

**IMMEDIATE**

**From : Rear Admiral Nick Wilkinson, CB**

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**To ALL EDITORS**

**PROTECTIVE COUNTERMEASURES IN IRAQ**

**I have been asked to provide advice on certain aspects of current countermeasures used to protect British personnel in Iraq (and indeed in some other theatres of operations). These are topical at present in particular following the recent press conference given by the family of the late Fusilier Gordon Gentle.**

My advice principally concerns the availability of electronic countermeasures against improvised explosive devices placed by anti-Coalition groups to target British forces and others with or linked to them.

The existence of such electronic countermeasures in general is widely in the public domain, being known to have been used for example in Northern Ireland in the 80s/90s, and more recently by other countries, such as Pakistan. There is therefore no reason, other possibly than reminding hostile groups in Iraq of this capability, for not publishing that such countermeasures in general are available to British forces in that country.

However, there is a constant dynamic in the development of the threat and of the counter- and counter-countermeasures. Hostile groups would indeed benefit in their planning, targeting, development of counter-countermeasures, and execution, if details were published of the UK Force Protection systems in use, or speculation about future developments, for example capabilities, frequencies, siting, ranges, platforms, deployment patterns and techniques, etc. This applies similarly to the details of non-electronic countermeasures.

Could you please therefore remind your staff of the real and serious danger to life of publishing any such details, and that I am always available to advise them on specifics, if they are considering any matters in this highly sensitive area.

Nick Wilkinson