



Ministry
of Defence

Defence Science and Technology Strategy Secretariat
Ministry of Defence (01/K)
Main Building
Whitehall
London SW1A 2HB
United Kingdom

Reference: [REDACTED]

Telephone: + [REDACTED]

Facsimile: + [REDACTED]

E-mail: DST-StrategySecretariat@mod.uk

Email: [REDACTED]

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Dear [REDACTED]

I am writing following my most recent letter to you of 12th May which was in response to your email of 14th April requesting the following information:

"I am wondering whether you have misunderstood the scope of this request, which asks for information about an AWE visit to China, and have confused it with my previous related but different request, which requested information about a follow-up Chinese visit to AWE. I should be grateful if you would check that you have understood my request correctly and confirm whether you have searched for the requested information. If the information has indeed be released into the public domain I should be grateful if you would advise me where it can be located."

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). I apologise for the delay in providing you with a substantive response.

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that all the information in scope of your request is held.

The information you have requested can be found as four individual attachments to this letter (but will be sent consecutively due to size constraints) which are:

Hydrodynamics at AWE
Plasma Physics at AWE
Materials Science Research – An Overview
Material detection, characterisation and verification science

Some of the information falls entirely within the scope of the absolute exemption provided for at section 40 (Personal Data) and qualified exemptions provided for at sections 24 (National Security), 27 (International Relations) and 38 (Health and Safety) of the FOIA and has been redacted and the Chinese Presentations withheld in entirety.

Section 40(2) has been applied to some of the information in order to protect personal information as governed by the Data Protection Act 1998. Section 40 is an absolute exemption and there is therefore no requirement to consider the public interest in making a decision to withhold the information.

Section 24, 27 and 38 are qualified exemptions and are subject to public interest testing which means that the information requested can only be withheld if the public interest in doing so outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

Section 24(1) has been applied to some of the information because it contains sensitive details necessary to safeguard national security. The balance of the public interest was found to be in favour of withholding the information given that, overall, the public interest is best served in not releasing any details that would, or would be likely to, assist individuals or groups planning theft, sabotage or other malevolent or illegal acts against the Atomic Weapons Establishment.

Section 27(1)(a) has been applied because some of the information has the potential to adversely affect relations with our allies. The balance of the public interest test concluded that whilst release would increase public understanding and confidence in the relation the United Kingdom has with other international states the balance of the public interest lay in withholding this information you desire. I have considered it necessary to apply the higher level of prejudice against release of the exempted information at the higher level of "would".

Section 38(1)(a) and (b) has been applied to some of the information to protect the health and safety of individuals. The balance of the public interest was found to be in favour of withholding the information given that the release of information would be likely to identify individuals and so may endanger their health and safety if they are easily identified in public.

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact me in the first instance. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, 1st Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.gov.uk>.

Yours sincerely,

