



Ministry
of Defence

DE&S SEC Policy Secretariat

Defence Equipment and Support
MOD Abbey Wood
Bristol
BS34 8JH

Email: [REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

Via: [REDACTED]

Our Reference:

[REDACTED]

Date: 31 October 2014

Dear [REDACTED],

Request for Information under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act

Further to the Information Commissioner's Office Decision Notice of 29 September 2014, I am writing to provide you with a final response to your Freedom of Information request, dated 20 November 2013, in which you asked for the following:

1. Please provide a copy of all the documents under the following titles, according to The National Archives these are all retained by the Ministry of Defence:
 - a) "*Expected radioactivities from plowshare devices*" under the reference **ES 10/1272** in The National Archives -
<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/SearchUI/s/res?q=ES+10%2F1272+>
 - b) "*Notes on Plowshare programme: peaceful use of nuclear explosives*" under the reference **ES 10/1259** in The National Archives -
<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/SearchUI/Details?uri=C10892307>
 - c) "*Third Plowshare symposium, April 1964: peaceful use of nuclear explosives*" under the reference **ES 10/1148** in The National Archives -
<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/SearchUI/Details?uri=C10892196>
 - d) "*Hypothetical peaceful nuclear explosion (PNE) device*" under the reference **ES 10/1945** in The National Archives -
<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/SearchUI/Details?uri=C11028360>.

- e) *"Peaceful uses of nuclear energy (PNE): correspondence"* under the reference **ES 13/65** in The National Archives -
<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/SearchUI/Details?uri=C11514067>
- f) *"Notes on a peaceful nuclear explosion (PNE) excavation device"* under the reference **ES 10/1946** in The National Archives -
<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/SearchUI/Details?uri=C11028361>.
- g) *"The French Peaceful Nuclear Explosion (PNE) device and what it tells us about the ATC"* under the reference **ES 12/445** in The National Archives -
<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/SearchUI/Details?uri=C11118390>
- h) *"AWRE Working Party on the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Explosives"* under the reference **ES 15/334** in The National Archives -
<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/SearchUI/Details?uri=C11548899>

You were provided with the files relating to parts b and c in February 2014. With regards to parts a, d, e, f, g and h of your request, please find the enclosed information, which comprises information from the remaining six files. We have made every effort to ensure that the text is readable, although the age of the documents means that some are less clear.

I must inform you that some of the information has been withheld under qualified exemptions Section 24 (National Security) and Section 27 (International Relations).

Some of the information is exempt under Section 24 (1) which has been engaged because protection of nuclear weapons design, capability, performance and source data is needed to safeguard national security. Some information has been excluded under Section 27 (1) (a), (c) and (d) as unauthorised disclosure of this information would harm the relationships between the UK and its allies.

It has also been judged that some of the information relevant to your request falls within scope of absolute exemption Section 40(2) (personal information). As exemption Section 40(2) is absolute, a public interest test is not required and the names of individuals contained within the enclosed documents have been redacted.

In reaching this decision we applied a balance of public interest test to determine whether, in all the circumstances of the case, the greater public interest lies in withholding or releasing the information. It is recognised that there is a public interest in providing historical information about the 'Plowshare' programme and the peaceful use of nuclear explosives' as it contains information about nuclear technology, that is of significance to the history of nuclear weapons over the last 50 years. It is also recognised that the release of information demonstrates the department's commitment to transparency and openness regarding defence matters. However, it is concluded that, although the documents were written a number of years ago, the release of certain information could still have a significant impact by allowing a hostile group or nation to develop or refine their nuclear capability. It has also been decided to withhold certain information where

disclosure would endanger our continuing strategic international agreements, relations and obligations with key collaborative partners on the weapons programme. For both of these exemptions the balance of public interest has found against release.

We very much regret that the process took longer than anticipated, and can only apologise for the delay. If you have any queries about this request do not hesitate to contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

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 Information Rights Compliance team, 1st 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>.

Yours sincerely,


Defence Equipment & Support Policy Secretariat