



## Media Transcription Service

(Partners: Susan & David Stott)

26 Sandon Road,

Hillside, Southport. PR8 4QH

Phone/fax: 01704 567838

E-mail: [mts@gn.apc.org](mailto:mts@gn.apc.org)

**The Media Monitoring Service for  
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LWT "Jonathan Dimbleby"

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### **G Hoon/nukes:**

*"...You said (at) the Defence Select Committee that in the right conditions you would be willing to use nuclear weapons against, among others, Iraq. Would that be if they used biological or chemical weapons against British troops? Is that the kind of condition? ...If Britain were to use ...one nuclear weapon you would in effect...have destroyed Iraq (and) the countries around...could very easily be horrifically affected by nuclear fallout. I put it to you that, in reality, no British government would ever, against the threat that you've described, deploy that weapon of mass annihilation? ..."*

**Extracts from an interview with the Defence Secretary.**

**(Extracts from 8 minutes)**

Geoff Hoon MP (Defence Secretary):

"Let me make it clear that (it's) longstanding British government policy that, if our forces, our people, were threatened by weapons of mass destruction, we would reserve the right to use appropriate, proportionate responses, which might, might (repeated and emphasised) in extreme circumstances include the use of nuclear weapons."

Presenter (Jonathan Dimbleby):

"In the most recent Strategic Review, you said that Britain would only respond with nuclear weapons against a non-nuclear state if that state was allied to a nuclear state which had used nuclear weapons. Now, this is a very significant departure (unless?) you clarify it when you say we would respond if...Iraq used weapons of mass destruction with nuclear weapons?"

Geoff Hoon MP:

"I said if the conditions were satisfied and they're precisely the conditions that we set out in the Strategic Defence Review, which is wholly consistent with the Government's longstanding policy."

Presenter:

“So you would only use nuclear weapons against Iraq if Iraq was allied to a nuclear state which had already used nuclear weapons or if Iraq had used nuclear weapons?”

Geoff Hoon MP:

“No, weapons of mass destruction...”

Presenter:

“I’m sorry, then this is a really big distinction here because what the Strategic Review is very careful to say - and of course that is the longstanding policy of all governments since Britain acquired nuclear weapons - is that there would only be a nuclear response to a nuclear attack. You’re saying there could be a nuclear response to an attack with weapons of mass destruction - namely, for instance, biological and chemical weapons?”

Geoff Hoon MP:

“I think you’ll find, if you look elsewhere in the Strategic Defence Review and range a little more widely, you’ll find that actually we make precisely this point: that if there is a threat to our deployed forces, if they come under attack by weapons of mass destruction and by that specifically chemical, biological weapons, then we would reserve the option, in an appropriate case subject to the conditions that I referred to when I was talking to the Select Committee, to use nuclear weapons.”

Presenter:

“You also told the Select Committee that you doubted whether Saddam Hussein would be deterred by that threat. If you did then use British nuclear weapons against Iraq because he was not deterred, you would in effect be punishing the people of Iraq for what Saddam Hussein had done with annihilation?”

Geoff Hoon MP:

“What we would be doing is defending ourselves and the British people against a threat from Saddam Hussein. I said in extreme conditions of self-defence we would need to do that. I’m not simply, you’re suggesting somehow that we’re talking about retaliation. We are talking about reserving the right to protect our own people against an attack by Saddam Hussein.”

Presenter:

“How do you protect your own people if Saddam Hussein is not deterred and therefore launches a biological or chemical attack?”

Geoff Hoon MP:

“The fact is that states of concern like Iraq, we have real concerns because we do not believe that he cares sufficiently about his own people. He has, after all, used chemical weapons against his own people and would not therefore be deterred from using such weapons against the people of the United Kingdom or our allies. (Presenter attempts to interrupt) But if he were to do that, then clearly if that threat was a continuing one, we would reserve the right proportionately in those extreme conditions to defend ourselves against those attacks by the use of the weapons that we have available.”

Presenter:

“But you would only use Britain’s weapon of mass destruction after an attack by Saddam Hussein using weapons of mass destruction?”

Geoff Hoon MP:

“Clearly if there were strong evidence of an imminent attack, if we knew that an attack was about to occur and we could use our weapons to protect against it, I can conceive of a situation where - your question isn’t quite precise but - generally speaking what we would be seeking to do is to leave Saddam Hussein unsure as to our intentions therefore he would not be certain in his own mind what response the British Government would make to an attack using weapons of mass destruction against the British people.”

Presenter:

“If Britain was to use its own weapon of mass destruction, one nuclear weapon, you would in effect be obliterating the lives of hundreds of thousands of people in Iraq. You would have destroyed Iraq. The countries around: Turkey, in the Gulf, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Israel could very easily be horrifically affected by nuclear fallout. I put it to you that, in reality, no British government would ever against the threat that you’ve described, deploy that weapon of mass annihilation?”

Geoff Hoon MP:

“That is why these are in only the most extreme circumstances where there is a direct threat to our forces and to our people from weapons of mass destruction. But it is important that we do not rule that out. It is important that we do not allow an appalling dictator like Saddam Hussein to know precisely what our response might be.”

Presenter:

“...Let’s now bring in some of our audience....”

Female member of the audience (Helen John???):

“Mr Hoon, can you not grasp the fact that, just by making it so clear that you are prepared to repeat President Bush’s determined statement to use nuclear weapons, that you and President Bush have issued the greatest terrorist threat to humankind? And Mr Dimbleby has spelled it out to you if you failed to understand before the level of annihilation that you will be inflicting on millions of innocent civilian lives. There’s no justification for this at all plus the fact you have to remember that when you joined with America in the first attack on Iraq, both the United States and the United Kingdom used

deadly radioactive depleted uranium weapons, which are still causing vast areas of the country of Iraq to be radioactive, with all the genetic and horrendously genocidal impact that it's having on the people of Iraq."

Presenter:

"Two points there, Secretary of State."

Geoff Hoon MP:

"Let me make it clear: the first responsibility of a Secretary of State for Defence and of a British government is to defend the interests of the British people and to defend the interests of Britain's Armed Forces and that does mean that we have to keep people like Saddam Hussein unsure as to our response. But I accept - as I just accepted in answer to Mr Dimpleby's question - that these are extreme measures that we would only use in the circumstances where our people were threatened by weapons of mass destruction (questioner attempts to interrupt) and, in those circumstances, we must reserve the right to be able to use them (so that) it's clear that Saddam Hussein will...not know what our intentions are."

Questioner:

"In this area, you have Menwith Hill. In North Yorkshire, you have Fylingdales - two bases that are putting the lives of British people at risk in this country because they're being prepared by stealth with you giving evasive answers about whether or not we have been asked to allow them to be developed for 'Star Wars'. These bases will have incredible repercussions for the people of the rest of the Planet. They will give America domination of the Planet and they will have incredible impacts on people's lives of this country, endangering people to a level that has never happened before. Your policies are just wrong!"

Geoff Hoon MP:

"On the contrary, those bases are there doing an invaluable job protecting the interests of the British people - as they have done over a very, very long period of time - and let me make it quite clear to you - I'm not giving you in any way an evasive response - we have had no request whatsoever from the United States to use those bases for any further purpose. But if we did receive such a request, let me repeat it again, we would use those bases to defend the best interests of the British people."

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Transcribed by: Susan Stott, M. T. S., 26 Sandon Road, Hillside, Southport. PR8 4QH