



**THE CABINET OFFICE**  
LONDON SW1A 2AS

From the National Security Adviser

25 November 2010

*Dear Mr Tyne,*

**CONSOLIDATED GUIDANCE FOR INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS**

Thank you for your letter to the Prime Minister of 6 October 2010, which has been passed to me for reply.

I am pleased to hear that you welcome the Government's publication of the "Consolidated Guidance to Intelligence Officers and Service Personnel on the Detention and Interviewing of Detainees Overseas, and on the Passing and Receipt of Intelligence Relating to Detainees".

The Government stands firmly against torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment. We do not condone it, nor do we ask others to do it on our behalf. The Guidance makes clear that intelligence officers and service personnel at all times act in compliance with our domestic and international law obligations and our values as a nation.

The Guidance makes plain that in a situation where it is known or believed that torture will take place, officers must not proceed. The Guidance also makes clear that if officers are in any situation in which they are unsure about levels of risk, they should consult senior personnel and, if necessary, Ministers. Where difficult decisions are faced it is right that Ministers, who are accountable, should have the ultimate responsibility. Ministers take this responsibility extremely seriously.

Where the situation is less clear, where we cannot be certain but assess there to be a serious risk that a detainee will be tortured, the starting position is that we would not proceed with action. But, as I hope you understand, we cannot

