



All Party Parliamentary Group on Extraordinary Rendition  
House of Commons

Press release: Immediate, 3 February 2015

**Andrew Tyrie MP comments on the statement of a senior American official confirming the CIA's use of Diego Garcia for interrogation.**

“It has been nearly a decade since I first started asking questions about Diego Garcia. I have lost count of the number of times that I have been given a cast-iron assurance by senior UK government ministers that Diego Garcia has not been used in the CIA rendition programme. These comprehensive denials had to be retracted on the floor of the House with a good deal of embarrassment in corrective statements.

The latest statement by a top American official that the island was used as a transit and interrogation site is disturbing. We need to know the truth. The use of Diego Garcia should have been thoroughly and decisively investigated several years ago. The drip-drip of allegations and revelations that continue to seep out about possible involvement in rendition damages the UK's reputation.

In spring 2014, allegations surfaced that the CIA maintained a so-called black site on Diego Garcia with the full cooperation of the British Government.<sup>1</sup> Then I was told last summer that flight records from 2002 were ‘incomplete due to water damage’. The following week, the Government backtracked and said that “previously wet paper records have been dried out”. It would be farcical if we weren't discussing possible kidnap and maltreatment or torture.

It is essential that the new inquiry by the Intelligence and Security Committee, commissioned by the Prime Minister, should get underway immediately.<sup>2</sup> It

---

<sup>1</sup> In April 2014, leaks by US officials familiar with the report of the Senate Intelligence Committee on the rendition programme stated that the CIA detained some high-value suspects on Diego Garcia, which the UK leases to the US.

<sup>2</sup> The inquiry will investigate the role of the UK Government and security and intelligence agencies in relation to detainee treatment and rendition. On 6 July 2010, the Prime Minister announced the establishment of a judge-led Detainee Inquiry, to be chaired by Sir Peter Gibson, to investigate Britain's alleged role in the torture and rendition of detainees after 9/11. The opening of the Inquiry was initially delayed by police investigations into possible criminal proceedings. The discovery in September 2011 of documents that appeared to implicate the British intelligence services in renditions

starts on the back foot. The ISC has already examined the issue but failed to get to the truth. It erroneously concluded in 2007 that Britain was not complicit in rendition, only to be flatly contradicted by a High Court ruling the following year. The inquiry also suffers because neither the Committee nor the Government have agreed to important improvements. Among these are agreeing to examine the issue of detainee transfers and requiring government officials to certify that they have provided the Committee with all relevant information.

It is now the best part of a decade since some of these allegations first surfaced. Sunlight is the best disinfectant. The US Senate Intelligence Committee has done a great service, by taking a crucial step to putting this right. The UK, both government and Parliament, should now belatedly do the same.”

Ends.

---

to Libya opened a new line of enquiry. When it became clear that this would result in further police investigations, the Government announced in January 2012 that the Gibson Inquiry would be stood down. In December 2013, the Gibson Inquiry published its preliminary findings. That same month, the Prime Minister announced that the ISC would be responsible for a new investigation into allegations of UK involvement in rendition.

## Notes to Editors:

In an interview with Vice News, Lawrence Wilkerson, who served as chief of staff to former Secretary of State Colin Powell from 2002 to 2005, disclosed that he had been informed by US intelligence sources that the Indian Ocean atoll was used by the CIA for “nefarious activities” and, in particular, as “a transit site where people were temporarily housed, let us say, and interrogated from time to time”.

The Government previously denied that renditions took place through Diego Garcia. On 13 December 2005, Rt Hon Jack Straw MP, then Foreign Secretary stated:

“Unless we all start to believe in conspiracy theories and that the officials are lying, that I am lying, that behind this there is some kind of secret state which is in league with some dark forces in the United States, and let me say, we believe that Secretary Rice is lying, there simply is no truth that the United Kingdom has been involved in rendition, full stop.”

In 2007, the Government again assured Parliament that Diego Garcia had not been used in the rendition programme. However, the following year, on 21 February 2008, Rt Hon David Miliband MP issued an apology to the House of Commons and stated that contrary to “earlier explicit assurances” from the United States, two US rendition flights landed at Diego Garcia to refuel in 2002:

“I am very sorry indeed to have to report to the House the need to correct those and other statements on the subject.” He said the flights had been mistakenly overlooked in previous US internal inquiries carried out at the UK's behest.

In April 2014, leaks by US officials familiar with the report of the Senate Intelligence Committee on the rendition programme revealed that the CIA detained some high-value suspects on Diego Garcia and that the US acted with the ‘full cooperation’ of the British government.

The APPG has written to the ISC with the following suggestions to increase the prospects of success with the rendition inquiry:

1. require Permanent Secretaries of all relevant departments and agencies personally to certify that they have taken all reasonable steps to supply the Committee with all relevant information held by their department;

2. create a high quality investigation Panel to examine documents and ensure that all relevant information has been provided;
3. examine the issue of detainee transfers in Iraq and Afghanistan, both whether anyone captured by the UK had been handed over to the control of the US or another country or transferred out of the country and whether the UK was involved in or had knowledge of subsequent mistreatment of these detainees;
4. where necessary and feasible, seek access to non-UK and non-government bodies to obtain information;
5. clarify that the ISC will decide whether and in what form information is published, subject to a final determination by the Prime Minister;
6. publish as full an explanation as reasonably possible of the Committee's intended overall approach to the inquiry, and do this as soon as reasonably possible.

---

Andrew Tyrie is Conservative MP for Chichester and Chairman and founder of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Extraordinary Rendition. Mr Tyrie can be contacted on 0207 219 6371. His office email is [andrew.tyrie.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:andrew.tyrie.mp@parliament.uk). The website of the All Party Group is [www.extraordinaryrendition.org](http://www.extraordinaryrendition.org).

Created in December 2005, the All Party Parliamentary Group on Extraordinary Rendition is an informal, cross-party group of over 60 Members of Parliament and Peers from the Parliament of the United Kingdom who have joined together to collect, examine and publicly disseminate information about the topic of extraordinary rendition, the involvement and/or cooperation of the United Kingdom in extraordinary rendition and related issues.