

Iraq: Treatment of Prisoners

Lord Lester of Herne Hill asked Her Majesty's Government:

Further to the statement by the Lord Bach on 12 May (HL Deb, col. 378), when and in what circumstances Ministers were first informed of the practice of hooding; what was the nature of the practice; and what were the reasons for its abandonment. [HL2835]

Lord Bach: The hooding of detainees for the purposes of arrest or transit was a standard procedure for UK troops prior to Operation TELIC and, as such, was not specifically brought to the attention of Ministers. The UK believes that hooding during arrest and transit is acceptable when there is a strong military reason, for example to offer security to our own forces and locations and to provide protection to the detainee (through the prevention of identification by other detainees).

The practice of hooding was discontinued when there was no longer a military justification for continuing to do so.

Iraq: UK Detention Facilities

Lord Lester of Herne Hill asked Her Majesty's Government:

Further to the statement by the Minister of State for the Armed Forces on 13 May (HC Deb, cols. 513–515), whether they will seek the permission of the International Committee of the Red Cross to publish the report of February 2004, together with the second report specific to United Kingdom detention facilities in Iraq. [HL2923]

Lord Bach: No. It would not be appropriate to do so.

War Pensioners: Alexander Izett

Lord Morris of Manchester asked Her Majesty's Government:

What further representations the Ministry of Defence has received about the case of war pensioner Alexander Izett, on which Lieutenant-Colonel Graham Howell of the British Forces Health Service in Germany reported; and whether they are considering any further action in this case. [HL3050]

Lord Bach: Since Mr Izett wrote to my honourable friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence on 1 May announcing that he had begun a hunger strike the honourable Member for North Cornwall, (Paul Tyler MP) has tabled one Parliamentary Question, which was answered on 13 May (*Official Report* col. 155W). As at 23 June

the Ministry of Defence has received 15 other representations from Members of Parliament and a further six from members of the public referring to Mr Izett's case.

We do not propose any further action in the case of Mr Izett.

Bosnia-Herzegovina: EU Mission

Lord Astor of Hever asked Her Majesty's Government:

What level of co-ordination there will be between the European Union planning cell and NATO in the forthcoming European Union peacekeeping deployment to Bosnia-Herzegovina; and which of the two will take the lead. [HL3357]

Lord Bach: The proposed EU stabilisation mission to Bosnia will be conducted under the 'Berlin Plus' arrangements through which the EU has assured access to NATO planning. The operational commander will be the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe (DSACEUR) who will report as an EU commander to the EU's Political and Security Committee. The operational headquarters will be NATO's Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) at Mons in Belgium, acting on behalf of the EU. The EU has a small planning cell embedded at SHAPE to assist DSACEUR and to improve co-ordination between the EU and NATO; it also has staff at the NATO regional HQ in Naples. This EU element in Naples will be in the chain of command between DSACEUR and the EU force commander in Bosnia.

Separately, the EU decided in December to set up a civil/military strategic planning cell within the EU military staff in Brussels. The civil/military cell will improve co-operation between the EU's civilian and military responses, and conduct early warning, situation assessment and strategic planning. The cell will not itself undertake operational planning and will have no direct involvement in EU military operations in Bosnia.

Parliamentary Constituencies

Lord Monson asked Her Majesty's Government:

How many electors on average there will be per parliamentary constituency in:

- England
- Wales
- Scotland; and
- Northern Ireland

after the number of Scottish seats at Westminster has been reduced from 72 to 59. [HL3374]

The Minister of State, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Lord Rooker): The average number of electors in a constituency after the reviews currently