



Ministry
of Defence

Ministry of Defence
Main Building
Whitehall
London SW1A 2HB
United Kingdom

Ref: FOI2019/13768

Telephone:

E-mail: xxxxxxxxx
(outgoing group e-
mail address)

Dr Emma L Briant

request-630464-
d3328c6e@whatdotheyknow.com

22 January 2020

Dear Dr Briant,

Thank you for your email of 27 December 2019 requesting the following information:

“all correspondence related to the leaking of the minutes of a meeting at the NATO Centre of Excellence for Strategic Communications in Riga on 18th-19th February 2015... any correspondence, investigation or reports produced at the MOD regarding the leak and a copy of the original undoctored minutes if held by the MOD (or details of what was altered)”.

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that some information in the scope of your request is held.

The information you have requested can be found at annex A, but some of the information falls entirely within the scope of the absolute exemptions provided for at sections 40 (Personal Data) and qualified exemptions provided for at sections 27 (International Relations) of the FOIA and has been redacted.

Section 40(2) has been applied to some of the information in order to protect personal information as governed by the Data Protection Act 2018. Section 40 is an absolute exemption and there is therefore no requirement to consider the public interest in making a decision to withhold the information.

Section 27(1)(a) has been applied because some of the information has the potential to adversely affect relations with our allies. The balance of the public interest test concluded that whilst release would increase public understanding and confidence in the relations the United Kingdom has with other international states in its assistance with operations the balance of the public interest lay in withholding this information you desire.

Under Section 16 of the Act, Advice and Assistance, you may find it helpful to note the Centre of Excellence alerted us to the compromise and falsification of the document. A UK academic and a DFID funding proposal for the Conflict Prevention Fund (the predecessor of the current Conflict Stability and Security Fund) were mentioned in the document. We judged it a matter for NATO/Centre of Excellence to pursue, and encouraged them, via the UK staff officer then at the

Centre of Excellence to do so. We no longer have a copy of the original minutes referred to in the document and were unable to find any further information relating to this request.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance Team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely,

Euro-Atlantic Security Policy