



Ministry
of Defence



DE&S Secretariat



DESSec-FOI@mod.uk



Defence Equipment & Support
Maple 0A, #2043
MOD Abbey Wood
Bristol, BS34 8JH



Ref: FOI2019/07480

Trevor Bodnar
request-585513-9b0db76e@whatdotheyknow.com

27 August 2019

Dear Mr Bodnar,

Thank you for your email, dated 26 July 2019, requesting the following information:

- *I am seeking the Aircrew Manual and Flight Reference Cards for the Westland Lynx HMA.8*

As advised in my letter of 26 July 2019, we examined whether Section 26 (Defence) and Section 27 (International Relations) were engaged and, following further investigation, both have been applied. The documents you have requested are attached, but are heavily redacted.

Notwithstanding the withdrawal of the Lynx from service with the Ministry of Defence, the aircraft remains in service with NATO allies and other countries. Section 27(1)(a) (International Relations) of the Act provides that we should withhold information that would, or would be likely to, prejudice relations between the United Kingdom and any other State whilst Section 27(2) states information is also exempt if it is confidential information obtained from a State other than the United Kingdom. Additionally, Section 26(1)(b) of the Act provides we should withhold information which would be likely to prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of relevant forces.

The Act requires that we have to carry out a Public Interest Test (PIT) in these respects to show that the reasons for withholding the information outweigh the reasons for releasing information.

Section 27(1)(a) is engaged because although it would provide further public understanding of how the UK operated the Lynx aircraft and the necessary skills required of the aircrew, releasing such information could have a detrimental effect on other nations operating capabilities and breach their security regulations. It would also jeopardise our relations with our allies. Section 27(2) is engaged because the Aircrew Manual contains information provided by a close ally on the understanding that the contents of the document would not be disclosed without their authorisation.

The effective conduct of international relations depends upon maintaining trust and confidence between Governments. This relationship of trust allows for the free and frank exchange of information on the understanding that it will be treated in confidence. If the UK does not respect such confidences, its ability to protect and promote UK interests through international relations could be hampered. The States concerned may be reluctant to share sensitive information with the UK Government in future and may be less likely to respect the confidentiality of information supplied by the UK Government to them. I have therefore set the level of prejudice at the lower level of "would be likely to" rather than "would".

Section 26(1)(b) is engaged because the document contains sensitive current UK defence

systems information which could be used by a potential enemy wishing to attack the UK or its interests to identify defence weaknesses and also therefore place service personnel in danger. Additionally, there are significant levels of common equipment between the Lynx Mk8 aircraft and the current in-service Wildcat aircraft. If this information was released it could identify vulnerabilities and provide an advantage to outside agents and would therefore prejudice the capability and operational effectiveness of the equipment (of the Wildcat).

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/>.

DE&S Secretariat