



Security Policy & Operations
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE, Floor 4, Main Building, Whitehall,
LONDON SW1A 2HB

Telephone (Switchboard) 0207 218 9000
(Fax) 0207 218 17775

Mr Bimmler

Date: 06 April 2011

Dear Mr Bimmler,

Further to recent email correspondence, I can confirm that we have now completed the consideration of your Freedom of Information request for access to the study prepared by Lieutenant General Christopher Brown and commissioned by the Ministry of Defence concerning the invasion of Iraq. I am sorry for the lengthy delay in doing this.

A redacted copy of the study at the point which it had been considered (but not formally endorsed) by Chiefs of Staff has been published in the Disclosure Log on the MOD website together with supplementary information about previous lessons identified from Op Telic - which in some instances is referenced in the study. Although the study was not formally endorsed by the Chiefs, the recommendations in it are being assessed and will be taken forward wherever appropriate.

The report can be found at the following link

<http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/FreedomOfInformation/DisclosureLog/SearchDisclosureLog/OperationTelicLessonsCompendium.htm>.

A number of redactions have been applied to the study. Some of the information falls under absolute exemptions at Section 23(1) (Information supplied by or relating to bodies dealing with security matters) and Section 40(2) (Personal information) of the Act. As such, no public interest test is required. The information which has been redacted under Section 40(2) relates to the names of junior officials.

The other exemptions which have been applied relate to Sections 26(1) (b) (Defence), 27(1) and 27(2) (International relations), and Section 29(1) (UK economy). These redactions have been the subject of a public interest test and, on balance the information should not be disclosed.

The redactions under Section 26 concern the capability, effectiveness or security of the armed forces. We accept that release of information about the equipment used by the Armed Forces, or about specific activities in Iraq would help inform the public about the role and resourcing of our armed forces whilst on operations. However, this would identify equipment capability gaps and draw attention to specific activities which currently contribute to the effectiveness of operations. Once this knowledge was made public, our enemies would adapt their tactics accordingly. This would compromise our operations and our overall effectiveness which is not in the public interest. We have therefore concluded that the information should not be released.



Information under Section 27(1) and s27 (2) concerns our relationship with allies and a number of other states. We accept that there is a strong public interest in releasing information which explains the political and wider military context in which the UK was operating throughout OP TELIC. This particularly applies to the United States with whom we have a strong bilateral defence relationship. However, our close allies and other states with whom we have strong bilateral relations would not expect the UK to disclose information which has been obtained in confidence or which concerns the nature or value of those relationships. We consider that disclosure of this information would, or would be likely to prejudice UK relations with these countries which and the public interest does not favour disclosure.

There is one redaction under Section 29 (1) which has been made in order to protect the economic interests of the United Kingdom. We understand that information related to any economic interests the UK may have in Iraq is a legitimate interest, but this is outweighed by the potential disadvantages to those economic interests which would arise if they were identified.

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact me in the first instance. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Head of Corporate Information, 2nd Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.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 investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.gov.uk>.

A copy of this letter has been sent to the Information Commissioner.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Beevor
Sec Pol + Ops Delivery Unit-Business Manager

