



10 DOWNING STREET  
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[www.number10.gov.uk](http://www.number10.gov.uk)

20 July 2009

Dear Mr Bainbridge

Thank you for your e-mail of 2 June asking for the number of telephone conversations that took place between the Prime Minister and the President of the United States between 27 June 2007 and 20 January 2009.

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The information you have requested is being withheld as it falls under the exemption in section 27(1)(a) of the Act. In applying this exemption we have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosing the information. The annex to this letter sets out the exemption in full.

We acknowledge that there is a general public interest in information about the Prime Minister's contacts with other world leaders including the President of the United States.

However, on balance we consider that the public interest factors in favour of non-disclosure of a list giving the timings of all those conversations outweigh those in favour of disclosure of the information you have requested.

It is important that the Prime Minister is able to undertake a dialogue with other world leaders at the time of his choosing and that he can hold free and frank discussions with other world leaders on a range of issues.

Disclosure of the details of all private discussions between the Prime Minister and the President of the United States of America, and other world leaders, is likely to erode the basis of trust on which such discussions are conducted. This in turn would result in those exchanges being inhibited in the future which in turn will affect the Prime Minister's ability to promote the UK's interests abroad.

I cannot therefore provide you with the information you have requested.

Yours sincerely

*N S Howard*

**NICHOLAS HOWARD**

Mr S Bainbridge



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If you are unhappy with the level of service you have received from this office in relation to any aspect of your request, you may ask for an internal review.

You should contact:

Sue Gray  
Director  
Cabinet Office  
70 Whitehall  
London  
SW1A 2AS

Email: [foiteam@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:foiteam@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk)

You should note that the Cabinet Office will not normally accept an application for internal review if it is received more than two months after the date that the reply was issued.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF