



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

**North America Department**  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
King Charles Street  
London SW1A 2AH

Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

27 November 2015

### **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0936-15**

Thank you for your email of 22 September 2015 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. We apologise for the delayed response. You asked:

- *Please provide copies of all communications, including electronic/written/SMS correspondence and records of oral conversations, between Jack Straw and:*
  - a) *The British Ambassador/embassy in Washington DC*
  - b) *The Consul-General/consulate-general in New York*
- *Please restrict your searches to communications relating to Mr Straw's request in 2013 for a "senior representative of the British Government" to attend the opening of a showroom in New York by Senator International.*
- *Please also provide any internal FCO communications (involving the embassy, consulate-general, or relevant section of the central department in Whitehall) relating to Mr Straw's request and the showroom opening.*

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed the search for the information which you requested.

I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant to your request.

Please find attached the information that the FCO can release to you in the Annex. Some of the information has been withheld using section 40 – personal information. The withheld information is personal data relating to third parties. It is our view that disclosure of this information would breach the first data protection principle, which states that personal data should be processed fairly and lawfully. Section 40(2) and (3) of the Freedom of Information Act therefore apply. It is the fairness aspect of this principle which we think would be breached by disclosure in this case. In such circumstances Section 40 confers an absolute exemption on disclosure and it follows that there is no public interest test to apply.

Revised guidance has been issued to overseas posts on assistance provided to former Prime Ministers and former ministers. As a result, posts will no longer facilitate programmes

for visits, including the setting up of meetings with Government figures, unless such visits support UK government objectives. This is to avoid the inappropriate use of HMG staff and resources and to avoid the perception that former Ministers and Prime Ministers are representing HMG, rather than a commercial interest.

Former Prime Ministers and former ministers who seek logistical support as representatives of UK business must now submit requests through official UKTI channels to ensure equal support is provided to UK companies.

Once an FOI request is answered, it is considered to be in the public domain. To promote transparency, we may now publish the response and any material released on [gov.uk](http://gov.uk) in the [FOI releases](#) section. All personal information in the letter will be removed before publishing.

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Yours Sincerely

**North America Department**



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