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Andrew Tyrie MP
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Dear Andrew

EXTRAORDINARY RENDITION

Thank you for your letter of 8 October 2007, concerning Extraordinary Rendition. You ask if I am in agreement with Lord Falconer on issues covered in his reply to you dated 27 June 2007. I am writing to confirm that I am.

You ask if I agree that it is right for terrorist suspects to be transported to third countries for the purpose of interrogation, or to be held. I do not agree and you will be aware that in the two cases in 1998 where the UK agreed to assist the US Government to transfer persons to the US it was for the sole purpose of bringing them to justice.

My colleague Dr. Kim Howells reiterated the UK Government position in the adjournment debate on 26 June 2007. We have not approved a policy of facilitating the transfer of individuals through UK territory to places where there are substantial grounds to believe that they would face a real risk of torture.

You ask for confirmation that we do not agree with secret imprisonment. Let me reassure you that we do not. The UK Government does not allow people to be removed from the UK except by recognised formal procedures such as extradition and deportation.

Equally, let me reassure you that we would not assist in rendering a person who would be held in the circumstances apparently applying to Abu Zubayda. Were we asked to assist in rendering a detainee through UK territory or airspace, we would consider whether or not our assistance would be lawful. In deciding whether to assist, we would consider the full range of our obligations under domestic and international law including, but not limited to, the prohibition on torture.

Finally, you ask what impact "the UK's unwillingness to condemn the US' rendition / secret detention policy" has on hearts and minds in the Muslim world. The UK has in fact repeatedly said that the fight against terrorism must be conducted in full compliance with the rule of law and in accordance with our values. The UK supported the decision of the US Government to bring its high value detainees into publicly acknowledged detention and to grant the International Committee of the Red Cross

access to them. The UK abides by its obligations under international law and expects other countries to comply with their obligations also.

Yours ever,

Jack

JACK STRAW