



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Arabian Peninsula Department
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Old Admiralty Building
London SW1A 2PA

Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

19 August 2015

Your Freedom Of Information Request: 0508-15

Thank you for your email of 27 May asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

I would be grateful for copies of any emails and correspondence between Falcon and Associates and Ministers and officials above SEO grade (or equivalent) since 2010, focused on the The Emirates embassies.

I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant to your request.

In relation to your request please find enclosed copies of emails and correspondence between Falcon and Associates and officials above SEO grade from our embassies in the United Arab Emirates.

However, some of the information is exempt under Section 43 (2) of the Act, which relates to commercial interests. The use of this exemption was carefully considered. The factors in favour of disclosure of this information, including the general public interest and greater transparency and accountability, were carefully weighed against the need to allow business-people and commercial organisations the space to conduct their lawful business competitively and without fear of disclosure of sensitive commercial information.

We consider that this transparency also poses risks to the protection of commercially confidential information. Failure to protect such commercially sensitive information would limit the sources of information and interlocutors available to the FCO and limit the FCO's ability to promote the British economy and lobby for the interests of British businesses overseas. In this case after such consideration we believe that the public interest in withholding the redacted information outweighs the public interest in its release.

Some of the information you have requested, is personal data relating to third parties, the disclosure of which would contravene one of the data protection principles. In such circumstances sections 40(2) and (3) of the Freedom of Information Act apply. In this case, our view is that disclosure would breach the first data protection principle. This states that personal data should be processed fairly and lawfully. It is the fairness aspect of this

principle, which, in our view, would be breached by disclosure. In such circumstances, s.40 confers an absolute exemption on disclosure. There is, therefore, no public interest test to apply.

Once an FOI request is answered, it is considered to be in the public domain. To promote transparency, we may now publish the response and any material released on gov.uk in the [FOI releases](#) section. All personal information in the letter will be removed before publishing.

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Yours sincerely,

Gulf Team



We keep and use information in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. We may release this personal information to other UK government departments and public authorities.