



House of Commons
Defence Committee

The Iran hostages incident: the lessons learned

Fourth Report of Session 2007–08

*Report, together with formal minutes, and
written evidence*

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The Defence Committee

The Defence Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Ministry of Defence and its associated public bodies.

Current membership

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Mr David Crausby MP (*Labour, Bolton North East*)
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Willie Rennie MP (*Liberal Democrat, Dunfermline and West Fife*)
John Smith MP (*Labour, Vale of Glamorgan*)

The following Members were also Members of the Committee during the Parliament.

Mr Colin Breed MP (*Liberal Democrat, South East Cornwall*)
Derek Conway MP (*Conservative, Old Bexley and Sidcup*)
Mr Mark Lancaster MP (*Conservative, North East Milton Keynes*)
Mr Desmond Swayne MP (*Conservative, New Forest West*)

Powers

The Committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No 152. These are available on the Internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publications

The Reports and evidence of the Committee are published by The Stationery Office by Order of the House. All publications of the Committee (including press notices) are on the Internet at: www.parliament.uk/defcom.

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Philippa Helme (Clerk), Eliot Wilson (Second Clerk), Ian Rogers (Audit Adviser), Stephen Jones (Committee Specialist), Richard Dawson (Committee Assistant), Christine McGrane (Secretary) and Stewart McIlvenna (Senior Office Clerk).

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Summary

In June 2007, the Secretary of State for Defence announced the broad conclusions of the Fulton report into the apprehension of Royal Navy personnel from HMS Cornwall by Iranians on 23 March 2007. He stated that it would not be possible to publish the report but that it would be given to our Committee to ensure parliamentary scrutiny.

We found the initial response of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to our inquiry inadequate, but the MoD has now provided us with full responses to our questions and briefing at the highest level.

The security classification of the Fulton report, and the evidence provided to us in support of it, makes it difficult for us to demonstrate openly the grounds on which we have reached our conclusions. But we assure the House of Commons, and the public, that we are satisfied that action is being taken to address the weaknesses exposed by the hostage-taking. We are assured that this should significantly reduce the likelihood of a recurrence. We have written to the Secretary of State for Defence with a number of classified conclusions and recommendations.

The decision not to publish the Fulton report has led some people to conclude that the whole thing was a whitewash. We can assure the House that this is not the case. The Fulton report was robust in identifying serious weaknesses: in intelligence, in communications, in doctrine and in training. And, while the MoD concluded there were insufficient grounds for courts martial, formal administrative action has been taken against a number of Service personnel.

The Fulton report recommended a range of remedial actions; and the Government has made good progress towards implementing its recommendations. We have been assured that the resources are in place to enable implementation of the action plan.

We accept that a lack of resources was not the direct cause of the events of 23 March.

We also considered the findings of the Hall report into media access to Service personnel. It is clear that the decision to allow the Service personnel to sell their stories was a serious mistake and deeply damaging to the reputation of the Royal Navy. The Secretary of State for Defence has accepted responsibility and apologised. This should not absolve others from blame.

We publish a progress report from the MoD on the action taken to implement the Hall recommendations, and note the progress made.

Report

Background

1. On 23 March 2007, 15 Royal Navy personnel (eight Royal Navy sailors and seven Royal Marines) from HMS Cornwall—a Royal Navy Frigate, deployed with the Coalition Task Force in the Northern Gulf—were captured by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard while conducting a boarding operation on a merchant vessel in shallow waters near the mouth of the Shatt al-Arab waterway, between Iraq and Iran. They were taken to Iran, paraded before the international media and detained until their release and return home on 5 April. On their return, the Royal Navy staged a press conference for some of the detainees: two of them subsequently sold their stories to the media.

2. On 16 April 2007, the Secretary of State for Defence, Rt Hon Des Browne MP, made a statement to the House of Commons, announcing that he had appointed Lieutenant General Sir Rob Fulton RM (retired), Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Gibraltar, to inquire into the operational circumstances and factors leading to the capture of the Royal Navy personnel. He said that, because the inquiry would consider operationally sensitive material, it would not be possible to publish all the conclusions, but they would be presented to the Defence Committee in full.¹ **We commend the Secretary of State for Defence for volunteering to expose the Ministry of Defence to parliamentary scrutiny on this matter.**

3. The Secretary of State also announced a separate review of the media handling.² It was subsequently announced that this would be carried out by Tony Hall, the Chief Executive of the Royal Opera House and formerly the BBC's Director of News and Current Affairs.³

4. Following the completion of Sir Rob Fulton's report, we were given a classified briefing at the Ministry of Defence (MoD) on 18 June 2007. The Secretary of State announced to the House of Commons on 19 June 2007 the broad conclusions of the Fulton report. He confirmed that the report was classified, because it addressed operational and tactical issues, but had been "shared with the Defence Committee to ensure proper parliamentary accountability". The Secretary of State also announced the key conclusions of the Hall inquiry.⁴ Unlike Fulton, the Hall report was published.⁵

Our inquiry

5. **To be asked to conduct an inquiry in secret, and to report on matters which we cannot make public, is highly unusual.** While we had some reservations about conducting scrutiny on terms of the Government's choosing, we agreed on 19 June 2007 to hold an inquiry. The purpose of our inquiry has been:

1 HC Deb, 16 April 2007, cols 23–26

2 *Ibid.*

3 HC Deb, 24 April 2007, col 21WS

4 HC Deb, 19 June 2007, cols 1255–1258

5 *Report by Tony Hall on Review of Media Access to Personnel*, 19 June 2007, available at www.mod.uk

- to scrutinise the Fulton Report on behalf of the House of Commons, and to establish whether it was comprehensive and its recommendations sufficient;
- to ensure that the MoD's related action plan was adequate and properly implemented and resourced;
- to scrutinise the Hall report and to ensure that its recommendations were implemented; and
- more broadly, to ensure that the lessons of the HMS Cornwall incident had been fully learnt and disseminated.

6. Given the security classification of the Fulton Report, it was not possible to hold an inquiry in public. We held an evidence session in private on 17 July 2007 with the Chief of Joint Operations, Commander in Chief Fleet and Flag Officer Sea Training. We found this first evidence session deeply unsatisfactory. The witnesses appeared surprised by the nature of the questions we asked, and were unable to explain to us the chain of events which had occurred prior to the capture of the HMS Cornwall hostages.

7. We made it plain that we expected a better response to our inquiry, given the Secretary of State's assurance that there would be "proper parliamentary accountability". This led to a significant change in attitude by the MoD. Both the Secretary of State for Defence and the Chief of the Defence Staff underlined their personal commitment to ensuring that we received all the information we required. We subsequently asked the MoD for a full chronology of events, and answers to a range of questions in writing, and received a very thorough response on 22 October 2007.

8. We received an informal private briefing on the implementation of the MoD's action plan from the Chief of the Defence Staff, the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, and the First Sea Lord, at Westminster, on 20 November 2007. We held a second formal private evidence session with those same witnesses on 4 December 2007.

9. We found the MoD's initial response to our inquiry inadequate, and sensed that the Department had not anticipated that we would pursue an inquiry in depth. But, following our strong response, the MoD responded positively to our inquiry and has been helpful both in providing full answers to our questions in writing and in offering high-level briefing. We believe our inquiry has sharpened the MoD's response to the Iran hostage incident.

The Fulton report

10. The Secretary of State told the House of Commons on 19 June 2007 that Sir Rob Fulton's report could not be published "because it addresses operational and tactical issues, which cannot be discussed in public without increasing the risk to our forces". He called the report "impressively thorough" and outlined some of the points it covered. He said:

- that though there were similarities with earlier incidents, the events were different; and the lessons of the earlier events had been learned and applied;

- that the rules of engagement were appropriate, and remained appropriate, for the task;
- that the event was not the result of equipment or resource issues, including helicopter availability, the size and suitability of HMS Cornwall or the size and armament of the boarding party's boats; and
- that the presence of the BBC on HMS Cornwall had not been a factor in any of the operational decisions taken.⁶

11. The Secretary of State said that the Fulton Report had identified some shortcomings:

- there were faults in the Coalition's shared procedures;
- the UK "must improve our ability to identify and assess the risks that this complex environment generates, and to train and posture our forces accordingly";
- improvement was needed in the handling of intelligence, in communications, in doctrine, and in training—both individual and collective;
- in particular, there needed to be improvement in training for particular tasks, including boarding, and specialist teams should be deployed for this task;
- there needed to be better information sharing with other nations operating in the area.

The Secretary of State said that an action plan had been drawn up and a number of measures already taken, allowing the recommencement of boarding operations in April.⁷

12. While we found the Fulton report very helpful in understanding the various contributory factors that led to the incident, it alone would not have allowed us (or anyone else reading the report) fully to understand the sequence of events or their significance. It was only after the MoD released a significant additional tranche of information—in October 2007—that we were able to reach a conclusion on whether Fulton's recommendations, and the subsequent action plan, were appropriate. Our evidence session in December focused on ensuring that the MoD had fully taken onboard the criticisms made by Fulton, and that it was giving priority and resources to implementing the action plan.

13. The decision not to publish the Fulton report has led some people to conclude that the whole thing was a whitewash. We can assure the House that this is not the case. The Fulton report was robust in identifying serious weaknesses, and recommended a range of remedial actions. The Government immediately drew up an action plan for implementing these recommendations, and has made good progress towards discharging the actions.

6 HC Deb, 19 June 2007, cols 1255–1256

7 HC Deb, 19 June 2007, col 1256

Accountability

14. The Secretary of State told the House of Commons in June that

General Fulton's report concludes that the events of 23 March were not the result of a single gross failing or individual human error, but of the coming together of a series of vulnerabilities, many relatively small when viewed in isolation, which together placed our personnel in a position which could be exploited by Iran. His conclusions suggest that there is no case for disciplinary action against any of those involved but his report emphasises that many of those individuals could have done more to prevent what happened. In that respect it identifies some failings, both collective and individual, which the Royal Navy's chain of command will consider and deal with.⁸

15. There has been a perception that the Fulton report let people off lightly, and that someone should have been held to account for the errors made. It is true that the Fulton report did not blame individuals: it identified broader, organisational, weaknesses. We were told that the MoD had taken legal advice, which indicated that there was insufficient evidence to secure a conviction on a disciplinary charge. However, we were assured that administrative action had been taken against a number of individuals, at different levels in the chain of command. Administrative action is a serious matter, which can have a major impact on an individual's subsequent career. **The perception that everyone has been let off scot-free for the Iran hostage incident is ill-founded. Whilst it was decided that there were insufficient grounds for courts martial, formal administration action has been taken against a number of Service personnel across a wide spectrum of ranks.**

16. On the other hand, **we were told that no action had been taken against individuals, military or civilian, for failings relating to media handling. Given the catalogue of serious mistakes made, we think this is unacceptable.** We return to this matter in paragraph 21 below.

Organisational weaknesses

17. While it is important that individuals should be held to account, it is more important that the MoD—and the Permanent Joint Headquarters and the Royal Navy in particular—should address the serious problems exposed by this episode. **While security constraints prevent us from making public the exact nature of the weaknesses identified, it is public knowledge that there were weaknesses in intelligence, in communications, in doctrine and in training. There was a lapse in operational focus in the front line, and a widespread failure of situational awareness.**

18. We have reviewed the MoD's action plan in response to the Fulton report. **We are satisfied that, provided all of the many recommendations are implemented, the MoD will have significantly reduced the likelihood of a recurrence and addressed the weaknesses identified by Fulton.** Many of the actions have already been completed, but we intend to monitor progress and shall expect the MoD to report to us when all of the actions have been discharged.

Resources

19. The Secretary of State told the House that Fulton had concluded that the event was not the result of equipment or resource issues.⁹ **We accept that a lack of resources was not the direct cause of the events of 23 March.**

20. **We are concerned to ensure that the MoD's current budgetary uncertainty does not impede the implementation of the action plan.** The Chief of the Defence Staff has assured us that the resources are in place to enable implementation of the action plan.

Media handling

21. The Hall report was published in full on 19 June 2007. The key conclusion was:

We have not been able clearly to identify a single person who in practice took the decision to authorise payment, or a clear moment when that authority was given. That lack of clarity on who was authorised to decide, on who should decide, and on how the decision was taken, is in itself potentially one of the main lessons from the episode. This was a collective failure of judgement or an abstention from judgement, rather than a failure of judgement by any one individual. Many people were consulted or involved, but very few took a clear view, and nobody clearly took control of the issue. Many people could have said no, and nobody did.¹⁰

22. The Secretary of State for Defence told the House that he had accepted the Hall report's recommendations in full.¹¹ Because it is in the public domain, we have not given the Hall report the close attention in this inquiry which we have given to Fulton. We note that the Foreign Affairs Committee considered the media handling in its report on the Foreign Policy Aspects of the Detention of Naval Personnel by the Islamic Republic of Iran, published on 22 July 2007.¹² **It is clear that the decision to allow the Service personnel to sell their stories was a serious mistake and deeply damaging to the reputation of the Royal Navy. The Secretary of State for Defence has accepted responsibility and apologised.¹³ This should not absolve others from blame.**

23. The MoD has provided us with a progress report on its implementation of the recommendations in the Hall report, which had been seen and agreed by the Service Chiefs of Staff. This is published as an appendix to this report. The MoD reports that it has clarified its regulations regarding public communication and contact with the media for both military and civilian personnel; and has made clear that payment is not acceptable where individuals are speaking or writing about their work or experience derived from their service. It also reports that it has increased the involvement of the military in media handling by giving the three single Service Assistant Directors of Public Relations formal responsibilities for news issues, and has increased the military component of the Defence

9 HC Deb, 19 June 2007, col 1255

10 *Report by Tony Hall on Review of Media Access to Personnel*, para 48

11 HC Deb, 19 June 2007, col 1256

12 Sixth Report from the Foreign Affairs Committee, Session 2006–07, *Foreign Policy Aspects of the Detention of Naval Personnel by the Islamic Republic of Iran*, HC 880.

13 HC Deb, 16 April 2007, col 26

Press Office from three to six, out of 27.¹⁴ While we continue to have concerns about the MoD's media operations, we note the progress made in implementing the Hall recommendations and particularly welcome the decision to increase military involvement in media handling.

Conclusion

24. The Fulton report, and the evidence provided to us in support of it, contain a depth of operational detail which it would be damaging to make public. This makes it difficult for us to demonstrate openly the grounds on which we have reached our conclusions. However, we assure the House of Commons, and the public, that we have scrutinised the report thoroughly, and have obtained extensive additional evidence from the MoD. We have written to the Secretary of State for Defence with a number of classified conclusions and recommendations. While the hostage-taking exposed worrying weaknesses, action has been taken to address them. The incident was a national embarrassment, deeply damaging to the reputation of the Royal Navy. It has, however, provided the spur to remedy major weaknesses.

Conclusions and recommendations

1. We commend the Secretary of State for Defence for volunteering to expose the Ministry of Defence to parliamentary scrutiny on this matter. (Paragraph 2)
2. To be asked to conduct an inquiry in secret, and to report on matters which we cannot make public, is highly unusual. (Paragraph 5)
3. We found the MoD's initial response to our inquiry inadequate, and sensed that the Department had not anticipated that we would pursue an inquiry in depth. But, following our strong response, the MoD responded positively to our inquiry and has been helpful both in providing full answers to our questions in writing and in offering high-level briefing. We believe our inquiry has sharpened the MoD's response to the Iran hostage incident. (Paragraph 9)
4. The decision not to publish the Fulton report has led some people to conclude that the whole thing was a whitewash. We can assure the House that this is not the case. The Fulton report was robust in identifying serious weaknesses, and recommended a range of remedial actions. The Government immediately drew up an action plan for implementing these recommendations, and has made good progress towards discharging the actions. (Paragraph 13)
5. The perception that everyone has been let off scot-free for the Iran hostage incident is ill-founded. Whilst it was decided that there were insufficient grounds for courts martial, formal administration action has been taken against a number of Service personnel across a wide spectrum of ranks. (Paragraph 15)
6. We were told that no action had been taken against individuals, military or civilian, for failings relating to media handling. Given the catalogue of serious mistakes made, we think this is unacceptable. (Paragraph 16)
7. While security constraints prevent us from making public the exact nature of the weaknesses identified, it is public knowledge that there were weaknesses in intelligence, in communications, in doctrine and in training. There was a lapse in operational focus in the front line, and a widespread failure of situational awareness. (Paragraph 17)
8. We are satisfied that, provided all of the many recommendations are implemented, the MoD will have significantly reduced the likelihood of a recurrence and addressed the weaknesses identified by Fulton. (Paragraph 18)
9. We accept that a lack of resources was not the direct cause of the events of 23 March. (Paragraph 19)
10. We are concerned to ensure that the MoD's current budgetary uncertainty does not impede the implementation of the action plan. (Paragraph 20)
11. It is clear that the decision to allow the Service personnel to sell their stories was a serious mistake and deeply damaging to the reputation of the Royal Navy. The

Secretary of State for Defence has accepted responsibility and apologised. This should not absolve others from blame. (Paragraph 22)

12. While we continue to have concerns about the MoD's media operations, we note the progress made in implementing the Hall recommendations and particularly welcome the decision to increase military involvement in media handling. (Paragraph 23)
13. The Fulton report, and the evidence provided to us in support of it, contain a depth of operational detail which it would be damaging to make public. This makes it difficult for us to demonstrate openly the grounds on which we have reached our conclusions. However, we assure the House of Commons, and the public, that we have scrutinised the report thoroughly, and have obtained extensive additional evidence from the MoD. We have written to the Secretary of State for Defence with a number of classified conclusions and recommendations. While the hostage-taking exposed worrying weaknesses, action has been taken to address them. The incident was a national embarrassment, deeply damaging to the reputation of the Royal Navy. It has, however, provided the spur to remedy major weaknesses. (Paragraph 24)

Formal Minutes

Tuesday 11 December 2007

Members present:

Mr James Arbuthnot, in the Chair

Mr David S Borrow	Mr Bernard Jenkin
Mr David Crausby	Mr Brian Jenkins
Linda Gilroy	Mr Kevan Jones
Mr David Hamilton	Robert Key
Mr Dai Havard	Willie Rennie

Draft Report (*The Iran hostages incident: the lessons learned*), proposed by the Chairman, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 24 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Fourth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chairman make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

Written evidence was ordered to be reported to the House for printing with the Report.

[Adjourned till Tuesday 8 January at 4.00 pm.]

List of written evidence

Ministry of Defence

Ev 1

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

Session 2005–06

First Report	Armed Forces Bill	HC 747 (HC 1021)
Second Report	Future Carrier and Joint Combat Aircraft Programmes	HC 554 (HC 926)
Third Report	Delivering Front Line Capability to the RAF	HC 557 (HC 1000)
Fourth Report	Costs of peace-keeping in Iraq and Afghanistan: Spring Supplementary Estimate 2005–06	HC 980 (HC 1136)
Fifth Report	The UK deployment to Afghanistan	HC 558 (HC 1211)
Sixth Report	Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts 2004–05	HC 822 (HC 1293)
Seventh Report	The Defence Industrial Strategy	HC 824 (HC 1488)
Eighth Report	The Future of the UK's Strategic Nuclear Deterrent: the Strategic Context	HC 986 (HC 1558)
Ninth Report	Ministry of Defence Main Estimates 2006–07	HC 1366 (HC 1601)
Tenth Report	The work of the Met Office	HC 823 (HC 1602)
Eleventh Report	Educating Service Children	HC 1054 (HC 58)
Twelfth Report	Strategic Export Controls: Annual Report for 2004, Quarterly Reports for 2005, Licensing Policy and Parliamentary Scrutiny	HC 873 (Cm 6954)
Thirteenth Report	UK Operations in Iraq	HC 1241 (HC 1603)
Fourteenth Report	Armed Forces Bill: proposal for a Service Complaints Commissioner	HC 1711 (HC 180)

Session 2006–07

First Report	Defence Procurement 2006	HC 56 (HC 318)
Second Report	Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts 2005–06	HC 57 (HC 376)
Third Report	Costs of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan: Winter Supplementary Estimate 2006–07	HC 129 (HC 317)
Fourth Report	The Future of the UK's Strategic Nuclear Deterrent: the Manufacturing and Skills Base	HC 59 (HC 304)
Fifth Report	The work of the Committee in 2005 and 2006	HC 233 (HC 344)
Sixth Report	The Defence Industrial Strategy: update	HC 177 (HC 481)
Seventh Report	The Army's requirement for armoured vehicles: the FRES programme	HC 159 (HC 511)
Eighth Report	The work of the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory and the funding of defence research	HC 84 (HC 512)
Ninth Report	The Future of the UK's Strategic Nuclear Deterrent: the White Paper	HC 225–I and –II (HC 551)
Tenth Report	Cost of military operations: Spring Supplementary Estimate 2006–07	HC 379 (HC 558)

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Eleventh Report	Strategic Lift	HC 462 (<i>HC1025</i>)
Twelfth Report	Ministry of Defence Main Estimates 2007–08	HC 835 (<i>HC 1026</i>)
Thirteenth Report	UK operations in Afghanistan	HC 408 (<i>HC 1024</i>)
Fourteenth Report	Strategic Export Controls: 2007 Review	HC 117 (<i>Cm 7260</i>)
Fifteenth Report	The work of Defence Estates	HC 535 (<i>HC 109</i>)

Session 2007–08

First Report	UK land operations in Iraq 2007	HC 110
Second Report	Costs of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan: Winter Supplementary Estimate 2007–08	HC 138
Third Report	UK/US Defence Trade Cooperation Treaty	HC 107

Written evidence

Memorandum from the Ministry of Defence

THE HALL REPORT ON MEDIA ACCESS TO PERSONNEL: AN IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

The Committee requested an update on the progress made in implementing the recommendations of Mr Tony Hall's Report on the media's access to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel detained by the Iranians on 23 March 2007.

The detailed Action Plan, in the same format as has been seen previously by the Committee, is attached (annex), with progress (as at 26 November) detailed against each recommendation; it will be noted that each action has a two-star official accountable to the Permanent Secretary for its delivery.

To ensure the closest possible involvement of military expertise in the decision processes, the three single Service Assistant Directors of Public Relations, each of whom already has a direct responsibility to their respective single Service Chief of Staff, have now been given formal responsibilities for news issues, working to the Director of News. The one-star military Director of Public Relations is routinely consulted as well. In addition, the military component of the Defence Press Office is being strengthened as part of a general increase in its capacity: rising from 3 military and 18 civilian press officers (ie 14% uniformed), to a planned 6 military and 21 civilians (ie 23%).

With regards to the issue of the payments to serving personnel, we have clarified our regulations regarding public communication and contact with the media, both for military and civilian personnel within Defence. In particular, we have made clear that payment is not acceptable when individuals are speaking or writing about their work or experience derived from their service. The necessary Defence Instruction was issued at the beginning of August, and will be reinforced by revised Queen's Regulations. These are in the process of being issued and this will be completed early next year. Revised civilian regulations were published in October.

With regards to Mr Hall's other recommendations, action has been taken:

- to codify best practice in clear procedures for dealing with potential crises, with a particular emphasis on ensuring the closest possible coordination with military and policy expertise across the Department;
- to clarify responsibilities, especially the need for national stories, or those of actual or potential controversy, to be dealt with at Ministry level by DGMC;
- to improve our relations with, and mutual understanding of the media.

The Committee will also wish to be aware that this work was discussed with Mr Tony Hall on 9 November. He was very content with the direction being taken and the progress being made in implementing his recommendations.

We are beginning this month a series of exercises and workshops to test and adjust the procedures against potential scenarios, and ensure that they are understood and applied.

As requested by the Committee, this note has been seen and agreed by the Chiefs of Staff.

Nick Gurr
Director General Media & Communications

7 December 2007

Media Access Review—Action Plan

<i>Serial Recommendation</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Target Date</i>	<i>Progress</i>
1	Regulations and Guidance			
a. Serving personnel (military and civilian) should not accept payments for talking to the media or the public about their work	Amend Queen's Regulations to ensure robust and enforceable policy. Include a clause to remind personnel of their responsibilities not to disclose confidential information and to maintain operational security	Director General Media & Comms (DGMC) Director General Service Personnel Policy (DG SP Pol) Director General Civilian Personnel (DGCP)	31 Oct 07	Revised text produced and in process of being issued, to complete early 2008. Action complete.
	Amend Statement of Civilian Personnel Policy to ensure robust and enforceable policy. Include a clause to remind personnel of their responsibilities not to disclose confidential information and to maintain operational security	DGMC DGCP DG SP Pol	30 Sep 07	Revised text published on 1 Oct. Action complete.
	Amend DCI 200/2004. To cover issue of payments for publishing books and articles which fall outside individual work responsibilities and are completed using their private time and resources	DGMC DG SP Pol DGCP	15 Aug 07	Revised instruction (DIN 03-006) issued 8 Aug. Action complete.
	Discuss with the Cabinet Office whether the Civil Service Management Code requires updating	DGCP	31 Oct 07	Cabinet Office advise that they intend to include text saying that Civil Servants should not accept fees for communicating in public or to the media about matters related to their jobs. Action complete.
b. Consider policies to deal with the use of mobile phones, blogs, e-mails and social networking sites		DGMC	30 Sep 07	New rules have been agreed and reflected in revised DIN. Action complete.
2	Future Handling of such Incidents			
a. Total clarity required over where the lead for media handling aspects should lie and the responsibilities of those in supporting roles	Standard Operating Procedures required	DGMC DG Op Pol	19 Oct 07	Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) produced and promulgated on 1 October. Action complete

<i>Serial Recommendation</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Target Date</i>	<i>Progress</i>
b. Detailed early contingency planning is required for media handling ensuring that adequate time is allowed for debriefing, welfare issues and preparation. More deliberate and collective consideration needs to be given to the issues and sensitivities involved				Covered by new SOPs
c. DGMC need to be represented at all key meetings.				Covered by new SOPs
d. Maintain momentum of key meetings right through to the conclusion of the episode				Covered by new SOPs
e. Daily meetings to consider specifically the media handling aspects				Covered by new SOPs
f. Provide clear guidance to families. Bring them together at an early stage to give them clear advice and to ensure that they maintain a unified approach and prepare them for the media attention they will receive	Include in Standard Operating Procedures and provide separate guidance for issue to families	DGMC	19 Oct 07	Covered by new SOPs
g. Involve Press Complaints Commission at an early stage to help protect families				Covered by new SOPs.
h. A clearer policy on the naming of individuals and their families	Update internal MOD policy. Update 'Green Book' guidance on not releasing family details of personnel held hostage	Personnel Director/Info-XD DGMC	12 Oct 07 31 Dec 07	Policy advice submitted to PUS.
3 Media Shielders				
a. Consider whether the MOD has sufficient numbers of adequately trained media shielders to draw on in extreme circumstances		DGMC Front Line Commands (FLCs)	15 Oct 07	Review complete and recommendations agreed. MOD has sufficient media shielders. A set of common standards have been established which are reflected in SOPs and will be incorporated into the training delivered to media officers. Action complete

<i>Serial Recommendation</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Target Date</i>	<i>Progress</i>
	b. Consider roles and responsibilities of the Visiting Officers and media shielders including whether the two groups should come under a single chain of command	DGMC/PJHQ ACDS(Ops) FLCs	15 Oct 07	As above.
4	MOD Press Office			
	a. Consideration should be given to strengthening the MOD Press Office both in terms of absolute numbers and in terms of experience and expertise they can draw on.	DGMC	30 Sept 07	Single Service ADs in D Def PR, in addition to responsibilities to Chiefs of Staff for reputation issues, now also responsible to D News for news media issues. 3 additional military personnel to be transferred into press office from D Def PR. Assistant Director Media Ops made responsible for crisis management planning across DGMC. Additional planning and press office staff being recruited.
	b. The Press Office element of DGMC needs to draw more heavily, routinely and consistently on high level expertise and advice from the Services		31 Dec 07	See above. SOPs include requirement for D News staff to consult other expertise in DGMC.
5	The Relationship between the MOD/Armed Forces and the Media			
	a. Examine ways of improving the relationship between the MOD and the Media to rebuild trust and to improve the MOD's ability to bring the media into its confidence in situations of this kind	DGMC	30 Sep 07	Event at RUSI on 10 Oct to discuss how to improve working relationships. Background briefings re-established. Greater face to face engagement with media at all levels, including IO and SIO on specific subject areas: ongoing action
	b. Investigate possibility of having an informal group of experienced media figures who could be taken into the MOD's confidence in sensitive situations and provide advice on handling	DGMC	31 Oct 07	Will be taken forward on an informal case by case basis through bodies such as the Society of Editors. Tony Hall content with this approach. Action complete.

<i>Serial Recommendation</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Target Date</i>	<i>Progress</i>
	c. MOD to consider calling on the Press Complaints Commission to provide training to its media shielders	DGMC FLCs	31 Dec 07	PCC has agreed to provide briefings to DGMC staff on PCC and in Media Officers Training. Action complete.
	d. Consider how the MOD could help to build up specialist knowledge within the media about Defence and the Armed Forces	DGMC	30 Sep 07	Background briefings for Editors and other senior media reps being arranged. Options to show work and equipment of Armed Forces being explored (eg FOST Thursday War, Warminster Firepower Demo) being pursued. Action complete.