



INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENT



PRESS NOTICE - 26 February 2026

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

“Further to the Committee's Press Notice of 10 February, which provided a read out of the meeting that the Committee had had with Cabinet Office officials regarding the Humble Address, the Committee has today held a further meeting with the Cabinet Office Permanent Secretary, the Deputy National Security Adviser and the Acting Director General Propriety and Ethics. The Committee is issuing this statement following the meeting to record what happened and to ensure that there continues to be maximum transparency to Parliament and the public on this matter.

Ahead of the meeting the Committee's position was clear:

- *the ISC has not received any documents from the Government;*
- *the ISC has requested that those papers relating to the vetting and appointment of Lord Mandelson are prioritised for release to the Committee; and*
- *the Committee considers that it is for the ISC to decide whether material referred to it is published or not. That decision is not subject to review by Government and cannot be overruled by Government.*

The discussion this morning was generally productive, and covered a range of issues. Officials told the Committee that:

- *the Government has now agreed a framework with the Metropolitan Police Service, in accordance with which documents can be released without prejudicing any ongoing police investigations;*
- *the Government has now decided what documents are within scope of the Humble Address; and*
- *material is currently being received by the Cabinet Office from across Government and it is hoped that some material will be published shortly.*

There was a substantive discussion on the question of whether the ISC has the final say on publication or whether that is a matter for the Government. The Committee made clear to officials that it is our understanding that, in passing the Humble Address motion, Parliament intended that the Intelligence and Security Committee would be the final arbiter on whether those documents referred to the Committee (i.e. those “papers prejudicial to UK national security or international relations”) are released to Parliament and the public. The Committee

does not believe that Parliament intended that the ISC's decisions could be overruled by Government - that is, that Government, not the ISC, have the final say on whether documents be released or not.

The Committee strongly believes that this principle is critical to the integrity of the process, for the ISC to be able to fulfil the will of Parliament as set out in the Humble Address motion.

Following this morning's meeting, officials have now confirmed in writing to the Committee that the decision as to whether material referred to the ISC is published is for the Committee alone. The Prime Minister - or anyone else in Government - will not be able to overrule the Committee's decision to publish material that has been referred to it.

With that fundamental point now agreed, the Committee now expects officials to revert to the Committee on the practicalities around how documents will be referred to the Committee and to inform the Committee as to when we can expect to receive the first tranche of documents and how many there will be - such that we can secure the resources that may be required so as to be in a position to do the job that Parliament has given us."

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament (ISC) is a statutory Committee of Parliament. It is not a Select Committee.
2. The Committee consists of nine Members drawn from both Houses of Parliament, and appointed by Parliament. The Chair is elected by its Members.
3. The Committee oversees the intelligence and security activities of the UK Intelligence Community. The Committee was originally established by the Intelligence Services Act 1994, and was reformed , and its powers reinforced, by the Justice and Security Act 2013.
4. Its remit includes oversight of the policies, expenditure, administration and operations of MI5, MI6 (the Secret Intelligence Service or SIS) and the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), and the work of the other parts of the Intelligence Community, including the Joint Intelligence Organisation and the National Security Secretariat in the Cabinet Office; Defence Intelligence in Ministry of Defence; and Homeland Security Group in the Home Office.
5. The Members of the Committee are subject to Section I(1)(b) of the Official Secrets Act 1989 and are routinely given access to highly classified material in carrying out their duties.
6. The current Members of the Committee 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. the Lord West of Spithead GCB DSC PC.
7. 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.
8. The Committee's dedicated Press Officer (Alex Hunt) can be reached at:

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