



Ministry of Defence

Global Issues team
MOD Main Building
Whitehall, SW1A 2HB

Monday 22nd February 2021

RE: PIT Time Extension

To Edward Kempe (request-722313-ff5110e9@whatdotheyknow.com),

Your correspondence dated 28 January 2021 has been considered to be a request for information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000. You requested the following information:

"Dear Ministry of Defence,

1: can you confirm or deny that the MOD is able to publicly confirm or deny there are stocks of novichok nerve agent or their analogues held in amounts regardless of size by the UK, or that such information shall be kept secret.

2: can you confirm or deny there are stocks of novichok nerve agent or their analogues held in amounts regardless of size by the UK, and if so, the quantity involved, and what agencies have access to it.

3: would it be possible that on a direct order from whitehall or other qualified person or department, that an amount of novichok or its analogues could be released to authorised parties for removal from secure storage facilities for purposes known or unknown by said storage facilities.

4: assuming such transfer had taken place as outlined in (4) what agency(ies) would hold records of this, in the cases or release being for a) analytical purposes, or b) secret operational purposes.

5: will asking such questions put me on some kind of watch list?

Yours faithfully,

edward kempe."

This letter is to inform you that the MOD holds information related to your request, but that we believe the information falls within the scope of the following qualified exemption(s): *Section 24 (National Security)*. As such it is necessary for us to decide whether, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

The Freedom of Information Act requires us to respond to requests promptly, and in any case no later than 20 working days after receiving your request. However, when a qualified exemption applies to the information and the public interest test has to be conducted, the Act allows the time for response to be longer than 20 working days. A full response must be provided within such time as is reasonable in all circumstances of the case and, in relation to your request, we estimate that it will take an additional 20 working days to take a final decision on where the balance of public interest lies. We therefore plan to let you have a response by *25 March 2021*. If it appears that it will take longer than this to reach a conclusion, we will let you know.

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 Faithfully,

MOD Global Issues team