



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

**Arabian Peninsula & Iran Department**  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
King Charles Street  
London SW1A 2AH

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20 January 2017

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 1139-16**

Thank you for your e-mail of 23 November, in which you asked for the following information under the FOI Act (FOIA);

*I'm writing to request, under the FOI act, information on the British delegation at the Manama Dialogues conference in December 2016.*

*I'd like to know who is in the British delegation to the conference (name if possible, role, organisation). I'd also like to know about any meetings which FCO staff are involved in organising or FCO ministers are present at. What are the names, roles and organisations of the people in these meetings and what was the subject of the meeting? I'd like this information in an accessible spreadsheet form with a list of any acronyms used.*

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

The British delegation at the Manama Dialogue was comprised of:

The Rt Hon Boris Johnson, MP, Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs,  
Foreign Office

Tobias Ellwood, MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Foreign Office

Harriett Baldwin MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary and Minister for Defence Procurement,  
Ministry of Defence

Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach, Chief of Defence Staff, Ministry of Defence

Dr Christian Turner, Director General for the Middle East and Africa, Foreign Office

Lt General Thomas Beckett, Defence Senior Advisor for the Middle East, Ministry of Defence

Peter Watkins, Director-General, Security Policy, Ministry of Defence

Commodore William Warrender, Commander, UK Maritime Component, Royal Navy; Deputy Commander, Combined Maritime Forces, Royal Navy

Simon Martin, Her Majesty's Ambassador to Bahrain, Foreign Office

The Foreign Secretary had two bilateral meetings during the dialogue with His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, Crown Prince of Bahrain. He also gave the keynote address at the opening dinner before departing for a prior engagement in Paris.

Mr Tobias Ellwood MP also had two bilateral meetings, one with General Joseph Leonard Votel, Commander of United States Central Command and the other with General Ali Mohsen Al Ahmar, Vice President of Yemen. In addition to these meetings Mr Ellwood also attended a number of the plenary sessions, signed a technical agreement with the Bahraini Foreign Minister, Sheikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa and toured HMS Jufair with Harriett Baldwin MP, Minister for Defence Procurement.

The information that you requested on the subject of the meetings is being withheld under section 27 (International Relations) and section 40 (Personal Information).

S27 is a qualified exemption and requires the FCO to consider the public interest in releasing or withholding the information. The effective conduct of international relations depends upon maintaining trust and confidence between governments. This relationship of trust allows for the free and frank exchange of information on the understanding that it will be treated in confidence. If the UK does not respect such confidences, its ability to protect and promote UK interest through international relations will be prejudiced. Bahrain may be more reluctant to share sensitive information with the UK Government in future and may be less likely to respect the confidentiality of information supplied by the UK Government, to the detriment of UK interests. For all these reasons, we consider that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information covered by section 27 (1)(d).

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.

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Yours sincerely,

Arabian Peninsula & Iran Department



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