



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Overseas Territories
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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28 October 2013

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - REQUEST REF: 0798-13

Thank you for your email of 31 August asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked for information relating to the:

Governor of the Cayman Islands' annual despatches to the Secretary of State for FCO Affairs from 1987-2005.

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. We were able to find all the documents requested, apart from the documents for the year 2000. This was the time that the FCO was moving from paper documents to electronic documents, we have checked both electronic and paper files but we are unable to find this document.

Please find the attached information that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office can release to you – each annual report is a separate document. Some of the information has been withheld under section 27(1)(a) and 27(1)(c) (International relations) of the FOIA. Section 27 is a qualified exemption and is subject to a public interest test.

Section 27 of the FOIA exempts information if disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the relations between the United Kingdom and another State, the interests of the United Kingdom abroad, or the promotion or protection by the United Kingdom of its assets abroad. In this case, the release of some information in these annual reviews could harm our current relations with the Cayman Islands.

Section 27 requires the application of a public interest test to determine whether the information should be released. The FCO recognises that there is a general public interest in openness in public affairs in order to ensure that the public are able to scrutinise the manner in which important decisions are reached. We also accept that disclosure of the information might lead to better informed debate on a subject of public interest.

However, under S27(1) we judge that disclosure would be prejudicial to the effective conduct of international relations between the United Kingdom and the Cayman Islands, which depends upon maintaining trust and confidence between the UK Government and the Government of the Cayman Islands. If the United Kingdom does not maintain this trust and confidence, its ability to protect and promote UK interests through its relations with the Cayman Islands will be hampered. Specifically, we judge that the disclosure of the information requested could lead to a loss of confidence from the Government of the Cayman Islands which would, in turn, damage our relations with the Cayman Islands.

It would also undermine the confidence of Governors of all Overseas Territories that they are able, in confidence, to report matters of significance back to London without the threat of disclosure, allowing full and frank exchange of views. This could lead to more circumspect reporting by Governors, which could in turn, damage the United Kingdom's ability to ensure the good governance of the Cayman Islands, and the Overseas Territories as a whole.

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the Freedom of Information Act, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless it is exempt. The information we have supplied to you may now be published on our website together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context.

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Yours sincerely,

Cayman Islands and British Virgin Islands Desk Officer
Overseas Territories Directorate



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