



Headquarters
New Zealand Defence Force
Defence House
Private Bag 39997
Wellington Mail Centre
Lower Hutt 5045
New Zealand

OIA-2025-5277

19th

March 2025

[redacted]@rnz.co.nz

Dear [redacted]

I refer to your emails of 20 February 2025 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA),

US docs and reports show the JCO is expanding 'well beyond' its pre mid-2024 scope. NZDF told us in June 2024 'any expansion requires the appropriate permissions'; and 'governance of our participation in the JCO ultimately lies with the Chief of Defence Force, and participation is at the agreement of government'. How has the expansion noted in the reports affected NZ JCO? Pls detail all the ways.*

Any document/s about the expansion to electromagnetic spectrum operations begun July 2024 in relation to the NZ JCO (this might be NZDF docs, or US docs, etc)

Any document/s about the expansion to tactical surveillance, reconnaissance and tracking (Tac-SRT), begun Oct 2024 in relation to the NZ JCO (this might be NZDF docs, or US docs, etc)

Copies/evidence of the 'appropriate permissions' given to this expansion

Copies/evidence of the Chief of DF decisions and/or oversight about this expansion

The expansion of the Joint Commercial Operation (JCO) has not affected New Zealand JCO operations. The New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) remains within its remit for JCO as approved by Cabinet and no further permissions have been sought by the Chief of Defence Force. This part of your request is therefore refused in accordance with section 18(e) of the OIA as the requested information does not exist.

NZDF/MOD told RNZ in Sept 2024 OIA that the JCO 'information is used by satellite operators to ensure, among other things, that the movement of the satellites does not create hazards ... to move satellites to avoid collisions, and identify irresponsible activity or space debris'. With reference to the phrase "among other things", I request you list ALL these other things that the information is used for, including in every way it is used (pls note also where it might be used in defence operations or military operations, both/either offensive and defensive.

The phrase "among other things" was a generalisation, and no specific list exists. JCO information is provided to spacecraft operators to inform them of risks to spacecraft operation which include but are not limited to: launches; satellite movements and destruction; unstable spacecraft orientation; and, irresponsible or threatening behaviour.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review this response to your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that responses to official information requests are proactively released where possible. This response to your request will be published shortly on the NZDF website, with your personal information removed.

Yours sincerely

GA Motley

Brigadier

Chief of Staff HQNZDF