

CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON SECURITY AND INTELLIGENCE RECORDS

Meeting held in Room G44, Admiralty Arch,
on Thursday 20 October 2011 at 2.00pm

Roger Smethurst (In the Chair)
Professor Richard Aldrich
Ministry of Defence
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Home Office
Northern Ireland Office
The National Archives
Security Service
Government Communications Headquarters
Cabinet Office
Alan Glennie (Secretary)

1. Phased move to a 20-year rule for the transfer of records to The National Archives (TNA)

The Chair said that the Government had announced on 7 January 2011 there would be a move under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 (CRAGA) to a 20-year rule for the transfer of records to TNA with effect from 1 January 2013. The reduction from 30 to 20 years would be phased in with records being transferred to TNA at the rate of two years at a time.

2. Renewal of the Lord Chancellor's security and intelligence instrument in 2012

The Chair said that to simplify procedures and increase transparency there would be a move to a single-style instrument with each new instrument confirming the retention of all previous records not yet released plus the records covered by the next additional 10-year period. The departmental re-review of retained records would continue to be at least every 10 years.

3. Releases of security and intelligence records

The departments and agencies present gave an update on recent and planned releases of records to TNA.

4. Meeting with post-graduate students on 10 December 2010

The general feeling was that students who had attended the meeting of 10 December 2010 found it to be a useful event. Future subjects for discussion by break-out groups were identified as being electronic records - forthcoming problems; how to identify and manage gaps in source material; and declassification of Second World War records. Among general comments was the provision of a list of participants for networking purposes.

5. Presentation on how the history of the American intelligence had made its way into the public domain

The University of Warwick had been undertaking a project on how on how the history of American intelligence had made its way into the public domain. It was for consideration whether a presentation on the project should be given to the Consultative Group; opened up more widely to one of the periodic lunchtime events, known as Knowledge bites, for Cabinet Office staff; or feature as part of the next meeting with postgraduate students.

6. Arrangements for the meeting with postgraduate students on 16 December 2011

The next meeting with students would take place on 16 December 2011. The venue and time would be the same as for 2010, with lunch being provided. The format would be similar to that for 2010. The subjects for discussion by the break-out groups would be those put forward as possible subjects in the feedback on the meeting that took place with students on 10 December 2010 (see paragraph 4 above).

7. Date of next meeting

The Chair said that the aim would for the Consultative Group to meet once within the next year.

2 February 2012