



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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BUSINESS APPOINTMENT APPLICATION: Sir Alexander William Younger KCMG, Independent Consultancy -the Safa Partnership.

1. Sir Alex, former Chief of the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), sought advice from the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (the Committee) under the government's Business Appointments Rules for former Crown servants (the Rules) on his proposal to establish an independent consultancy, the Safa Partnership. The material information taken into consideration by the Committee is set out in the below annex.
2. The purpose of the Rules is to protect the integrity of the government. Under the Rules, the Committee's remit is to consider the risks associated with the actions and decisions made during Sir Alex's time in office, alongside the information and influence a former Crown servant may offer his consultancy and its future clients.
3. The Committee considered whether this appointment was unsuitable given the heightened risks associated with someone of his seniority and the broad range of his responsibilities and access to information he had as Chief of the SIS. The Committee has advised that a number of conditions be imposed to mitigate the general risks under the Rules. However, this is just the first step in the process and the potential risks to the integrity of government can only be considered when further applications are made for advice in relation to each client. This does not imply the Committee has taken a view on the appropriateness of this consultancy for a former Chief of the SIS in any other respect.
4. The Rules set out that Crown servants must abide by the Committee's advice¹. It is an applicant's personal responsibility to manage the propriety of any appointment. Former Crown servants are expected to uphold the highest standards of propriety and act in accordance with the 7 Principles of Public Life.

The Committee's Consideration

¹ Which apply by virtue of the Civil Service Management Code, The Code of Conduct for Special Advisers, The Queen's Regulations and the Diplomatic Service Code

Consultancy

5. When considering Sir Alex's application to set up the Safa Partnership, the Committee took into account that he proposes to set up a consultancy which is broadly defined as offering advice '*focused on geo-political risk, cyber and digital leadership*'. The Committee² considered the broad nature of the consultancy to raise potential risks.
6. The Committee recognised it would not be improper for Sir Alex to operate a consultancy which draws on generic skills and experience he gained from his time in government. However, there are risks that arise under the government's Business Appointment Rules, where work is related to his time in office. Given his role as the former Chief of the SIS, he will have had oversight of a wide range of information and policy that may provide an unfair advantage to a broad range of organisations. There are also risks attached with his access to contacts within government and his potential to offer unfair influence.
7. The Committee would remind Sir Alex that he must not draw on privileged insight from his time in office, generally or more specifically - for example around geopolitics, international risk and cyber - which the Committee noted he might be seen to have insight into. It is important to note that alongside the Committee's advice, Sir Alex is bound by the Official Secrets Act and an ongoing duty of confidentiality. In addition, the Committee notes that nine months has passed since he was in service, putting some space between his access to government and his starting this consultancy.
8. The Committee considered it was possible to mitigate the general risks presented in this application by imposing conditions on the consultancy itself, including the standard condition which prevents individuals' from drawing on privileged information. Further conditions below include a ban on lobbying the UK government and a restriction on providing advice on the terms of, a bid or contract relating directly to the work of the UK government, to mitigate the potential for unfair advantage to his clients if they apply for contracts or funding from the government.
9. The Committee also noted that as the former Head of SIS, there is a risk associated with his influence and contacts within the security sector. Therefore the Committee would draw Sir Alex's attention to the below restriction that makes it clear he should not use contacts he has developed in the security sector and other organisations for the purpose of securing business for any company or organisation.

Future commissions

10. Sir Alex will need to seek advice from the Committee for each commission he wishes to accept. Whether the conditions set out below can sufficiently mitigate

² This application for advice was considered by Jonathan Baume; Andrew Cumpsty; Sarah de Gay; Isabel Doverty; The Rt Hon Lord Pickles; Richard Thomas; Mike Weir; Lord Larry Whitty and Dr Susan Liataud.

the risks presented by any future commission he proposes to take up will depend on the specific details of each piece of work.

11. Given the broadly defined nature of Sir Alex's consultancy, the Committee wanted to make it clear that applications where there is a connection between his former responsibilities and the area he is looking to work in outside government, will be more likely to give rise to risks under the Rules and any such application will need close scrutiny. This risk is heightened given his seniority and the broad range of his responsibilities and the access to information he had as Chief of the SIS. The Committee will therefore need to carefully consider the suitability of any work that relates to his role in office, and may advise that a further waiting period is required. Where conditions and a suitable waiting period cannot appropriately mitigate the risks, the Committee may advise the work is unsuitable³ to take up within the two years the Rules apply. The Committee will consider such risks on a case by case basis.

12. The Committee also advises that when seeking work and/or commissions, he should adhere to the conditions below.

13. The Committee advises, under the Government's Business Appointment Rules, that this appointment, to set up an **Independent Consultancy, the Safa Partnership**, should be subject to the following conditions:

- He should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of himself or the persons or organisations 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 or any of its Arm's Length Bodies on behalf of those he advises under his independent consultancy (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients); nor should he make use, directly or indirectly, of his contacts in the government and/or Crown service contacts to influence policy, secure business/funding or otherwise unfairly advantage those he advises under his independent consultancy (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients);
- for two years from his last day in Crown service, he should not provide advice to on behalf of those he advises under his independent consultancy (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients) 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 or any of its Arm's Length Bodies;
- for two years from his last day in Crown service, he should not become personally involved in lobbying contacts he has developed during his time in office and in other governments and organisations for the purpose of securing business for any company or organisation (including parent companies, subsidiaries and partners); and

³ Should an applicant subsequently take up or announce this work ACOBA will publish relevant information.

- 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, the Civil Service Code 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 inform us as soon as Sir Alex takes up employment with this organisation, or if it is announced that Sir Alex will do so, either by returning the enclosed form or by emailing the office at the above address. We shall otherwise not be able to deal with any enquiries, since we do not release information about appointments that have not been taken up or announced. This could lead to a false assumption being made about whether Sir Alex has complied with the Rules.
 17. Please also inform us if Sir Alex 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 the appointment has been publicly announced or taken up, 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

Annex - Material information

1. Sir Alex said the Safa Partnership will provide advice focused on geo-political risk, cyber and digital leadership.
2. The SIS, Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the Cabinet Office provided their views on this application. The SIS and FCDO confirmed they were not aware of anything with direct impact, although Sir Alex will have been involved in wider discussions about security, cyber, and foreign policy. It confirmed Sir Alex remains bound by the Official Secrets Act.
3. All departments confirmed they had no concerns with the setting up of this consultancy and recommended the standard conditions apply.