



Cabinet Office

1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

T +44 (0)20 7276 2294
foi.team@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk
www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk

Caspar Bowden
request-246701-1512ff55@whatdotheyknow.com

FOI Reference: FOI320469
22/1/2015

Dear Caspar Bowden,

I refer to your request where you asked for:

“the schedule of meetings (participating organizations and disclosable individuals, dates, locations, names of fora) held by Sir Nigel Sheinwald, in his capacity as Special Envoy on intelligence and law enforcement data sharing.”

I am writing to advise you that following a search of our paper and electronic records, I have established that the information you requested is held by the Cabinet Office.

However, the information you have requested is exempt under section 35(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act, which protects the formulation of policy.

Section 35 is a qualified exemption and I have considered whether the balance of the public interest favours our release of this material. There is a general public interest in disclosure of information and I recognise that openness in government may increase public trust in and engagement with the government.

However, Sir Nigel Sheinwald is currently in the process of leading discussions domestically and internationally in his role of Special Envoy. While I recognise that there is a strong public interest in the deliberation of Government being transparent, this also has to be weighed against a strong public interest that policy-making and its implementation are of the highest quality and informed by a full consideration of all the options. It would be detrimental to the development, and Ministerial consideration, of policy options for the discussions to be disclosed prematurely. Taking into account all the circumstances of this case, I have concluded that the balance of the public interest favours withholding this information.

Some of the information you have requested is exempt under section 27(1) (a), (c) and (d) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 27 exempts information if its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice relations between the United Kingdom and any other State, the interests of the United Kingdom abroad, or the promotion or protection by the United Kingdom of its interests abroad. Information you have requested is also exempt under section 27(2) which exempts confidential information obtained from a State other than the United Kingdom. Information obtained from a State is confidential at any time while the terms on which it was obtained require it to be held in confidence or while the circumstances in which it was obtained make it reasonable for the State to expect that it will be so held.

Section 27 is a qualified exemption and I have considered whether the balance of the public interest favours releasing or withholding this material. The Cabinet Office recognises that there is a general public interest in the Government's deliberations with international partners being transparent. I have weighed this public interest against a strong public interest in the United Kingdom being able successfully to pursue our national interests. We are more likely to do so if we conform to the conventions of

international behaviour, avoid giving offence to other nations and retain the trust of our international partners. Taking into account all the circumstances of this case, I have concluded that the balance of the public interest favours withholding this information.

Additionally, some of the information you have requested is exempt under section 23(1) of the Freedom of Information Act, which exempts information held by a public authority if it was directly or indirectly supplied to the public authority by, or relates to, any of the bodies specified in section 23(3) of the Act. Section 23 is an absolute exemption and the Cabinet Office is not required to consider whether the public interest favours disclosure of this information.

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

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