

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 18, 2007

The Honorable Robert Gates
Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Mr. Secretary,

We are writing to inquire about comments allegedly made by Debra Cagan, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Coalition Affairs.

According to the attached September 29, 2007, article from the *Daily Mail* ("I hate all Iranians, U.S. aide tells MPs"), a group of six members of the British Parliament met with Deputy Assistant Secretary Cagan at the Pentagon to discuss coalition efforts regarding Iraq and Iran. During the discussion, Deputy Assistant Secretary Cagan allegedly said "I hate all Iranians." Roger Cohen, in a *New York Times* op-ed ("Coalition of the Reluctant", October 15, 2007), noted that Deputy Assistant Secretary Cagan's reputation for bluntness may be hindering relations with important allies.

Although the *Daily Mail* article quotes a Pentagon official as denying that Deputy Assistant Secretary Cagan made this remark, in light of the ongoing diplomatic situation regarding Iran, we believe that an additional explanation of this incident would be helpful. As we are sure you can appreciate, such a comment would be insulting to Iranian-Americans and to those living in Iran who would welcome democratic reforms. Therefore, we respectfully request that you clarify what was said in this meeting regarding Iran and Iranians.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Member of Congress


MICHAEL HONDA
Member of Congress