



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

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SIT/4/1

Mr Martin Butcher

E-mail: request-9762-7b4623ad@whatdotheyknow.com

3 August 2009

Dear Mr Butcher,

1. Your correspondence dated 22 July has been considered to be a request for information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000. You requested the following information:

“Thank you for your reply of May 14. I have been rather lax in not replying sooner. i would like to thank you for drawing my attention to the information from Hansard.

In addition, are you able to provide a list of the subwogs?”

2. The information you have requested falls within the scope of the following qualified exemptions under the Act:

Section 24 (National Security)

Section 27 (International Relations)]

3. These exemptions are qualified exemptions and, as such, it has been necessary to decide whether, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

4. The Section 24 exemption has been used to withhold information where release would be prejudicial to national security and the balance of public interest is in favour of withholding the information. There is a public interest which favours the disclosure of information that might broaden an understanding of the measures that MOD takes to ensure that the nuclear deterrent is safely managed and those taken to counter the threat of nuclear proliferation. However, the UK is committed to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and other international agreements. We conclude that the information held still has the potential to prejudice the security of the country and that the

public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

5. The Section 27 exemption has been used to withhold information concerning our working relationship with another state. Release would demonstrate openness and transparency, and frank provision of information to the public. However, releasing information may harm relations with the US. We conclude that the balance of the public interest favours withholding the information.

6. If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact me in the first instance. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Head of Corporate Information, 6th Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

7. If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.gov.uk>.

Yours sincerely,

Richard John

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