



# Ministry of Defence

Air Command Secretariat  
Spitfire Block, Room 2E21-33  
Headquarters Air Command  
Royal Air Force  
High Wycombe  
Buckinghamshire  
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Ref: FOI 2015/03695



Email: 

07 May 2015

Dear 

Thank you for your emails dated 08 April 2015. You requested the following information:

- *A copy of the Host Nation Notification received by the UK in connection with the European Infrastructure Consolidated Review;*
- *A copy of the UK's response to the Host Nation Notification received in connection with the European Infrastructure Consolidated Review.*
- *How many times Ministry of Defence stakeholders consulted with their US counterparts with respect to the US European Infrastructure Consolidation Review?*
- *Whether those consultations at any point discussed current and future US operations out RAF Croughton?*
- *Whether any of those consultations at any point mentioned, involved or referenced any aspect of the US drone programme? Please note, I am asking not just about the flying of US drones, but also the broader infrastructure surrounding the programme, including but not limited to the creation and maintenance of targeting packages and the execution or analysis of casualty and battle damage assessments.*

*For the avoidance of any doubt, the consultations are referenced in this Written Answer of 26 March 2015, provided by Anna Soubry to Tom Watson MP (no. 226250, 10 March 2015, <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/wrans/?id=2015-03-04.226250.h&s=tom+watson#g226250.q0.>)*

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). I have now completed a search of our paper and electronic records and I can confirm that some of the information in scope of your request is held. I will respond to your questions in the order presented above.

I am withholding a copy of the Host Nation Notification and the UK response to it under Section 27(1) and (2) of the Act. Section 27 is a qualified exemption and in reaching the conclusion to withhold the information I have taken into account the balance of the public interest. It is accepted that disclosure may demonstrate openness and transparency and thereby help build greater public trust and confidence in the MOD. There is also public interest in the disclosure of information that will improve public understanding on the basing of US military forces in the UK.

However, it is also substantially in the public interest to maintain strong, trusting bilateral relations with the US. This trust would be breached if the UK disclosed information, without the agreement of the US, which had been intended (explicitly or implicitly) to be held in confidence. Disclosure of such information would likely be prejudicial to bilateral relations with the US, and inhibit future cooperation with potentially a wide range of adverse impacts. It is for these reasons that the balance of the public interest is assessed to be in favour of withholding the information under section 27(1) and (2) of the Act.

Following a period of consultation an ongoing dialogue was maintained with US officials throughout the European Infrastructure Consolidation (EIC) Review. Under Section 16 of the FOI Act (the Department's duty to provide advice and assistance) I can tell you that consultations took place at various levels in a number of different forums although the number of these discussions was not recorded. I can however confirm that the US Defence Attaché briefed the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff and other senior officials on 19 November 2014.

The final results of the EIC review, the Host Nation Notification, were notified in a letter dated 7 Jan 2015 - which also covered the relocation of personnel to Croughton – please see link below:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2015-03-24/228912>

As I have mentioned in the above paragraph there were a number of consultations on the EIC Review. However, we do not have any record of the US remotely piloted aircraft programme being discussed in connection with the Review.

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, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail [CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk](mailto: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.org.uk>.

Yours sincerely

[Original signed]

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.

Air Command Secretariat