



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Zimbabwe Unit
Africa Directorate
King Charles Street
London
SW1A 2AH

11 March 2009

Our reference: 0978-08

Mr Stephen Nash

By email: request-4613-679cf11c@whatdotheyknow.com

Dear Mr Nash,

You requested an internal review of the decision, conveyed to you in a letter sent by email of 2 February 2009, not to disclose information the FCO holds "*on Mr Nicholas Van Hoogstraten especially in relation to his companies in Zimbabwe*" under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I have conducted a full examination of all the material, both released and exempted, of relevance to your request. I have concluded the following.

Search for information

Searches for information were conducted electronically and by hand in FCO archives. Searches for material were conducted by all relevant departments including in Zimbabwe Unit and in the British Embassy in Harare. I am therefore content that a reasonable search was carried out in relation to your request.

Use of exemptions

We withheld information under section 35(1)(a) and section 40(2) and (3). In our letter of reply of 2 February we explained we were withholding information under Section 35(1)(a) – formulation of government policy, our letter explained that the public interest test had been applied. The information in question relates to an area of government policy on which discussions are ongoing and decisions are yet to be made, these factors outweighed the public interest in releasing the information, we still believe this to be the case.

As was explained in our previous letter Section 40(2) and (3) do not require us to apply the public interest test, we maintain that the information we hold is not releasable under this exemption.

If you are not content with the outcome of this Internal Review you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

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

Yours sincerely,

Geoffrey Harrison

Zimbabwe Unit