



Ministry
of Defence

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Mr Chris Cole (Drone Wars UK)

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Date: 2 September 2015

Dear Mr Cole

Thank you for your email of 5 August 2015 which requested the following information:-

'Please can I ask, under Section 16 of the Freedom of Information Act (Duty to provide advice and assistance) for you to clarify how the strike figures given to me in this response (i.e the 'coalition method') and figures given to me in the past (the 'UK method') differ, in other words can you explain how these figures are arrived at'

Your correspondence has been treated as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and we can confirm that all of the information in scope of your request is held. The information you have requested can be found below.

UK Strike Definition

The UK MoD definition of a Strike is stated below, and is dependant on whether an attack is made against a pre-planned target or against a target identified during a combat engagement.

Targeting

Targets that are pre-planned are assigned a Basic Encyclopaedia (BE) number¹. This is used as a reference for how many strikes take place (e.g. two BE numbers equals two strikes). If multiple weapons are released against multiple joint designated point of impacts² (JDPIs) within a single BE Number, this will be classed as a single strike. If there are two BE Numbers, with multiple JDPIs, then this is classed as two strikes.

Combat Engagement and Self Defence

Targets that emerge during the conduct of an operation (such as enemy troops) are categorised using the following guidelines:

1. One weapon versus the original target equals one strike;

¹ A BE number is a unique identification number used as a reference to a particular installation within a theatre of operations. This may have sub-components (facilities) such as buildings, structures, etc. For example; **BE number 0427ZC2137** could be a compound, **O Suffix RT006** could be a building within that compound, **A17K4M** could be a particular impact point for a weapon, which will have a set of coordinates attached to it, the overall weapon impact point is, therefore, described as **0427ZC2137 RT006 A17K4M**.

² A JDPI is a weapon impact point designed to achieve the effect required with the weapon type available.

2. If the initial weapon fails to achieve the desired effect against the original target and a subsequent weapon of the same type is released by the same aircraft then this still equals one strike;
3. If a different weapon is used by the same platform against the original target then this constitutes an additional strike;
4. If enemy forces move from the original target and they are subsequently attacked in a different location, no matter what the distance, this constitutes an additional strike;
5. If there are multiple installations being struck (i.e. different installations which, if they had been pre-planned targets, would equate to different BE numbers), each will be classed as a separate strike. For example, two buildings co-located but each representing a different target will be classed as two strikes.

Coalition Strike Definition

The Coalition defines a strike as a target and time-based count, not aircraft or weapon-based. Regardless of the number of aircraft or weapons, a strike is an attack against a target within a timeframe consistent with a single engagement. By example, two Tornado aircraft drop two bombs each on the same target. This counts as one strike using the Coalition definition. While the two methods normally give similar results for pre-planned targets they often give different results for dynamic targets.

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 this office 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.org.uk>.

Yours sincerely,

PJHQ J9 FOI Secretariat