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FOR  
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Dear Huw,

**IRAQ: POSSIBLE DETENTION OF POWS AND CIVILIAN INTERNEES IN THE SBAs**

1. Thank you for your letter of 25 March faxed through on 26<sup>th</sup>. *ES3*
2. Let me reassure you straight away that though, for lay people, the word "interrogation" summons up images of dank dungeons, blinding lights and the removal of finger nails, the military (and hence the MOD generally) use the term in an entirely benign sense -- to mean simply "questioning". I agree that it appears rather alarming but there is no call to be worried.
3. All those who are involved in the handling and questioning of detainees, whether they are PWs or civilian internees, are fully aware of the legal obligations that you describe. They are also aware that they will be held accountable for any breach of them. There are military and civilian lawyers, who are very familiar with the terms of the Geneva Conventions and other rules of IHL, deployed at various levels of the command chain. It is their task to ensure that all troops are given the guidance and instruction necessary to enable compliance with the UK's international obligations. Our expectation is that HM Forces will comply fully with these obligations in this conflict as they have done in conflicts in the past.
4. With regard to GCIV, as you know the way in which this is going to operate in Iraq is currently the subject of detailed discussion between the Foreign Office and the MOD on a daily basis. Work is also in hand in relation to the rules to govern status and disciplinary tribunals. [REDACTED] efforts should be made to ensure that as much protection was given to detainees appearing before tribunals as was practicable. Such steps might include a firm direction to those staffing the tribunals that they are to act independently and impartially and allowing decisions of the tribunals to be subject to judicial review in the English courts. It is not quite right to say, as you say in