

“UK representations to the Iraqi authorities on (a) the fairness of the trial of Saddam Hussein (b) the use of the death sentence and (c) the conduct of his execution, between 1 October and 31 December, 2006.”

DIGEST

1. In a communication between officials on 15 October 2006 it was recorded that:

“The Ambassador (in Baghdad) took the opportunity this afternoon of a private meeting with President Talabani to raise the death penalty.”

2. In a document on 3 November 2006 it is noted that:

“The FCO has made the UK’s position (on the death penalty) clear to the Iraqi Prime Minister, the Iraqi President and the President of the Iraqi Higher Tribunal on a number of occasions.”

“We have made very clear to the Iraqi authorities that the United Kingdom opposes the use of the death penalty in all cases and circumstances.”

“We have repeatedly and consistently made our opposition to the use of the death penalty clear to the Government of Iraq.”

“We have made it clear to the Government of Iraq that independence of the judiciary is paramount.”

3. Reports of a meeting on 6 November 2006 with a senior Iraqi official (or should I say Abdul Mehdi?) show that the Ambassador in Baghdad:

“underlined our view, this was an Iraqi process dealing with an Iraqi issue, but that international attention would remain focused on the independence of the judiciary”

4. In a communication between officials on 16 November 2006 about possible interference in the trial it was recorded that:

“Her Majesty’s Ambassador (in Baghdad) has raised our concerns with Vice President Mehdi”

5. In a communication between officials on 21 November 2006 it was stated that:

“Her Majesty’s Ambassador (in Baghdad) made the point of principle that interference with the judiciary is not acceptable at the earliest opportunity...with Vice President Mehdi, and will now be doing so at the highest level with President Talabani tonight.”

6. In a report from the Embassy later on 21 November 2006 the Ambassador’s action was confirmed:

“I told Talabani that he knew what importance we attached to the independence of the judiciary.”

7. In a report dated 31 December 2006 from the Embassy in Baghdad about the execution of Saddam Hussein on 31 December 2006, it was noted that:

“I was able to see Foreign Minister, Dr Hoshyar Zebari, on the eve of the execution, when I took the opportunity to remind him of the UK’s and the EU’s opposition to the death penalty.”

8. A communication between officials in Baghdad on 3rd January 2007 also records information that falls within the scope of this request.

“ I (the Charge d’ Affairs) have raised UK/EU policy on the death penalty four times during the past week. With Foreign Minister Zebari on 29 December, with the Minister for National Security, Sherwin al Wa’illi on 30 December...”