Dear [NAME],

Thank you for your e-mail of 15th September 2011, addressed myself. In your e-mail you requested:

"Could you let me have a list of dates on which official UK government invitations to the Defence and Security Equipment International exhibition were issued to each country not named in the 7th June parliamentary answer, namely:

- Algeria
- Angola
- Bahamas
- Bahrain
- Colombia
- Croatia
- Egypt
- Georgia
- Iraq
- Ireland
- Jordan
- Kazakhstan
- Kuwait
- Lebanon
- Malaysia
- Mexico
- Morocco
- Nigeria
- Oman
- Philippines
- Qatar
- Saudi Arabia
- Singapore
- Thailand
- UAE
- Vietnam."
Was it known at the time the answer was given that further invitations were to be issued? Was there a reason for the staggering of the invitations?

I can confirm that we do hold the information requested, however, the dates you have requested are being withheld under S27(1) as publishing the dates would create a list which could be interpreted as a list of priority, thereby causing offence to some countries. This could in turn damage the interests of the UK abroad.

In answering your final two questions it is important to understand that we begin with a list of countries that could possibly be invited. Once FCO have given clearance then we start to issues invitations but this is a process that is by its nature a protracted process. For each country the delegate(s) have to be selected which may involve consultation with embassy staff in each country. Invitations may also be issued to coincide with a high level visit where the invitation can be handed over in person by a minister or senior official. There is also a need to balance invitations in light of acceptances/declines throughout the process. These are some of the reasons that can affect when the invite is finally issued.

Therefore to answer your questions, we were aware that further invitations would be issued but we could not say categorically at the time of the PQ who would be invited, as the question came during the invitation process. It was therefore answered with the list we had available when the question came through. Although protracted slightly this year, for DSEI 2011 the invitations were issued between March and August.

You will no doubt be aware that we do publish a list of all countries invited shortly before the event when the invitation process is complete and update the list to show who actually attended as an official delegation. This list can be found at the URL address below.

http://www.ukti.gov.uk/defencesecurity/item/192120.html

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be addressed to: [email protected].

Please remember to quote the reference number in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner’s Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wimslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely,
Signed

UKTI Defence & Security Organisation
Policy & Resources Secretariat