



Cabinet Office

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Christopher Lamb  
[request-191980-3fc6b72c@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:request-191980-3fc6b72c@whatdotheyknow.com)

FOI Reference:FOI318854  
30<sup>th</sup> January 2014

Dear Christopher Lamb

I refer to your request where you asked:

“information held either (or both) by the Cabinet Office and Prime Minister's Office about all communications and/or meetings between Special Advisors and Civil Servants involved in the drafting of the WMD Programmes of Concern papers and the Iraq WMD dossier between February and September 2002 and the White House Iraq Group and members thereof. To clarify, this request seeks confirmation about whether such communications or meetings occurred, how many took place, who were involved and asks for records of contents of such communications and meetings.”

I have dealt with your request under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('the Act').

I must inform you that the Cabinet Office is unable to comply with your request. Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act relieves public authorities of the duty to comply with a request for information if the cost of dealing with it would exceed the appropriate limit. The appropriate limit has been specified in regulations and for central Government this is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3½ working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting it.

The reason that your request exceeds the cost limit is that relevant information could be contained in very many paper and electronically held files. In addition, the terms of your request are broad and you have not specified the names of those who might have been parties to the communications or who attended the meetings. Searching all the files that might contain relevant information to determine whether the Cabinet Office holds any information relevant to your request will exceed the appropriate limit laid down in the regulations.

If you wish, you may refine your request in order to bring the cost of determining whether the Cabinet Office holds relevant information, locating, retrieving and extracting it, below the appropriate limit. One way to refine your request would be to narrow the period it covers but even a shorter period would require us to search many files and electronic records and would not be sufficient, on its own, to make it possible for us to comply with your request within the appropriate limit. Bearing in mind that our records are classified by broad subject areas, I consider that we will not be able to carry out a

search for information unless you can relate the information you seek to a definite context such as a particular event, initiative or meeting, including a narrow date range. I must also inform you that if the Cabinet Office does hold any information, it is likely to be subject to one or more of the exemptions contained in the Freedom of Information Act

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

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request or wish to request an internal review, you should write to:

Roger Smethurst  
Head of Knowledge and Information Management  
Cabinet Office  
1 Horse Guards Road  
London  
SW1A 2HQ

email: [foi.team@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:foi.team@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk)

You should note that the Cabinet Office will not normally accept an application for internal review if it is received more than two months after the date that the reply was issued.

If you are not content with the outcome of your internal review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by Cabinet Office. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

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

Yours sincerely



**FOI Team**  
**Cabinet Office**