



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

China Department
Foreign and Commonwealth
Office
King Charles Street
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8th March 2016

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS: FOI 0191-16

Thank you for your e-mail of 6 February in which you asked for the following information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI Act):

The former minister for transport, Rt Hon. The Baroness Kramer visited Taipei in 2015 and met with the mayor of Taipei. I would like some clarifications on this visit.

1. *While undertaking this government visit, under the jurisdiction and law of which country was Baroness Kramer and accompanying officials subject to?*
2. *Who was the issuing authority of the visa for the minister and her companions, or the authority that allowed the minister and her companions to enter Taiwan for the visit? Through the border controls of which country(ies) did the minister pass during her visit?*
3. *Did the minister have any other meetings, official or unofficial, with the president (Ma Ying-jeou), government ministers or elected officials of the Republic of China (not to be mistaken for the People's Republic of China)? What were the nature of these meetings?*
 - a. *Did any other member of the UK delegation accompanying the minister, or any officials of the British Office Taipei, meet with the president (Ma Ying-jeou), government ministers or elected officials of the Republic of China (not to be mistaken for the People's Republic of China)? What were the nature of these meetings?*
4. *With the government of which country did Her Majesty's Government communicate when making the necessary arrangements in advance of the baroness' visit?*
 - a. *Can the FCO name the individual on the Chinese side (whether Republic of China- or People's Republic of China-affiliated) who gave final approval to the visit?*

5. *Did Her Majesty's Government seek the prior approval of the People's Republic of China or the Republic of China on Taiwan, or both for the visit?*
 - a. *If permission from the People's Republic of China was not sought, or not given for the minister's trip to Taipei, can Her Majesty's Government confirm that a minister (Baroness Kramer) entered People's Republic of China-claimed territory (i.e. Taipei) without the permission of the People's Republic of China?*
6. *Can the FCO confirm that without the permission of the government of the Republic of China, the visit by the minister to Taipei could not have been undertaken?*
7. *Furthermore, can the department confirm that the minister was at no time subject to the jurisdiction or law of the People's Republic of China during her visit to Taipei?*
8. *Please include a full list of officials and ministerial advisers who accompanied Baroness Kramer to Taipei.*

In reference to the above set of questions, I would be grateful if the department could avoid use of the ambiguous phrase "China" and employ the more specific designations "Republic of China" and "People's Republic of China" when answering questions, in the interests of clarity.

The long standing position of Her Majesty's Government is that we do not recognise Taiwan as a state. The 1972 Joint Communiqué between the United Kingdom and China set out that: 'The UK acknowledges the Chinese position that Taiwan is a province of the People's Republic of China and recognises the People's Republic of China as the sole legal government of China'.

The United Kingdom and Taiwan have a strong but unofficial relationship, based on dynamic commercial, educational and cultural ties and facilitated by The British Office, Taipei, and the Taipei Representative Office in London. This relationship delivers significant benefits to both the UK and Taiwan and has featured a wide range of exchanges and visits, for example on environmental, judicial and educational issues.

I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information falling within the terms of your request. The answers to your questions are as follows:

1. We do not keep records of jurisdictions to which ministers are subject to whilst travelling.
2. Under section 21 of the Act, we are not required to provide information which is already reasonably accessible to you. Details of the visa-free travel arrangements for short stay British passport holders visiting Taiwan are already publically available (<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/taiwan/entry-requirements>).

British citizens do not need any prior permissions, including visas for short stay visits to Taiwan.

Baroness Kramer arrived in Taiwan at Taipei Taoyuan Airport and departed from Taipei Songshan Airport.

3. During her visit, Baroness Kramer met the following in her capacity as Minister:
 - o The Ministry of Transportation and Communications to lobby for UK railway companies to bid for upcoming railways High Value Opportunities; to lobby for Siemens Rail Automation Technology's bid for a contract under an extension project of Taiwan Taoyuan Airport express link; to provide UK transport security expertise to Taiwan; to lobby on behalf of Norman Foster Partners, Zaha Hadid and Rogers and Partners on their separate bids for the design work of the third terminal of Taipei Taoyuan airport; and to raise the profile of London International Shipping Week. Baroness Kramer met Minister Chen Jian-Yu.
 - o The Taipei City Government to discuss metro, urban regeneration and smart cities. Baroness Kramer met Mayor Ko and Deputy Mayor Teng.
 - o Minister Hsu of the Public Construction Commission to discuss Government procurement strategy in Taiwan.
 - o Dr. Wei, Minister for Environmental Protection, to encourage Taiwan to pursue a more ambitious carbon reduction programme, in particular, around Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs); to share UK policy experience in developing the domestic ULEV industry; and to promote UK commercial expertise around recharging facilities.
- a. As stated above, Baroness Kramer met Minister Chen Jian-Yu, Minister Hsu, Minister Wei, Mayor Ko and Deputy Mayor Teng. There were no meetings with the President (Ma Ying-jeou) or any other elected officials.

In addition, Officials from the British Office in Taipei accompanied Baroness Kramer throughout her programme. The business delegation accompanied Baroness Kramer to the majority of the above meetings; they had no separate or additional meetings with the President or other Ministers.

4. As stated above, the long standing position of Her Majesty's Government is that we do not recognise Taiwan as a state. The 1972 Joint Communiqué between the United Kingdom and China set out that: 'The UK acknowledges the Chinese position that Taiwan is a province of the People's Republic of China and recognises the People's Republic of China as the sole legal government of China'.

HMG officials discussed the arrangements for this visit with the relevant authorities in Taiwan.

- a. The arrangements for the visit were not discussed with officials from the People's Republic of China.

5. As stated above, HMG officials discussed the arrangements for this visit with the relevant authorities in Taiwan.
 - a. As stated above, any British citizens visiting Taiwan for less than 90 days, including ministers, do not require any prior permissions to do so.
6. As stated above, Any British citizens visiting Taiwan for less than 90 days, including ministers, do not require any prior permissions to do so.
7. As stated above, we do not keep records of jurisdictions to which ministers are subject to whilst travelling
8. The Minister was accompanied by an official from the Department for Transport,

Some of the withheld information is personal data relating to officials. It is our view that disclosure of this information would breach the first data protection principle, which states that personal data should be processed fairly and lawfully. Section 40(2) and (3) of the FOIA therefore apply. It is the fairness aspect of this principle which we think would be breached by disclosure in this case. In such circumstances Section 40 confers an absolute exemption on disclosure. We do not therefore have to apply the public interest test.

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,

China Department

