



Ministry
of Defence



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Secretariat and Policy
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MOD Abbey Wood
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Name: [REDACTED]
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Date: 16 December 2024

Our Reference: **FOI2024/22660**

Dear [REDACTED]

I am writing in response to your email of 20 November 2024, requesting the following information:

My name is Tom Scotson, political reporter for PoliticsHome based in Westminster.

I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information from the Ministry of Defence. Please may you provide me with the following:

- How many hazard warning or explosion warning labels have been put on Storm Shadow cruise missiles?*
- How much did it cost to produce each label?*
- How much did it cost to place the labels on all of the Storm Shadow cruise missiles?*

Please provide the information in the form of a PDF.

If it is not possible to provide the information requested due to the information exceeding the cost of compliance limits identified in Section 12, please provide advice and assistance, under the Section 16 obligations of the Act, as to how I can refine my request.

If you can identify any ways that my request could be refined I would be grateful for any further advice and assistance.

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act). A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence (MOD), and I can confirm that some information in scope of your request is held.

However, it has proved necessary to withhold the information related to your request regarding the number of hazard warning or explosion warning labels placed on Storm Shadow missiles.

The information has been withheld under the qualified exemption Section 26 (Defence) of the FOI Act. Section 26 applies to information that, if disclosed, would, or would be likely

to, prejudice the defence of the British Islands or any colony; and/or the capability, effectiveness, or security of the Armed Forces of the Crown or any forces cooperating with them.

As the exemption is qualified, it was necessary to undertake a Public Interest Test to determine whether the balance for withholding the information outweighs that for disclosure. General arguments in favour of release were that full disclosure would demonstrate the MOD's commitment to openness and transparency and make the UK Government more accountable to the electorate. The FOI Act also contains a presumption for release.

However, disclosing the total number of hazard warning or explosion warning labels placed on Storm Shadow missiles could provide adversaries with information that could be used to ascertain the number of missiles in the UK stockpile. This information is withheld for operational reasons to prevent adversaries from gaining insights into our military capabilities.

For these reasons, the balance of public interest lies in favour of withholding the requested information in full under Section 26(1)(b) of the FOI Act. Given the arguments described above, the level of prejudice against the release of this exempted information has been set at the higher level of "would" rather than "would be likely to".

No information is held on the cost to produce each label or how much it costs to place labels on Storm Shadow missiles.

Under Section 16 (Advice and Assistance) I can advise you that the Storm Shadow missile has 15 external warning labels per missile.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request 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).

Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly 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 the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely,
DE&S Policy Secretariat