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Our ref: FOI 947-14 eCase 2014/01700
Your ref:

18 June 2014

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 22 May 2014 requesting the following information:

On April 21st 2002 The Observer published the following report:-

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2002/...>

The last sentence in that report has [REDACTED] stating, when asked whether such tests are still being carried out, that "It is not our policy to discuss ongoing research".

So, now that trials for that year can not be considered ongoing, can you please provide details of all biological warfare simulants trials that your department has authorized and/or carried out since 1979?

Also specifically when was the most recent of such trials performed?

We are treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

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

I can confirm that since 1979 there have been no trials of the type reported in the Guardian article with respect to the release of biological warfare simulants in public areas. Any such releases would only be undertaken if the modern use of computational modelling to predict the dissemination of biological aerosols was insufficient.

You may wish to be aware that in 1999 Lord Gilbert made a statement that the Ministry of Defence could not rule out the need to conduct, in the future, chemical or biological open air trial in areas that would involve the general public. However, it was stated that if the need

arose then the MOD would ensure that there was appropriate consultation and an assessment by independent experts to ensure that public safety was not compromised in any way.

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

Dstl Secretariat