



SECRETARY OF STATE

Copy to:
PS/Minister(AF)
PS/PUS
PSO/CDS
DG Op Pol
Director Iraq
D News
Hd IIT
PJHQ J9 Pol/Ops
Dep Hd IIT

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
ROOM 205, OLD WAR OFFICE BUILDING
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2EU

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Fax: [REDACTED]

E-mail: [REDACTED]

MO 6/17/15C
MST 4/5/2

25 May 2004

New Nicholas,

Thank you for your letter of 12 May. I should first stress that there has been no change in the Government's policy on hooding and so I do not believe that it is necessary to make an announcement to the House.

The Heath Ruling of 2 March 1972 determined that hooding would not be used for the purposes of interrogation. Since then, the training and doctrine of the UK Armed Forces has made clear that the use of hooding during interrogation or tactical questioning is unacceptable. However, there may be operational circumstances where there are clear military reasons for obscuring detainees' vision. For example it may be necessary during the arrest and transit of prisoners to prevent them viewing sensitive information, or troop dispositions. The UK believes that in these circumstances this is acceptable under the Geneva Conventions. This has been the case for very many years, including when you were in office.

Local commanders took decisions to cease the hooding of detainees when they believed the circumstances permitted. We do not routinely announce such operational level decisions.

Hon Nicholas Soames MP
House of Commons



Recycled