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Ms Maire Daley

By email:

request-22608-5720832b@whatdotheyknow.com

2 December 2009

Dear Ms Daley,

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST: 0943-09

I write in relation to your Freedom of Information Act request dated 04 November 2009 in which you requested;

“any documentation, correspondence or related material detailing the financial cost of British military assistance to the Colombian government annually for the years 2006, 2007 and 2008.”

I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office does hold information relevant to your request. Whilst we do not provide military assistance to Colombia, UK co-operation with the Colombian Armed Forces in 2006-8 comprised three strands – counter-narcotics, humanitarian demining and human rights awareness training. I enclose a document that sets out the UK's total financial assistance to Colombia for these three years, including our contributions through the European Union and Inter-American Development Bank.

This document does not include details of financial assistance under the counter-narcotics strand of co-operation. We do not provide any details of our counter-narcotics work in Colombia. To do so could endanger the lives of personnel involved in this work, and our decision has been upheld by the Parliamentary Ombudsman. The information is exempt under section 23(1) of the Act (information supplied by, or relating to, bodies dealing with security matters). Section 23 (1) is an absolute exemption and does not require the application of the public interest test in favour of disclosure.

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint or request a review of our decision, you should write to me at the above address. You have 40 working days to do so from the date of our response.

If you are not content with the outcome of the 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

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours faithfully

Catherine Shaw

Assistant Desk Officer Andean Section

South America Team

Foreign and Commonwealth Office