



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Overseas Territories Department
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

15 August 2016

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: FOI 0598-16

Thank you for your email of 20 June 2016 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked for:

“Copies of any despatches from the Governor, Cayman Islands to the FCO from 2006. *Clarified to mean - The Annual and Valedictory despatches and State of the Nation/Throne Speech.”*

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed the search for the information which you requested.

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

Please find attached the information that the FCO can release to you. Some of the information has been withheld using section 21 (information accessible to the applicant by other means), section 27 (international relations) and section 36 (prejudice to the effective conduct of public affairs).

Under Section 21 of the Act, we are not required to provide information in response to a request if it is already reasonably accessible to you. Some of the information you requested is available from the Cayman Islands Legislative Assembly website:

<http://www.legislativeassembly.ky/portal/pls/portal/docs/1/10458104.PDF>

Section 27(1)(a) recognises that the effective conduct of international relations depends upon maintaining trust and confidence between governments. The application of s.27(1)(a) requires us to consider the public interest test arguments in favour of releasing and withholding the information. If the United Kingdom does not maintain this trust and confidence, its ability to protect and promote UK interests through international relations will be hampered, which will not be in the public interest. The disclosure of information that details both our relationship with the Cayman Islands government could potentially damage the bilateral relationship between the UK and the Cayman Islands. We have assessed the information requested against this risk and consider that the disclosure of some of the

information would, or would be likely, to prejudice that relationship. This would reduce the UK government's ability to protect and promote UK interests through its relations with the Cayman Islands, which would not be in the public interest. For these reasons we consider that the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Also, some of the information you have requested is exempt under section 36(2)(b)(i) - prejudice to the effective conduct of public affairs. It is the opinion of an FCO Minister that the disclosure of some of this information would be likely to inhibit the free and frank provision of advice and the free and frank exchange of views from Governors for the purposes of deliberation with the FCO. There is a strong public interest in protecting the space Ministers and officials have to consider and discuss options, to ensure that full and proper consideration to policy is given. The candour of contributions to this process will be affected by officials' assessment of whether the content of such discussion will be disclosed in the near future. This would have a negative impact on the quality of decision making, which is clearly not in the public interest. For these reasons, we consider that the public interest in withholding this information outweighs the public interest in release.

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Yours sincerely,

Caribbean Territories and Strategy Department



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