

OFFICIAL REPORT (HANSARD)

Wednesday, May 2, 2007

Afghanistan

Ms. Ruby Dhalla (Brampton—Springdale, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, chaos, confusion and cover up and now access to information documents show that the government tried to suppress a photograph of Afghan detainees a year ago.

In May 2006 a photojournalist took pictures of 10 suspected insurgents captured by the Canadian military. Canadian military lawyers told him that the photos could not be published because they would violate the Geneva convention.

Why is the government's respect for human rights and the Geneva convention so selective?

Hon. Helena Guergis (Secretary of State (Foreign Affairs and International Trade) (Sport), CPC):

Mr. Speaker, again, I can confirm for the member that Canadians are respecting their obligations under international law. Canadian brave men and women are doing an excellent job in Afghanistan. We have relationships with the Government of Afghanistan and the human rights commission to ensure there is an investigation. We will work closely with them.

Ms. Ruby Dhalla (Brampton—Springdale, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, make no mistake that on this side of the House we support our Canadian brave men and women, but we must tell the truth. Access to information documents show that even a National Defence spokesman has questioned why the photo was suppressed. He has said, “The military should not play cat and mouse on this one because success lies in openness”.

Could anyone on the frontbench tell the—

The Speaker:

The hon. the Secretary of State.

Hon. Helena Guergis (Secretary of State (Foreign Affairs and International Trade) (Sport), CPC):

Mr. Speaker, there have been many allegations. I remind the hon. member that there were five reports on Afghanistan, four of them were delivered to the previous Liberal government, with which it did absolutely nothing. There were general allegations within all of those reports. There are no specific details or specific evidence to support any of the allegations made by Taliban alleged terrorist detainees.

Why do the hon. member and the opposition parties continue to take the word of the Taliban detainees over our Canadian brave men and women?