



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

15th September 2009

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

Thank you for your request for information which we received on 18 July 2009 about discussions regarding the paying of ransoms by owners of sea-going vessels in order to secure the release of their vessels, crew and/or families from pirates, particularly off the coast of East Africa.

I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information falling within the terms of your request.

Please find 5 documents attached to this email which contains the information you requested.

The following exceptions were applicable to your request:

Information under Section 27

Information has specifically being withheld under section 27(1)(a) and (c) of the Act. In applying the required public interest test we have taken into consideration the factors in favour of disclosure. We recognise the public interest in greater transparency in how Government operates and on the issue of East African piracy, which has received significant UK media attention. However in this case disclosure of the information would be likely to prejudice relations between the United Kingdom and other states. Releasing this information would reveal detail of discussion within Her Majesty's Government on approaches to particular states or issues, and would also disclose information about other states' views or intentions provided in the course of diplomatic or political exchanges of views. It has been concluded that disclosing the information might have a negative effect on the UK's relationships with these states, and would potentially prejudice the interests of the UK abroad. It has therefore been judged that the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.