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24th October 2003

Dear Andrea,

THE NEED TO REVIEW UK MILITARY DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE FOR PRISONER HANDLING, TACTICAL QUESTIONING AND INTERROGATION.

During the OP TELIC combat phase, the hooding of PWs, internees and detainees by our forces attracted the attention of the international media and the ICRC and brought with it some adverse criticism. I might add that during OP TELIC, our forces adopted different practices, some units hooded PWs as a matter of routine, whilst others were more selective. Once this practice was exposed, legal advice at the time was that the practice should stop.

Recent events and some apparent re-emergence in the use of hooding have prompted me to stop this practise on anyone detained by British Forces. However, I have accepted that blindfolding is an acceptable alternative to hooding, but on the basis that it be used only to offer:

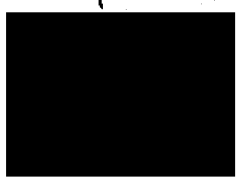
- a. Security to our own forces and locations.
- b. Protection to the detained personnel (through prevention of identification by other detained personnel).

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This change should protect the rights of detainees; also, and equally as important, it protects our troops from accusations of breaching Geneva Conventions III and IV.

Clearly we need to address our prisoner handling techniques and I believe it would be appropriate to review both our doctrine and training, in order to ensure compliance with obligations under current international law. I believe the responsibility for this lies with you and I would be grateful if you could take appropriate action.

Yours ever,



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Sig:

