



Permanent Joint Headquarters (United Kingdom)

Middle East Team Secretariat
J9 Policy and Operations
Permanent Joint Headquarters,
Sandy Lane
NORTHWOOD, HA6 3HP

Mr Chris Cole
Drone Wars UK
Peace House
19 Paradise Street
Oxford
OX1 1DL

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TREAT OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE - TO2015/1580E

Dear Mr Cole,

Thank you for your letter of 21 January 2015 requesting clarification on the reasons why the Ministry of Defence has decided not to give the location of UK Reapers since the end of Operation Herrick. The Permanent Joint Headquarters in Northwood is responsible for all the UK's overseas operations, which is why I have been asked to respond to you.

I note in your letter that you have asked that the difference in terms of operational security between Operation HERRICK and Operation SHADER are set out as clearly as possible.

In Afghanistan there were a large number of air assets contributing to the overall ISAF mission. Given this we were able to release information on UK Reaper assets as this did not compromise capabilities by giving an indication of the level and area of coverage. As we drew down in Afghanistan, disclosing the capability in each location could have disclosed potential capability gaps which could have compromised security; this is when the UK ceased to release this information.

On Op SHADER, releasing the location of UK Reapers could disclose capability gaps and compromise security. Furthermore, for the protection of the other nations involved, the UK does not divulge their location in accordance with FOI qualified exemption Section 27 – International relations.

We will continue to keep this position under review and should the reasons for withholding the information cease to outweigh the public interest of releasing the information, we will seek to do so.

Yours sincerely,

Middle East Team Secretariat
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