



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

European Union Department Internal
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

25 November 2014

Dear

Freedom of Information request, Foreign and Commonwealth Office reference 0905-14

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FOI) request of 22 September, asking for information as follows:

“I would like to apply for the information to which a reference was made in the 1992 Annual Review for Czechoslovakia of 31 December 1992. The FCO has kindly released this document under the FOI Act, reference 066-13, in response to my request. In the report’s introductory paragraph H. M. Ambassador to Czechoslovakia Mr. David Brighty noted “I am sending a separate despatch which attempts to look more closely at how and why the break-up happened”. I request a copy of that despatch, which was apparently sent on 31 December 1992 or shortly thereafter, as well as any related documents such as minutes, memoranda and other forms of communication.”

I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) holds information falling within the terms of your request. The attached document is dated 23 April, almost four months after the date of the Annual Review. Due to this lapse of time between the attached document and the Annual Review, we are unable to confirm whether the document is the despatch that Mr Brighty refers to. As it is of a similar description however, I am including it as a related document.

Section 27 – international relations:

Further to my letters to you of 21 October and 18 November, we have considered some of the information included in the attached document as eligible for redaction under Section 27 of the FOI Act. Section 27(1)(a) of the act recognises the need to protect information that would be likely to prejudice relations between the United Kingdom and other states if disclosed. The Freedom of Information Act requires us, when applying Section 27, to consider the balance of public interest in releasing or withholding the information. Releasing information on this issue would increase public knowledge about our assessment of and relations with the former Czechoslovakia, then the Czech Republic and Slovakia, at the time,

and would be in the interests of open provision of information by the UK Government in-keeping with the spirit of the FOI Act. But Section 27(1)(a) recognises that the effective conduct of international relations depends upon maintaining trust and confidence between governments. If the UK does not maintain this trust and confidence, its ability to protect and promote UK interests through international relations will be hampered, which would not be in the public interest. The disclosure of information which could put at risk the trust and confidence between the UK and other countries' governments could potentially damage the bilateral relationship between the UK and the countries concerned. This would reduce the UK Government's ability to protect and promote UK interests through its relations with these Governments, which would not be in the public interest. On assessing the possible impact of the information concerned in the attached document, and in particular its historical nature, we have concluded that on balance the public interest is maintained in releasing the information in full..

If you are unhappy with the service you are receiving and wish to make a complaint, please write to the FOI and DPA Team, King Charles Street, Room K4.10-13, London, SW1A 2AH
E-mail: foi-dpa.imd@fco.gov.uk.

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint, you may then apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the FCO. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

Please contact me if you have any queries about this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Northern and Central Europe Team



We keep and use information in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. We may release this personal information to other UK government departments and public authorities.