



THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
2000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-2000

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The Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3214

Dear Representative Maloney:

Thank you for your letter of October 18, 2007. Secretary Gates asked me to reply on his behalf.

I appreciate your query about articles in the British newspaper Daily Mail and New York Times concerning comments by Ms. Debra Cagan. Both articles misrepresent what transpired during a meeting between Ms. Cagan and six Members of the British Parliament on September 11, 2007. The statement on Iran reported by the Daily Mail and New York Times does not represent the Department of Defense's views, and I am confident Ms. Cagan did not make the statement attributed to her in the articles. Debra Cagan is a career State Department official, detailed to the Department of Defense. Ms. Cagan has assured me that she never made the statement attributed to her in the Daily Mail and New York Times articles, and I believe based on her background, position, and my knowledge of her professionalism, that she would not make such a statement. In addition to falsely attributing this remark to Ms. Cagan, most of the rest of the articles were inaccurate as well.

The Members of the British Parliament who visited Ms. Cagan in September received a routine briefing that Ms. Cagan has been presenting to Coalition partners an average of twice per week over the last year. Iran was discussed, but the topics were limited to quotes from the Petraeus-Crocker report on Basra, concerning the effect of a UK withdrawal. I understand that Ms. Cagan declined to answer questions about the Iran nuclear program or about speculation concerning plans for military action against Iran as being outside her purview, other than to quote President Bush.

Thank you for the opportunity to clarify this matter.

Sincerely,

Eric S. Edelman

cc: Congressman Michael Honda

