (Chairman)
The Rt Hon. Sir Jeremy Wright KC MP (Deputy Chairman)
Baroness Brown of Cambridge DBE FREng FRS
Peter Dowd MP
Richard Foord MP
The Rt Hon. Sir John Hayes CBE MP
Jessica Morden MP
Derek Twigg MP
Admiral The Rt Hon. Lord West of Spithead GCB DSC PC.

7. The Members of the Committee are subject to Section 1(l)(b) of the Official Secrets Act 1989 and are routinely given access to highly classified material in carrying out their duties.
8. The Committee sets its own agenda and work programme. It takes evidence from Government Ministers, the Heads of the intelligence and security Agencies, officials from across the UK Intelligence Community, and other witnesses as required. The Committee makes an Annual Report on the discharge of its functions and also produces Reports on specific issues.
9. The Committee's dedicated Press Officers can be reached at:
Miranda.Fleming@cabinetoffice.gov.uk or 07714 171256 (on Monday 14 July 2025); or
Katie.Armour@cabinetoffice.gov.uk or 07543 302826 (from Tuesday 15 July 2025).