



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301

JUL 7 2006

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS  
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
UNDER SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE  
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS  
ASSISTANT SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE  
GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
DIRECTOR, OPERATIONAL TEST AND EVALUATION  
INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
ASSISTANTS TO THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
DIRECTOR, ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT  
DIRECTOR, PROGRAM ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION  
DIRECTOR, NET ASSESSMENT  
DIRECTOR, FORCE TRANSFORMATION  
DIRECTORS OF THE DEFENSE AGENCIES  
DIRECTORS OF THE DOD FIELD ACTIVITIES

SUBJECT: Application of Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions to the  
Treatment of Detainees in the Department of Defense

The Supreme Court has determined that Common Article 3 to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 applies as a matter of law to the conflict with Al Qaeda. The Court found that the military commissions as constituted by the Department of Defense are not consistent with Common Article 3.

It is my understanding that, aside from the military commission procedures, existing DoD orders, policies, directives, execute orders, and doctrine comply with the standards of Common Article 3 and, therefore, actions by DoD personnel that comply with such issuances would comply with the standards of Common Article 3. For example, the following are consistent with the standards of Common Article 3: U.S. Army Field Manual 34-52, "Intelligence Interrogation," September 28, 1992; DoD Directive 3115.09, "DoD Intelligence Interrogation, Detainee Debriefings and Tactical Questioning," November 3, 2005; DoD Directive 2311.01E, "DoD Law of War Program," May 9, 2006; and DoD Instruction 2310.08E, "Medical Program Support for Detainee Operations," June 6, 2006. In addition, you will recall the President's prior directive that "the United States Armed Forces shall continue to treat detainees humanely," humane treatment being the overarching requirement of Common Article 3.

You will ensure that all DoD personnel adhere to these standards. In this regard, I request that you promptly review all relevant directives, regulations, policies, practices, and procedures under your purview to ensure that they comply with the standards of Common Article 3.

OSD 10735-06



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Your reply confirming completion of this review should be submitted by a Component Head, General/Flag Officer, or SES member, including a reply of "reviewed and no effect" where applicable, to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (DASD) for Detainee Affairs, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, no later than three weeks from the date of this memorandum. The DASD for Detainee Affairs may be reached at (703) 697-4602.

The text of Common Article 3 follows:

In the case of armed conflict not of an international character occurring in the territory of one of the High Contracting Parties, each Party to the conflict shall be bound to apply, as a minimum, the following provisions:

(1) Persons taking no active part in the hostilities, including members of armed forces who have laid down their arms and those placed *hors de combat* by sickness, wounds, detention, or any other cause, shall in all circumstances be treated humanely, without any adverse distinction founded on race, colour, religion or faith, sex, birth or wealth, or any other similar criteria.

To this end, the following acts are and shall remain prohibited at any time and in any place whatsoever with respect to the above-mentioned persons:

(a) violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture;

(b) taking of hostages;

(c) outrages upon personal dignity, in particular, humiliating and degrading treatment;

(d) the passing of sentences and the carrying out of executions without previous judgment pronounced by a regularly constituted court affording all the judicial guarantees which are recognized as indispensable by civilized peoples.

(2) The wounded and sick shall be collected and cared for.

An impartial humanitarian body, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, may offer its services to the Parties to the conflict.

The Parties to the conflict should further endeavour to bring into force, by means of special agreements, all or part of the other provisions of the present Convention.

The application of the preceding provisions shall not affect the legal status of the Parties to the conflict.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gordon England". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.