

In June 2003 members of staff at the British Embassy in Uzbekistan made a number of potentially serious complaints against Craig Murray. The FCO is, of course, obliged to take such complaints seriously, and investigate them under its Misconduct Procedures.

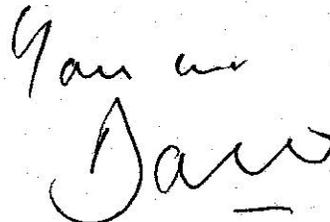
In line with these procedures, a fact-finding investigation was carried out to determine whether or not a formal disciplinary allegation would be made. As a result of this investigation, it was decided that, of an original 18 complaints, there was a case to answer in three. These were put to Mr Murray as formal allegations. The other complaints were not taken forward, but the investigation did not find any evidence that they were malicious, or made in bad faith.

At a disciplinary hearing held on 22 January 2004, Sir Richard Stagg, the then Director General for Corporate Affairs, ultimately upheld only one of the three allegations: that Craig Murray disobeyed instructions from the FCO in London not to talk about the allegations in his case with Embassy staff. For this, Mr Murray received a written warning. I know that you have misgivings about this finding. But it is standard practice, in FCO disciplinary investigations, to instruct the person involved not to discuss the details of the allegations or the progress of the case with colleagues. The FCO's Human Resources Directorate believe, quite reasonably in my view, that disciplinary investigations can be compromised by discussion of allegations among colleagues, particularly with those who may be in some way involved. Mr Murray chose to ignore the instruction he was given, which led to the sanction against him.

Mr Murray appealed against the decision, and in June 2004 Michael Jay, the then Permanent Under-Secretary, heard his appeal. He upheld Sir Richard Stagg's decision.

In October 2004 Mr Murray was suspended from duty for a second time, and withdrawn from his post, following comments he made on the BBC's 'Today' programme. The reason for this was that his appearance on the programme may have contravened Diplomatic Service Regulations concerning unauthorised contact by members of staff with the media. A further investigation was to have been carried out into this incident, but was put on hold, due to concerns about Mr Murray's health. In February 2005 Mr Murray applied for early severance terms, which were granted, before the second investigation and disciplinary process had run its course. The matter was therefore dropped.

I hope this full account of the circumstances of Craig Murray's case clarifies events leading up to his departure from the FCO, and reassures you that FCO internal procedures were applied fairly and correctly.



**LORD HOWELL  
MINISTER OF STATE**