



From: Mr. M. Barbet, FOI Focal Point,  
**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**  
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UK/long

Mr Jonathan Bloch  
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Reference:  
18-04-2006-064823-002

Date:  
26th April 2006

Dear Mr Bloch,

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

1. Thank you for your request in which, under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000, you requested information about Operation Rockingham. It is confirmed that the Ministry of Defence holds the information that you have requested.
2. The origin and operations of Operation Rockingham are described in the Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction which was chaired by Lord Butler and published on 14 July 2004. The information on Operation Rockingham is at page 90 of the published report, which is available on the Butler Review website at: <http://www.butlerreview.org.uk/report/index.asp>.
3. Under Section 21 of the Act, we are not required to provide information which is already reasonably accessible to you, however, for convenience, a copy of this page is provided at Attachment A. You will see that it provides background information on why Operation Rockingham was set up, its purpose and the various organisations that it has supported during its existence.
4. You also requested information on the staffing composition of Operation Rockingham. At Attachment B is an extract from an MOD letter (DI GI AC R2/1/11 GI dated 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2003) which gives details of the staffing of Operation Rockingham. (An extract is provided as the remainder of the letter is not relevant to your request).
5. Finally, I can confirm that Operation Rockingham has not been disbanded.
6. If you are unhappy with the response or wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of this request, then you should contact the undersigned in the first instance. Should you remain dissatisfied, then you may apply for an internal review by contacting the Director of Information Exploitation, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB, (e-mail [Info-XD@mod.uk](mailto:Info-XD@mod.uk)).

7. If you are still unhappy 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 **normally** 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.informationcommissioner.gov.uk>.

Yours sincerely,

MBarbet

Extract from: *'Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction'* - published on 14 July 2004.

### **Operation Rockingham**

At the end of the first Gulf war, the United Nations Security Council passed a series of resolutions aimed at eliminating Iraq's nuclear, biological and chemical weapons capabilities, and programmes covering ballistic missiles with ranges in excess of 150 kilometres. These established the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM), which worked closely with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in pursuit of this goal. UK support to UNSCOM and the IAEA was provided as a cross-departmental initiative through a new organisation within the Defence Intelligence Staff known as Operation Rockingham.

From 1991 until the end of 1998, Rockingham was responsible for briefing some of the personnel who formed part of UNSCOM and IAEA inspection teams. It processed information received as a result of the inspections, and acted as a central source of advice on continuing inspection activity. Rockingham also advised FCO and MOD policy branches on the provision of UK experts from government and industry to work with UNSCOM and the IAEA as members of inspection teams. Rockingham included an officer detached to Bahrain to staff an organisation known as GATEWAY to co-ordinate briefings to, and debriefings of, inspection team members as they deployed to, and returned from, Iraq.

With the withdrawal of UNSCOM from Iraq in December 1998, Rockingham was reduced to a single member of staff. It continued to maintain a watching brief on matters related to possible future United Nations inspections in Iraq. GATEWAY was closed.

Rockingham was expanded again to provide UK support to UNMOVIC. Unlike UNSCOM, UNMOVIC inspectors were United Nations employees, and did not deploy in a national capacity. As a result, no official feedback from UNMOVIC was offered, nor expected. Rockingham did not brief or debrief individual inspectors. It did, however, continue to provide UNMOVIC and the IAEA with all-source UK intelligence assessments of the extent of Iraq's nuclear, biological, chemical and ballistic missile programmes, and information about sites of potential significance. Rockingham also assisted in the briefing of senior UNMOVIC staff and responded to a number of requests from UNMOVIC for specific information to assist its work. It acted as the focus for the work tasked by the JIC on the analysis of the Iraqi declaration of 7 December 2002.

After the second Gulf war, Rockingham became the UK focal point for intelligence support to the work of the Iraq Survey Group. In that role, Rockingham receives and distributes reporting from the ISG, and provides additional guidance and support to the ISG and UK customers, as required.

**Attachment B**

Extract from an MOD letter (DI GI AC R2/1/11 GI dated 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2003):

“Following the Gulf War and in order to support UK policy, in Iraq, there was a need to establish a conduit to provide UN inspectors in Iraq with intelligence to enable them to locate and destroy Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and proscribed missiles. Also the UN needed analytical support to successfully conduct their work. In addition, the FCO needed advice on the provision of UK inspectors. Operation ROCKINGHAM was established to provide these function. Initially the staff, drawn from Defence Intelligence but paid for by the FCO, comprised 3 in the DIS (1xB2, 2xCI) and 2 (2xCI/2 or equivalent Service rank) in Bahrain. Over time this reduced to 1xB2 and 1xCI/2 in the DIS with 1xC2 in Bahrain. In 1999 the staff member in Bahrain was disestablished and the DIS staff reduced to 1 xC1. In the summer of 2002 a VR collator was established, in December 2003 a C2 analyst was added and in February 2003 a Research Analyst was established”.