



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
OLD WAR OFFICE BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2EU

Telephone [REDACTED] (Direct Dialling)
[REDACTED] (Switchboard)

MINISTER OF STATE FOR
THE ARMED FORCES

D/Min(AF)/AI 2268/03/P

2 May 2003

Dear Michael

Thank you for your letter of 11 April (reference: JM030914) to Geoff Hoon on behalf of your constituent, Mr [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] about the treatment of Iraqi detainees. I am replying as this matter falls within my area of responsibility as Minister of State for the Armed Forces.

Prisoners of War (PWs) captured by British Forces are being treated strictly in accordance with our obligations under the Geneva Conventions and international law. Some of the PWs currently being held by British Forces were actually detained by US Forces. They will be held until custody can be transferred to appropriate US facilities. We have worked very closely with the International Commission of the Red Cross (ICRC) who have expressed themselves content with the way we have treated prisoners and detainees throughout this conflict.

Captured Iraqis are given prisoner of war status until proved otherwise, and will be treated according to our obligations under the Geneva Convention. Captured Iraqi Forces are likely to be prisoners of war unless they have concealed weapons in the conduct of operations, in which case they are unlawful combatants. Although unlawful combatants do not have PW status, we would have a duty under International Humanitarian Law to treat the prisoner in a reasonable and humane manner which we would discharge in full.

We would only restrain prisoners if we felt that it was necessary to do so (for example if we felt that they might seek to escape, or be violent towards the guards or other prisoners). There were a small number of occasions at the start of the conflict where prisoners were hooded for short periods - this practice has now been stopped. But I would like to reassure your constituent that in all this we have worked very closely with the ICRC who have expressed themselves content with the way we have treated prisoners and detainees throughout the conflict.

I hope this is helpful

[REDACTED]
The Rt Hon Adam Ingram MP

Private Office

Michael Foster Esq DL MP



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

MOD050331_R