



Ministry  
of Defence

Navy Command FOI Section  
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Ref. 2016/08721

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[REDACTED]  
Via email: [REDACTED]

12 October 2016

Dear [REDACTED],

Release of Information

Thank you for your correspondence dated 15 September 2016 requesting the following information:

*With reference to this Royal Navy press release <http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/news-and-latest-activity/news/2016/september/15/160915-new-co-carrier-strike-group>*

- 1) *Could you reveal the positions and ranks on the 22 COMUKCSG staff?*
- 2) *What will the final number of COMUKCSG staff be and what other positions are there?*

Your enquiry is considered to be a request for information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I can confirm that the Department holds information of the description specified in your request. However, I am writing to advise you that, after careful consideration and for the reasons set out below, it has been concluded that as some of the information falls within the scope of section 26 (Defence) of the Act there is no obligation to disclose this information.

Under s26(1)(b) information is exempt if its disclosure under the Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of any relevant forces.

As the exemption under section 26 is a qualified exemption, the Department has considered the balance of the public interest in disclosing and withholding this information. It is recognised that there is widespread interest in defence matters and that openness and transparency in government informs public debate. However, to release information that sets out the exact composition of the COMUKCSG (Commander United Kingdom Carrier Strike Group) staff resources, the nature of their capabilities and details of their operational activities could result in a loss of tactical advantage in terms of effectiveness and capability

and provide knowledge liable to assist potential adversaries in times of conflict. On balance, it been concluded that the public interest is firmly in favour of this specific information being withheld.

Notwithstanding the above, under section 16 of the Act – Duty to provide Advice and Assistance – we can provide you with the following general description about the COMUKCSG team. With regard to your first query the 22 strong COMUKCSG HQ currently consists of a mix of RN and United States Navy (USN) officers that span the functions of a CSG battle staff, including: command, strike warfare, information warfare, the traditional maritime warfare disciplines of Air Missile Defence (previously Anti Air Warfare), Anti Submarine Warfare and Anti Surface Warfare and Logistics. Regarding your second query, at its full strength, the battle staff team of approximately 75 will include a full suite of Information Warfare specialists that span the spectrum of attributes in this developing area of warfare, and be in a position to provide the command and control for a Carrier Strike Group around the clock with two watches of Warfare, Information Warfare, Logistics and Strike Warfare experts that will man the carrier's Force Operations Room.

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, Zone K, 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://.ico.org.uk>.

Yours sincerely,

Navy Command - FOI Section