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**ACTION MEMO**

November 5, 2004

FOR:  SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

FROM: Lawrence Di Rita, PDASD for Public Affairs 

SUBJECT: Letter Regarding Minister Hoon

PURPOSE: SecDef Signature

DISCUSSION:


- This letter has been run by Minister Hoon, and he sent additional list of papers to send this to in England.

RECOMMENDATION: SecDef sign letter at TAB 1.

COORDINATION: None

Attachment:  
As stated

Prepared by: Captain David Romley, 697-9312

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OSD 17754-04

ITM

5 Nov 04



THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

NOV 8 2004

Editor  
**Daily Telegraph**  
One Canada Square  
Canary Wharf, London  
E14 5DT, United Kingdom

To the Editor:

Your article ("Hoon Left out of Loop by US over Black Watch," November 3, 2004") left the incorrect impression that I was aware, when I met with Defence Minister Hoon in Romania, of a pending request by the Commander of the Multi-National Force in Iraq to reposition British forces in the country, and that I chose not to inform Mr. Hoon.

When I met with Minister Hoon, I myself had not been apprised of the discussions that were taking place at the military to military level between the commanders in Iraq on this point.

Properly, commanders representing the more than 30 coalition partners in Iraq frequently consult on tactical matters such as the positioning of forces. These issues do not always come to the attention ~~of~~ civilian political leaders, nor do I believe they must.

I share Minister Hoon's view that tactical issues of this nature can often be handled by commanders in the field. As a former legislator, I understand that parliaments and legislatures may be interested in such matters. However, this does not mean that it would be appropriate for commanders to feel obliged to involve civilian political leadership in every tactical decision they make.

Our commander in Iraq has almost daily contact with the military representatives that serve in liaison positions from over 30 nations. Needless to say, that is the appropriate level to handle the vast majority of the military issues that arise.

Sincerely,



OSD 17754-04

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8 Nov 04

5 Nov 04