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THE PRIME MINISTER

7 January 2016

Dear Andrew,

Thank you for your letter of 2 November about the upcoming Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC) review of the recent military strike which targeted Reyaad Khan in Syria.

A Memorandum of Understanding between the ISC and the Government was agreed and published by the ISC in their annual report on 25 November 2014. This memorandum remains extant and includes details of the arrangements for oversight of operational matters as set out in Section 2(3) of the Justice and Security Act 2013.

As I made clear in my statement to the House, the Attorney General was consulted and advised that there would be a clear legal basis for action under international law. By long-standing convention, reflected in the Cabinet Manual, the content of Law Officers' advice is not disclosed outside Government without the consent of the Law Officers. As the Attorney General explained in his oral evidence to the Justice Select Committee of 15 September 2014, this aspect of the convention should be adhered to in this case.

While, for obvious reasons, we do not comment on specific Rules of Engagement, the use of the UK's Reaper Remotely Piloted Air Systems adhere to the same Rules of Engagement that govern other forms of military activity. We always comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law, following the principles of distinction, humanity, proportionality and military necessity.

With regards to the final two points in your letter, I agreed to consider what role the ISC might have in scrutinising the events leading up to the strike and I have already met with the Chair, Dominic Grieve MP, for an initial discussion. We hope to make an announcement in due course, once the remit of the review has been decided.

Thank you, once again, for your letter.

Yours,
David.

The Right Honourable Andrew Tyrie MP