



# Ministry of Defence

Our Ref: FOI2021/02784

Your Ref:

Ministry of Defence

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Via email: [request-735415-fea1140b@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:request-735415-fea1140b@whatdotheyknow.com)

12 March 2021

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 11 March 2021 asking the following questions:

*“CASD has been in operation since about 1968. Since then there have been technological developments that may have rendered it ineffective for example it might be possible for an aggressor to find and destroy the submarine on patrol prior to launching an attack on the UK. Has there been any assessment of this possibility and if so when?”*

*Are the results of such an assessment publicly available, and if so where can I see it please?”*

We have treated your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act) because, by submitting your request through [whatdotheyknow.com](http://whatdotheyknow.com) which has the sole purpose of facilitating requests under the Act, you have implicitly indicated that you wish your request to be treated as such.

Under Section 16 of the Act, whereby public authorities should provide advice and assistance, so far as it is reasonable to do so, you may find it helpful to know that the Act is sometimes not the approach which will yield the most helpful response. This is because it entitles individuals to request recorded information from a public authority but places no obligation on public bodies to answer questions by creating information where it does not already exist in recorded form. The MOD welcomes engagement with the public outside of the Act, so to assist you we will answer your questions on this occasion as we would have done if you had corresponded with us outside of the Act.

We can inform you that we regularly assure that the nuclear deterrent is protected against all conceivable threats but our assessments are not publicly available and would almost certainly not be released under the terms of the Act, should they be requested, because of security considerations which would lead to consideration of Sections 24 (Safeguarding National Security) and 26 (Defence) being applied. We hope that you will appreciate information relating to possible threats to the nuclear deterrent and the actions we take to mitigate or counter those threats would be highly valuable to hostile actors if it were easily available, as that information could then be used to try to weaken the deterrence effect we are seeking to achieve.

You refer to technological developments which may render the nuclear deterrent submarines detectable. We can assure you that the nuclear deterrent is not rendered obsolete by new technologies such as underwater drones and more advanced satellites. The ocean is, and will remain, a complex and challenging environment in which to conduct large-scale anti-submarine

warfare, despite technological advancements. We are confident that the Royal Navy's ballistic missile submarines will continue to be able to deliver continuous at sea deterrence, operating undetected, keeping us all safe from the most extreme threats to our national security and way of life, as they have done for over 50 years.

We hope that this information has been helpful to you. If you have any queries about this response, are not satisfied with this response, or wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact us in the first instance at the address above. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail [CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk](mailto:CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk)). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on their website, <http://www.ico.org.uk>.

Yours sincerely,

Defence Nuclear Organisation Secretariat