



Howell James CBE

70 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2AS

Telephone 020 7276 0650

Fax 020 7276 0822

E-mail howell.james@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk

Permanent Secretary, Government
Communication

2 May 2006

Steve Wood Esq.
Faculty of Business and Law
Liverpool John Moores University
John Foster Building
98 Mount Pleasant
Liverpool, L3 5UZ

Our ref: FOI240467

Dear Mr. Wood,

REVIEW OF REQUEST UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

I am responding to your email of 24 January 2006 to Colin Balmer requesting an internal review of the response to your Freedom of Information request of 24 November 2005. Colin Balmer has recently retired and I have assumed responsibility for FOI.

In conducting this internal review I should first like to clarify how your initial request was handled. The Cabinet Office has received various requests to publish information in relation to alleged discussions between the Prime Minister and President Bush about the bombing of the Al-Jazeera television station in Qatar. Yours was one such request. These requests appeared to be related to allegations in the press that a memo recording discussions between President Bush and the Prime Minister in April 2004, the leaking of which is currently the subject of a prosecution under the Official Secrets Act, includes references to the "bombing of the Al-Jazeera television station in Qatar". Against that background it was therefore assumed that those seeking publication of information in relation to these issues were seeking disclosure of that entire memo and, in that sense, that memo was therefore "relevant" to their requests.

However, you ask in your request for an internal review whether "the memo could be released in part through the process of redaction to restrict the viewing of any other surrounding information that was not the subject of my request." It is therefore clear, that you were not seeking disclosure of the entire memo and that you were, in fact, only seeking very specific information, i.e. "memos or notes that record President Bush's discussions with the Prime Minister about the bombing of the al-Jazeera television station in Qatar." As the Prime Minister's Official Spokesman confirmed on 17



January 2006 (see Government Press Briefings at www.number-10.gov.uk), the memo recording discussions between the Prime Minister and President Bush in April 2004 does not refer to the bombing of the al-Jazeera television station in Qatar. We therefore do not hold material falling within the scope of your request.

I trust this clarifies matters.

Yours
Howell James -

HOWELL JAMES

