



Ministry
of Defence

HQ Air Command
[REDACTED], 1 Site
Walters Ash
Buckinghamshire
HP14 4UE
United Kingdom

E-mail: [Air-DResSec-
ParliBusiness@mod.uk](mailto:Air-DResSec-ParliBusiness@mod.uk)

Ref: FOI2015/00573

E-mail address: [REDACTED]

4 February 2015

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your e-mail of 14 January requesting information about UK Reaper aircraft.

You have asked the following:

- *How many Reapers are now in storage in the UK?*
- *When did those Reapers arrive in the UK?*
- *When did each of these aircraft begin operating in Afghanistan?*
- *How many hours have each of these aircraft flown in Afghanistan?*
- *What was the estimated cost of operating each of them in Afghanistan?*

I am 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 (MoD), and I can confirm that information within the scope of your request is held.

It may be helpful to know that Section 1 of the FOIA gives an applicant the right to access recorded information held by public authorities at the time the request is made and does not require public authorities to answer questions, provide explanations or give opinions, unless this is recorded information held.

The following information is held in respect of your request:

I am withholding the number of Reapers in storage in the UK and the dates they arrived in the UK under Section 26 of the FOI Act. Section 26 is information which if disclosed, would prejudice defence or the capability, effectiveness or security of relevant forces.

UK Reaper air vehicles began operating in Afghanistan on the following dates:

ZZ201 - Jan 08
ZZ202 - Jun 08
ZZ203 - Mar 09
ZZ204 - Jul 10
ZZ205 - Aug 10
ZZ206 - Jun 14

ZZ207 - Jun 14
ZZ208 - Jun 14
ZZ209 - Jun 14
ZZ210 - Jun 14

The total number of hours flown by all UK Reaper aircraft during Operation HERRICK in Afghanistan was 71147. I am withholding the individual breakdown against each airframe under Section 26 of the FOI Act.

The total financial approval for delivering and supporting the UK Reaper system from 2007, when it entered service, until the end of combat operations in Afghanistan in 2015, is £506 million. The information is not held for individual airframes.

Section 26(1)(b) has been applied to some of the information because it contains details which are operationally sensitive and would prejudice the capability and effectiveness of our armed forces. The balance of 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 on the assistance we provide to other states in that it would prejudice the security of UK personnel serving abroad and which would provide tactical advantage to our enemies and for these reasons I have set the level of prejudice against release of the exempted information at the higher level of "would" rather than "would be likely to".

Reasons for and against disclosure are as follows:

Public Interest (PI) factors in favour of disclosure

- The public interest in understanding how the Armed Forces work and how their assets are used and to demonstrate that the RAF has the ability to respond efficiently, effectively and appropriately to potentially hostile threats.

Public Interest (PI) factors against disclosure

- Knowledge of the number of operational aircraft and their location, and movements, could be used by hostile elements to threaten the integrity and security of current and future UK military operations.
- Giving precise details of the Reaper aircraft is likely to compromise its effectiveness in hostile regions and could have serious strategic implications for the UK.

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,



Air-DRes Sec 3b
HQ Air Command