



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Arabian Peninsula and Iran Department
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

17 August 2016

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0685-16

Thank you for your email of 20 July asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked for:

** Please provide the details of all overseas trips made by Alan Duncan while Special Envoy to Yemen (up to today's date) By details, I mean the dates of the trips, the destination, purpose and cost.*

** For each trip, please disclose the dates of all meetings, with whom Mr Duncan met, the duration and the reasons for the meeting.*

** Please provide the details of all overseas trips made by Alan Duncan while Special Envoy to Oman (up to today's date). By details, I mean the dates of the trips, the destination, purpose and cost.*

** For each trip, please disclose the dates of all meetings, with whom Mr Duncan met, the duration and the reasons for the meeting.*

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.

Sir Alan Duncan was appointed in his role as the Government's Special Envoy to Yemen on 4 August 2014 and served in this role until 17 July 2016. Sir Alan was appointed as the Government's Special Envoy to Oman from 4 August 2014 to 26 August 2015. Sir Alan made five visits to the Gulf from 2014-2016 and in doing so followed the same rules as apply to all FCO Ministerial travel. Sir Alan worked to help deliver the government's Yemen Strategy, which includes security, stability and development objectives, and separately, to maintain and further strengthen the UK's strong bilateral relationship with Oman.

Please find attached the information that the FCO can release to you. Some of the information has been withheld using the following exemptions, Section 27(1)(a) and Section 40.

We do not possess final copies of the programmes for the visits, as arranging calls in the region is complex and many calls will have changed or been cancelled at short notice, including on the day itself and even when they went ahead, timings would have invariably slipped. We have therefore provided the information in a digest.

Section 27 – international relations is a qualified exemption and is subject to a public interest test. Section 27(1)(a) of the FOIA recognises the need to protect information that would be likely to prejudice relations between the United Kingdom and other states if it was disclosed.

The application of s.27(1)(a) requires us to consider the public interest test arguments in favour of releasing and withholding the information. We acknowledge that releasing information on this issue would increase public knowledge about our relations with Oman and Yemen. However, s.27 (1) (a) recognises that the effective conduct of international relations depends upon maintaining trust and confidence between governments and the disclosure of information detailing the UK's interaction with these countries in relation to Oman and Yemen issues would be likely to damage the bilateral relationship with these countries. If the United Kingdom does not maintain this trust and confidence, its ability to protect and promote UK interests through international relations will be hampered, which will not be in the public interest. For these reasons we consider that, the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

Some of the information you have requested, is personal data relating to third parties, the disclosure of which would contravene one of the data protection principles. In such circumstances sections 40(2) and (3) of the Freedom of Information Act apply. In this case, our view is that disclosure would breach the first data protection principle. This states that personal data should be processed fairly and lawfully. It is the fairness aspect of this principle, which, in our view, would be breached by disclosure. In such circumstances, s.40 confers an absolute exemption on disclosure. There is, therefore, no public interest test to apply.

Under Section 21 of the Act, we are not required to provide information in response to a request if it is already reasonably accessible to the applicant. There are links, to information that is publically available, provided in the digest.

Once an FOI request is answered, it is considered to be in the public domain. To promote transparency, we may now publish the response and any material released on gov.uk in the [FOI releases](#) section. All personal information in the letter will be removed before publishing.

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Yours sincerely,

Arabian Peninsula and Iran Department



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