



## OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

Room G/8, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ

Telephone: 020 7271 0839

Email: [acoba@acoba.gov.uk](mailto:acoba@acoba.gov.uk)

Website: <http://www.gov.uk/acoba>

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### **BUSINESS APPOINTMENT APPLICATION: LIEUTENANT GENERAL THOMAS BECKETT CBE**

The Committee has been asked to consider an application from Lt Gen Thomas Beckett, Defence Senior Adviser Middle East (DSAME) based in the MOD Head Office in London. Lt Gen Beckett has been invited to become Executive Director – Middle East at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) when he leaves Crown service in May 2018. This is a full-time, paid post.

IISS is a registered charity researching political and military conflict. It describes itself as a non-partisan organisation, independent of Government and other bodies and its mission is to, “promote the adoption of sound policies to further global peace and security and maintain civilised international relations.”

Lt Gen Beckett’s role will be to lead the IISS-Middle East office in Bahrain as the centre of IISS scholarship in the region providing independent, high-quality research and analysis.

When considering this application the Committee took into account the following:

- Lt Gen Beckett has been DSAME since January 2015 and will remain in the role until January 2018.
- His duties as DSAME are to communicate UK bilateral policy and strategy to Middle Eastern and North African nations and to seek opportunities for mutually advantageous bilateral cooperation. The MOD Business Appointments Panel have confirmed that Lt Gen Beckett’s role is not expected to change between now and leaving this role in January 2018.
- Lt Gen Beckett and the MOD Business Appointments Panel have confirmed that he has not had any contractual dealings with IISS while in office or involvement in any decisions that might affect the business of the organisation.
- Lt Gen Beckett has had official contact with IISS and attended their Manama dialogue event in 2014, 2015, and 2016 in support of the Secretary of State for Defence, Minister Defence Procurement and the Chief of the Defence Staff, as part of his DSAME role.
- The IISS generates income to fund its research and operations from a wide variety of sources including governments, foundations, private companies and individuals. It sells publications and membership packages, convenes major conferences with host-nation and private sector support, and bids successfully for research grants. The MOD currently has

one contract valued at £44K with IISS for a seminar and other UK Government departments are listed on the IISS website as sources of funding.

- Lt Gen Beckett has explained that IISS routinely deals with Governments, including HMG, but it neither lobbies nor is engaged in advocacy.
- Air Chief Marshall Sir Stuart Peach (Chief of the Defence Staff) is supportive of Lt Gen Beckett's application as his Countersigning Officer. He notes that IISS' research and analysis benefits the MOD and the UK's armed forces.
- The Committee also took into account the views of the MOD Business Appointments Panel, who were content with the appointment subject to a 2-year lobbying ban.

It is unusual for the Committee to consider applications significantly in advance of the proposed start date for an appointment. However, in view of the particular circumstances in this case, including the nature of the organisation that he is seeking to join, the Committee is prepared to provide advice now. However, its recommendation is made on the basis of the description of Lt Gen Beckett's MOD role as provided in his application and set out above; and on the understanding that he will have no involvement in awarding any contracts or grants to IISS for the remainder of his time as DSAME.

The Secretary of State for Defence accepted the Committee's advice that the appointment be subject to the following conditions:

- That he should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of himself or the organisation to which this advice refers) any privileged information available to him from his time in Crown service;
- For two years from his last day in Crown service, he should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK Government on behalf of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, nor should he make use, directly or indirectly, of his Government and/or Crown service contacts to influence policy or secure funding or business on its behalf. This would not prevent him from having routine contact with the MOD and Government on matters that are an integral part of the normal course of business for IISS.

By 'privileged information' we mean official information to which a Minister or Crown servant has had access as a consequence of his or her office or employment and which has not been made publicly available. Applicants are also reminded that they may be subject to other duties of confidentiality, whether under the Official Secrets Act or otherwise.

The Business Appointment Rules explain that the restriction on lobbying means that the former Crown servant/Minister "*should not engage in communication with Government (Ministers, civil servants, including special advisers, and other relevant officials/public office holders) – wherever it takes place - with a view to influencing a Government decision, policy or contract award/grant in relation to their own interests or the interests of the organisation by which they are employed, or to whom they are contracted or with which they hold office.*"

I should be grateful if you would ensure that we are informed as soon as Lt Gen Beckett takes up this position, or if it is announced that he will do so (I enclose a form for this purpose). We shall otherwise not be able to deal with any enquiries, since we do not release information about appointments which have not been taken up or announced, and this could lead to a false assumption being made about whether he had complied with the rules.

I should also be grateful if you would ask that Lt Gen Beckett informs us if he proposes to extend or otherwise change the nature of his role as, depending on the circumstances, it may be necessary for him to make a fresh application.

Once the appointment has been publicly announced or taken up, we will publish this letter on the Committee's website and include the main details of the application, together with the Advisory Committee's advice, in the regularly updated consolidated list on our website and in the next annual report.

Yours sincerely

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Nicola Richardson  
Committee Secretariat

