



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Middle East & North Africa Department
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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14 August 2017

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0419-17

Thank you for your email of 28 April asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

1) Does the Foreign and Commonwealth Office hold any correspondence or communications - electronic, written or other material (such as notes taken from telephone conversations) - between members of the FCO's ministerial and/or management team and members of staff at BP plc. during the months October 2016 - March 2017?

2) If the answer to question (1) is yes, I request that you disclose copies and/or transcripts of the material outlined.

3) Have any members of the FCO's management team held meetings with BP plc. during the period October 2016 - March 2017, and if so, were agendas, minutes or other meeting notes produced?

4) If material in relation to question (3) was produced, I request that you disclose copies and/or transcripts of relevant material.

You further refined your request to:

- The Arab Republic of Egypt

And:

- The FCO's management team

We have interpreted your reference to the FCO's Management Team as referring to staff in the Senior Management Structure.

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.

In relation to question 1, the FCO holds one email that falls in scope of your request. In relation to question 2, parts of the email fall under the exemption in section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act, which relates to commercial interests. In applying this exemption, we have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosure. 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. There is a public interest in the disclosure of commercial information to ensure effective, open and honest use of public money and the scrutiny of public licensing in accordance with published policy and to provide an environment where business can better respond to government opportunities.

However, we consider that this transparency also poses risks in that companies and individuals would, if this information were disclosed, be much less likely to provide the FCO with commercially sensitive information. This would limit the sources of information and interlocutors available to the FCO. In doing so, it would seriously impair our ability to work for UK interests in a safe, just and prosperous world.

I enclose a copy of an email chain between the Permanent Under Secretary of the FCO and BP's Vice President for Europe. Some information has been redacted from the released document under section 43(2) of the Act as its disclosure would or would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of any person.

In relation to questions 3 and 4, I can confirm that Bob Dudley (BP CEO), Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP (UK Trade Envoy to Egypt), John Casson (Her Majesty's Ambassador to Cairo) and Jason Ivory (former Department for International Trade Cairo Director) met on 14 February 2017. There is no written record of this meeting.

Egypt Team
Middle East and North Africa Department



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