



**OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS**

G/08 Ground Floor, 1 Horse Guards Road SW1A 2HQ

Telephone: 020 7271 0839

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

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

28 January 2020

**BUSINESS APPOINTMENT APPLICATION: Air Vice Marshal Ian Morrison CBE**

1. The Committee has been asked to consider an application from Air Vice Marshal Morrison on setting up an Independent Consultancy. Air Vice Marshal Morrison was Acting Air Marshal and Director General at the Ministry of Defence, responsible for supplying defence equipment and services to Saudi Armed Forces (Defence Saudi Armed Forces Projects [MOD SAP]) from September 2012 – April 2018.

2. His last day in post was 4 April 2018, and his last day in Crown service was 15 October 2018.

Application details

3. Air Vice Marshal Morrison has sought the Committee's advice on setting up an Independent Consultancy. Air Vice Marshal Morrison states he will provide consultancy and Non-executive advisory support to the management boards of client UK based companies in the aviation, defence and security fields, focusing on corporate governance, structure, leadership, management development, along with providing advice on the design/development of strategic plans and delivery roadmaps, and Business development.

4. The MOD Business Appointments Panel considered Air Vice Marshal Morrison's application and confirmed Air Vice Marshal Morrison would have had access to MOD policy, plans and strategies as these relate to MOD Saudi Arabia Projects and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The MOD confirmed that whilst he had some official dealings with BAE Systems in office, he had no access to detailed commercial information or pricing by virtue of his role in office. However, by virtue of his Senior Command and RAF service, he will have established many contacts across the MOD and wider Government. Further the MOD recognised that should he have involvement in Saudi government-facing activity relating to the Saudi British Defence Cooperation, or other matters specific to his time in office on behalf of his prospective clients, this would raise risks under the Rules and offer an unfair

advantage. Overall, the MOD considered that any gain or perceived gain would be minimal and considered the setting up of a consultancy was low risk.

5. The MOD Business Appointments Panel recommended that Air Vice Marshal Morrison's independent consultancy be subject restrictions which prevent:

- the use of privileged information he had access to by virtue of his time in office;
- him lobbying the UK MOD on behalf of his prospective clients, in particular they note he must not engage with the MOD in relation to the Saudi British Defence Cooperation programme or the Salam project on behalf of his prospective clients;
- him from advising his prospective clients in relation to bids and contracts with the MOD;
- Him from using contacts gained within the MOD and in other governments and organisations to benefit his prospective clients.
- In addition the MOD recommended, as is usual, that he return to the Committee for advice on each commission he wishes to take up.

### The Committee's Consideration

#### **Consultancy**

6. When considering Air Vice Marshal Morrison's application to set up an independent consultancy, the Committee<sup>1</sup> noted that there is some overlap between your former role in the MOD and the general nature of the work his consultancy will take on.

7. The Committee took into account its consideration of similar cases. It is the Committees' experience that applications where there is a connection between former Crown servants' responsibilities in Government and the area they are looking to work in outside Government, are more likely to give rise to risks under the Rules. The Committee considered there is a potential risk he could be seen to offer his future clients an unfair advantage if he were to work for organisations which contract or may contract in the future with the UK MOD or other Governments he had involvement with in office.

8. The Committee also considered that by virtue of his role as Director General Saudi Armed Forces Projects he could be seen to have access to general sensitive information regarding policy, plans and strategies especially in regards to Saudi Arabia. Therefore, he may have had access to information which could be seen to give an unfair advantage to his clients.

9. However, there is a ban on disclosing privileged information which it would draw his attention to. Further, the Committee considered a ban on advising on bids and contracts related to the MOD and a ban on lobbying, including via contacts he has made in Crown service, appropriately mitigate the risks above. For the avoidance of doubt, the Committee would like to make it clear that this would include direct engagement with the MOD, the MOD SAP and the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on behalf of his clients (including, but not limited to Saudi British Defence Cooperation programme or the Salam project).

#### **Future Commissions**

---

<sup>1</sup> This application for advice was considered by Sir Alex Allan; Jonathan Baume; Baroness Angela Browning; Richard Thomas; Lord Larry Whitty; John Wood; and Mike Weir.

10. Whether the conditions set out below can sufficiently mitigate the risks presented by any future commission Air Vice Marshal Morrison proposes to take up will depend on the specific details of each piece of work. Further conditions may be appropriate. As is usual in such cases, Air Vice Marshal Morrison will need to seek advice from the Committee for each commission he wishes to accept.

11. The Committee will consider with each commission whether the restrictions below sufficiently mitigate the risk attached and will decide whether each commission is consistent with the terms of the consultancy, considering any relevant factors under the Business Appointment Rules. **The Committee would draw his attention to the fact that, in particular, the nature of any work in the UK and KSA defence sector will need particular consideration.** For example, though it is not currently his intention, should Air Vice Marshal Morrison seek to work on matters he had direct responsibility for in office, the Committee would consider whether a waiting period may be required. The Committee will consider such risks on a case by case basis.

12. Additionally, when seeking work and/or commissions, Air Vice Marshal Morrison is advised to adhere to the conditions below.

13. The Secretary of State for Defence accepted the Committee's advice that, under the Business Appointment Rules, the Air Vice Marshal Morrison's independent consultancy be subject to the following conditions:

- that he should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of himself or the organisations to which this advice refers) any privileged information available to him from his time in office;
- for two years from his last day in Crown service office, he should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK MOD on behalf of those he advises under his independent consultancy (including parent companies, subsidiaries and partners); nor should he or should he make use, directly or indirectly, of his MOD or government contacts to influence policy, secure funding/business or otherwise unfairly benefit those he advises under his independent consultancy (including parent companies, subsidiaries and partners);
- for two years from his last day in Crown service, he should not become personally involved in lobbying contacts he has developed during Crown service, such as at BAE Systems, and in other Governments, such as that of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for the purpose of securing business for those he advises under his independent consultancy (including parent companies, subsidiaries and partners);
- for two years from his last day in Crown service, he should not provide advice to any company or organisation on the terms of, or with regard to the subject matter of, a bid with, or contract relating directly to the work of the UK Government, UK MOD, MODSAP or their trading funds;
- for two years from his last day in Crown service, before accepting any commissions for his independent consultancy and or/before extending or otherwise changing the nature of his commissions, he should seek advice from the Committee. The Committee will decide whether each commission is consistent with the terms of the

consultancy and consider any relevant factors under the Business Appointment Rules.

14. 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.

15. 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."

16. I should be grateful if you would ensure that we are informed as soon as Air Vice Marshal Morrison takes up this position, or if it is announced that he will do so. 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.

17. I should also be grateful if you would ask that Air Vice Marshal Morrison 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.

18. Once this consultancy has been publicly announced or is live we will publish this letter on the Committee's website, and where appropriate, refer to it in the relevant annual report.

Yours sincerely

Isabella Wynn  
**Committee Secretariat**