

July 15, 2019

VIA ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION

Office of Information Programs and Services
A/GIS/IPS/RL
U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC 20522-8100

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request

Dear Freedom of Information Officer:

Judicial Watch, Inc. (“Judicial Watch”) hereby requests that the Department of State produce the following records pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552 (“FOIA”):

- 1. Any and all records regarding, concerning, or related to the planned meeting between President Trump and other administration officials and Guatemalan President Jimmy Morales, which had been scheduled for July 15, 2019.**
- 2. Any and all records regarding, concerning, or related to the cancellation of the meeting referenced in part one of this request.**
- 3. Any and all records regarding, concerning, or related to the proposed “safe third country” agreement between the United States and Guatemala.**
- 4. Any and all related records of communication between any official, employee, or representative of the Department of State and any official, employee, or representative of any branch of the Government of Guatemala or the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG).**
- 5. Any and all records of communication between any official, employee, or representative of the Department of State and The New Yorker magazine staff writer Jonathan Blitzer.**

It is specifically requested that the search for records responsive to this request include, but not be limited to, any and all cables/teletypes, emails, or other records created or received by any Department of State official,

Department of State

July 15, 2019

Page 2 of 3

employee, or representative stationed at the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala City.

Please determine whether to comply with this request within the time period required by FOIA and notify us immediately of your determination, the reasons therefor, and the right to appeal any adverse determination to the head of the agency or his or her designee. 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(i). Please also produce all responsive records in an electronic format (“pdf” is preferred), if convenient. We also are willing to accept a “rolling production” of responsive records if it will facilitate a more timely production.

Judicial Watch also hereby requests a waiver of both search and duplication fees. We are entitled to a waiver of search fees because we are a “representative of the news media.” See 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(ii)(II); see also *Cause of Action v. Federal Trade Comm.*, 799 F.3d 1108 (D.C. Cir. 2015); *Nat’l Sec. Archive v. U.S. Dep’t of Defense*, 880 F.2d 1381 (D.C. Cir. 1989). For more than twenty years, Judicial Watch has used FOIA and other investigative tools to gather information about the operations and activities of government, a subject of undisputed public interest. We submit over 400 FOIA requests annually. Our personnel, which includes experienced journalists and professional writers on staff and under contract, use their editorial skills to turn this raw information into distinct works that are disseminated to the public via our monthly newsletter, which has a circulation of over 300,000, weekly email update, which has over 600,000 subscribers, investigative bulletins, special reports, www.judicialwatch.org website, *Corruption Chronicles* blog, and social media, including Facebook and Twitter, among other distribution channels. We have authored several books, including *Corruption Chronicles* by Tom Fitton (Threshold Editions, July 24, 2012), and another book, *Clean House* by Tom Fitton (Threshold Editions, Aug. 30, 2016). In 2012, we produced a documentary film, “District of Corruption,” directed by Stephen K. Bannon. Our “news media” status has been confirmed in court rulings. See, e.g., *Judicial Watch, Inc. v. U.S. Dep’t of Defense*, 2006 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 44003, *1 (D.D.C. June 28, 2006); *Judicial Watch, Inc. v. U.S. Dep’t of Justice*, 133 F. Supp.2d 52 (D.D.C. 2000). As a tax exempt, 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, we have no commercial interests and do not seek the requested records for any commercial use. Rather, we intend to use the requested records as part of our on-going investigative journalism and public education efforts to promote integrity, transparency, and accountability in government and fidelity to the rule of law.

Judicial Watch also is entitled to a waiver of both search fees and duplication fees because “disclosure of the information is in the public interest.” 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii). Disclosure of the requested records undoubtedly will shed light on “the operations or activities of the government.” *Cause of Action*, 799 F.3d at 1115 (quoting 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii)). Disclosure also is “likely to contribute significantly to the public understanding” of those operations or activities because, among other reasons, Judicial Watch intends to disseminate both the records and its findings to “a reasonably broad audience of persons interested in the subject” via its newsletter, email updates,

Department of State

July 15, 2019

Page 3 of 3

investigative bulletins, website, blog, and its other, regular distribution channels. *Cause of Action*, 799 F.3d at 1116 (quoting *Carney v. U.S. Dep't of Justice*, 19 F.3d 807, 815 (2d Cir. 1994)). Again, Judicial Watch does not seek the requested records for any commercial benefit or for its own "primary" benefit, but instead seeks them as part of its ongoing investigative journalism and public education efforts to promote integrity, transparency, and accountability in government and fidelity to the rule of law.

In the event our request for a waiver of search and/or duplication costs is denied, Judicial Watch agrees to pay up to \$300.00 in search and/or duplication costs. Judicial Watch requests that it be contacted before any such costs are incurred, in order to prioritize search and duplication efforts.

If you do not understand this request or any portion thereof, or if you feel you require clarification of this request or any portion thereof, please contact us immediately at 814-691-9806 or sdunagan@judicialwatch.org.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Sean Dunagan
Judicial Watch, Inc.