

# Captured UK sailors were not in Iraqi waters, British Documents confirm

US and UK redefined borders to make false claims against Iran

By [Global Research](#)

Global Research, April 19, 2008

[IRNA](#) 17 April 2008

Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [Law and Justice](#), [US NATO War](#)

[Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [IRAN: THE NEXT WAR?](#)

Fifteen British sailors and marines captured by Iran last year were not in Iraq's maritime territory as the UK government claimed, official documents released under the Freedom of Information Act confirm.

The sailors were apprehended in March 2007 because the US-led coalition designated a sea boundary for Iran's territorial waters without telling the Iranians where it was, according to internal Ministry of Defence (MoD) briefing papers.

At the time, Defense Secretary Des Browne repeatedly insisted to parliament that the military personnel from their mother ship HMS Cornwall were seized in Iraqi waters.

A fictitious map claiming to show a line in the Persian Gulf called the "Iraq/Iran Territorial Water Boundary" was also produced in a televised briefing by Vice-Admiral Charles Style, the Deputy Chief of the Defense Staff.

But according to the partially censored documents obtained by the Times newspaper Thursday, the arrests took place in waters that are not internationally agreed as Iraqi territory.

The so-called dividing line was invented by the US-UK coalition occupying Iraq, without telling Iranian authorities about their unilateral designation, the daily said.

A report, addressed to Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Stirrup, the Chief of the Defense Staff, blames the incident on the absence of an agreed boundary and a failure to coordinate between Iraq, Iran and the coalition.

It also reveals that it was the British who apparently raised their weapons first before the Iranian gunboats came alongside the British boats carrying the sailors.

A subsequent all-party parliamentary inquiry described the incident as a "national disaster" for the UK.

Former Defense Secretary Lord Heseltine said the MoD was humiliated at every step, including the permission for selling sailors' stories for propaganda purposes.

[\*\*Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page\*\*](#)

[\*\*Become a Member of Global Research\*\*](#)

Articles by: [Global Research](#)

**Disclaimer:** The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)

[www.globalresearch.ca](http://www.globalresearch.ca) contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)