



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Americas Directorate
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Dr Emma L Briant

request-639173-d2e50e0b@whatdotheyknow.com

29th January 2020

Dear Dr Emma L Briant

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: FOI2020/00101

Thank you for your email of 27th January asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

Guest list and any briefings given to the foreign minister or correspondence regarding the Reception with Republican Political Operatives at the Ambassador's Residence, mentioned in the document released as part of FOI request 1122-19.

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed the search for the information which you requested. I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant to your request.

Please find attached the information that the FCO can release to you.

Some information you requested is withheld under the following exemptions of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA):

Section 27 – international relations
Section 40 – personal information

Section 27

Section 27(1) (a) of the FOIA recognises the need to protect information that would be likely to prejudice relations between the United Kingdom and other states if it was disclosed. In this case, the release of information could harm our relations with the United States of America.

The application of s.27 (1) (a) requires us to consider the public interest test arguments in favour of releasing and withholding the information. We acknowledge that releasing information on this issue would increase public knowledge about our relations with the United States of America. However, s.27 (1) (a) recognises that the effective conduct of international relations depends upon maintaining trust and confidence between governments. If the United Kingdom does not maintain this trust and confidence, its ability to protect and promote UK interests through international relations will be hampered, which will not be in the public interest. The disclosure of information detailing our relationship with the US Government could potentially damage the bilateral relationship between the UK and the United States of America. This would reduce the UK government's ability to protect and promote UK interests through its relations with the United States of America, which would not be in the public interest. For these reasons we consider that, the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

Section 40

Some of the information you have requested is personal data relating to third parties, the disclosure of which would contravene one of the data protection principles. In such circumstances sections 40(2) and 40 (3A) (a) of the Freedom of Information Act apply. In this case, our view is that disclosure would breach the data protection principle that personal data should be processed lawfully, fairly and transparently. It is the fairness aspect of this principle, which, in our view, would be breached by disclosure. In such circumstances, s.40 confers an absolute exemption on disclosure. There is, therefore, no public interest test to apply.

Once an FOI request is answered, it is considered to be in the public domain. To promote transparency, we may now publish the response and any material released on gov.uk in the [FOI releases](#) section. All personal information in the letter will be removed before publishing.

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If you would like a review of our decision, or if you wish to make a complaint, please write to the Central FOI Unit, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Room WH2.177, King Charles Street, London, SW1A 2AH. E-mail: foi-dpa.pmcs@fco.gov.uk. You have 40 working days to do so from the date of this letter.

You can apply directly to the Information Commissioner. However, the Information Commissioner will not normally make a decision unless you have first exhausted the

complaints procedure provided by the FCO. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely,

Americas Directorate



For information about how the FCO handles personal information please see our [Personal Information Charter](#)