

OIA-2016-2391

29 January 2016

**Valerie Morse**

[fyi-request-3492-14668023@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-3492-14668023@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear Ms Morse

I refer to your email of 18 December 2015 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA): *any information held by your agency regarding the Defence Industry Association annual conference created from November 16, 2015. In particular, but not limited to: any information regarding advice to the Minister of Defence or Senior Officers regarding the conference; any information or discussions with Police regarding protests at the conference; any information regarding communications plans or media.*

From 16 November 2015, advice was provided to senior New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) personnel attending the New Zealand Defence Industry Association Forum that there was the possibility of protest action on 17 and 18 November 2015. This advice is withheld under sections 6(a) and 6(c) of the OIA; to avoid prejudice to the security or defence of New Zealand, and to avoid prejudice to the maintenance of law.

NZDF Military Police liaised verbally with their New Zealand Police counterparts as to the likelihood of protest action and mitigations for it, as they routinely do for any large scale event that the NZDF participates in. The NZDF produced two security and intelligence documents relating to this, which are also withheld under sections 6(a) and 6(c) of the OIA.

The New Zealand Defence Industry Association was the organiser and host of the annual conference so the NZDF policing and security apparatus did not have lead or primacy for mitigation of any protest action.

The NZDF had no communication or media plan for the event, however the following media statement was released to various media outlets making inquiries regarding the role NZDF played in the 2015 event:

*“Representatives from the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) regularly attend the annual New Zealand Defence Industry Association Forum, and some personnel will be guest speakers at this year’s event.*

*The purpose of attending this forum is to ensure that through successful industry partnership the NZDF continues to deliver a combat capable, highly professional, and well equipped Force for New Zealand.*

*As a Defence Force our primary role is to protect our nation therefore we need to be equipped to succeed. This means providing our men and women with the means and equipment to do their job in an effective and efficient manner, whilst ensuring their safety which is paramount.*

*We are striving as a Defence Force to work smarter and to continuously find ways to be better at what we do. As the nature of combat and our other roles as an armed force changes, we are adapting and planning for the future.*

*The role of the NZDF is to protect New Zealand and its interests, and to do this it is imperative that we have effective and modern equipment for combat, as well as humanitarian and peacekeeping missions, and other tasks such as search and rescue.*

*We are aware of protests about the Forum and we respect the rights of protesters and believe the same respect should be afforded to forum attendees and organisers. There will be attendees from a variety of departments in both the NZDF and the Ministry of Defence, some registered as full delegates and some as day visitors. Final numbers have not yet been confirmed."*

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review my response to your request.

Yours sincerely



**G.R. SMITH**  
Commodore, RNZN  
Chief of Staff HQNZDF