



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

G/7 Ground Floor, 1 Horse Guards Road SW1A 2HQ

Telephone: 020 7271 0839

Email: acoba@acoba.gov.uk

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

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BUSINESS APPOINTMENT APPLICATION: Lieutenant General Sir Nick Borton KCB DSO MBE, former Commander of the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps, Ministry of Defence. Paid appointment with Praetorian Global Services.

1. Lieutenant General Sir Nick (Lt Gen Sir Nick) 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 work with Praetorian Global Services (PGS) as an advisor.
2. The purpose of the Rules is to protect the integrity of the government. The Committee has considered the risks associated with the actions and decisions Lt Gen Sir Nick made during his time in office, alongside the information and influence he may offer PGS. The material information taken into consideration by the Committee is set out in the annex.
3. The Committee's advice is not an endorsement of the appointment - it imposes a number of conditions to mitigate the potential risks to the government associated with the appointment under the Rules.
4. The Rules¹ set out that Crown servants must abide by the Committee's advice. 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.

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

The Committee's consideration of the risk presented

5. PGS is a newly established civilian security and consulting firm. It aims to provide services in civilian security such as provision of security guards, security patrols and demining; and consulting services in data management, risk analysis, assurance, supply chain resilience and capability development. It plans to operate exclusively in Southern Africa, Namibia and Tanzania. As an advisor, Lt Gen Sir Nick told the Committee that his role will include leadership, strategy, governance oversight and business development.
6. As PGS is a new company, there is no relationship, commercial or otherwise, between PGS and Lt Gen Sir Nick's former department, the Ministry of Defence (MOD). Further, he made no decisions nor had any specific responsibility for the civilian security sector in which the company plans to operate. Therefore, the risk is low that this role was offered as a result of decisions made or actions taken in office.
7. Lt Gen Sir Nick will have had access to a broad range of sensitive information relating to operations and training strategies and protocols. There is a risk these could be seen to provide organisations operating in the defence and security sector with potential unfair insight. The Committee² noted there are a number of mitigating factors that reduce the risks associated with his access to information:
 - He had no responsibility for civilian security whilst in service at the MOD.
 - His role was focused on operations relating to the war in Ukraine and deterrence in Europe limiting his access to information on other operation matters.
 - The MOD confirmed it was not aware of any specific information that would offer an unfair advantage. For example, his role had not recently included involvement in/access to information about humanitarian aid or stabilisation.
 - He has not had any responsibility or involvement in matters related to Africa in office - which is where PGS plans to operate.
 - There will have been a four-month gap between when he left his operational role and therefore when he last had access to sensitive information, and when it is proposed he takes up his role with PGS.
8. There are risks with any senior military official leaving office and offering potential unfair access and influence to the UK MOD, or potentially NATO

² This application for advice was considered by Andrew Cumpsty; Isabel Doverty; Sarah de Gay; The Rt Hon Baroness Jones of Whitchurch; The Rt Hon Lord Eric Pickles; and Mike Weir. Hedley Finn OBE, Michael Prescott and Dawid Konotey-Ahulu were unavailable.

allied militaries given he worked closely with troops from other NATO nations. The risks here are limited given the company is operating outside of the UK, Europe, and other NATO areas of operation and will be focused on civilian security.

9. As this is a business development role, there is also a risk that Lt Gen Sir Nick may have contacts external to NATO and the UK MOD that might unfairly advantage PGS in securing business. This risk is significantly limited given he has had no official dealings or operational roles in Africa.
10. The unknown nature of PGS' potential clients may present risks that cannot be considered and mitigated. This is limited for the same reason as above - the company is operating outside his areas of responsibility in office, both operationally and geographically.
11. It is significant that Praetorian confirmed its understanding and compliance of the conditions, and explained that the conditions will be subsumed into its risk management process. It said that a multistage risk process for each project has been established, and that oversight will maintain compliance with the Committee's advice.

The Committee's advice

12. The Committee considered the opportunity to offer an unfair advantage is limited here, given the company will be operating in civilian security in Africa. These matters are outside of his areas of operational responsibility and leadership within the NATO facing corps he was in command of. The Committee considered it was appropriate to impose a limitation to this work to make the separation from his time in UK defence and this role clear, particularly given the clients are as yet unknown. In keeping with the role as described this condition prevents Lt General Sir Nick from working in the UK defence sector.
13. The remaining conditions below make it clear Lt Gen Sir Nick must not make use of his access to privileged information, contacts or influence gained from his time in Crown service to the unfair advantage of PGS and its clients.
14. The Committee advises, under the government's Business Appointment Rules, that Lt Gen Sir Nick's role with **Praetorian Global Services** 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, MOD or NATO or their arm's length bodies on behalf of Praetorian Global Services (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients); nor should he make use, directly or indirectly, of his contacts in the government and/or ministerial contacts to influence policy, secure business/funding or otherwise unfairly advantage Praetorian Global Services (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients);
- 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 in other governments and organisations for the purpose of securing business for Praetorian Global Services (including parent companies, subsidiaries and partners and clients);
- for two years from his last day in Crown service, he should not provide advice to Praetorian Global Services (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients) on the terms of, or with regard to the subject matter of, a bid or contract with, or relating directly to the work of the UK government, the Ministry of Defence/ its trading funds, NATO allied militaries, or any of their arm's length bodies; and
- for two years from his last day in Crown service, he should not advise Praetorian Global Services (including parent companies, subsidiaries or partners) or its clients on the UK defence sector.

15. The advice and the conditions under the government's Business Appointment Rules relate to an applicant's previous role in government only; they are separate from rules administered by other bodies such as the Office of the Registrar of Consultant Lobbyists, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards and the Registrar of Lords' Interests³. It is an applicant's personal responsibility to understand any other rules and regulations they may be subject to in parallel with this Committee's advice.

16. 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.

³ All Peers and Members of Parliament are prevented from paid lobbying under the House of Commons Code of Conduct and the Code of Conduct for Members of the House of Lords. Advice on obligations under the Code can be sought from the Parliamentary Commissioners for Standards, in the case of MPs, or the Registrar of Lords' Interests, in the case of peers.

17. 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'*.
18. Lt Gen Sir Nick must inform us as soon as he takes up employment with this organisation, or if it is announced that he will do so, by emailing the office at the above address. He must also inform 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.
19. 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

Shaneez Mithani
Committee Secretariat

Annex - material information

The role

1. Lt Gen Sir Nick wishes to take up a paid part-time role as an advisor with Praetorian Global Services. PGS is a newly established company that is registered in Mauritius. There is a holding company in the UK with the same name that was registered in April 2024. Lt gen Sir Nick said this is a holding company to be used for payment purposes. PGS plans to operate exclusively in Southern Africa, Tanzania and Namibia. If it expands, it will look to expand to the Middle East, in the first instance.
2. PGS proposes to work in the civilian defence sector and potentially expand into offer consulting services including
 - a. Security guards.
 - b. Security patrols.
 - c. Demining.
 - d. Data management.
 - e. Risk analysis.
 - f. Assurance.
 - g. Supply chain resilience.
 - h. Real life support.
 - i. Capability development and training.
3. Lt Gen Sir Nick said that joining a company set up by two other people - one who is an established businessman in South Africa and one who is an ex-army officer with previous experience operating a security company in Africa. In his paid, part-time role as an advisor, Lt Gen Sir Nick said that his responsibilities would include:
 - a. Leading on strategy for the company developing its new business only in Southern Africa.
 - b. Providing leadership and guidance to the chief operating officer and other employees.
 - c. Assisting with business development and outreach .
 - d. Providing standard oversight of contracts and legal compliance.
4. He states this role will not involve any contact with government, the UK MOD or NATO allied militariesThere are no plans for the Praetorian Group to work with the UK or NATO allied militaries. Lt Gen Sir Nick said that while he had an international career at the MOD, he has not worked in Africa and does not have any contacts in the region that PGS will be operating in.

Dealings in office

5. Lt Gen Sir Nick said that he was responsible for any policy, regulatory, commercial or operational decisions specific to PGS, and that, as it is a new company, there is no departmental relationship between PGS and the MOD.
6. He stated that his role as Commander of the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps was operational. He stated that he did not have any access to sensitive information and also noted the information readily available through Janes, a defence intelligence resource.⁴

Department Assessment

7. The MOD and NATO have confirmed the details provided in Lt Gen Sir Nick's application, along with the following:
 - He did not make any decisions - policy, regulatory, operational or commercial - specific to PGS while in office.
 - He was not involved in any specific negotiations with competitors of PGS, and any risk of unfair advantage to PGS over its competitors is low.
 - There is no departmental relationship with PGS - which is in the process of being established .
 - While Lt Gen Sir Nick will have had contacts at the highest levels of defence and extensive knowledge of MOD policy and operations, there is no concern as to his access to information. He did not spend any time during his tenure on stabilisation and de-mining operations as his role was focused exclusively on the war in Ukraine and deterrence in Europe.
8. The MOD recommended:
 - a. A privileged information ban;
 - b. A lobbying ban;
 - c. A ban on advising on bids and contracts;
 - d. A ban on using his contacts developed outside of government, while in office, for business development purposes;
 - e. Limitations to his role to prevent him from advising on matters which creates a conflict of interest, such as advising in the UK defence sector.

Praetorian Global Services

9. Lt Gen Sir Nick's proposed employer confirmed, in writing, its understanding of and agreement to comply with the Committee's advice. It said that the restrictions will be complied with by incorporating them into PGS' risk management process. This will consist of:
 - a. *'Capturing all potential projects in our 'Business Development' register.*

⁴ <https://www.janes.com/defence-news/>

- b. A weekly meeting is held, during which each new project is assessed, including its potential risks. For each ACOBA Condition, a data cell will be generated where an assessment will be made as to whether the project would in any way require Lt Gen Sir Nick Borton to compromise those conditions.*
- c. If a project is assessed as a risk to compliance with the Conditions, then it will be designated as such and Lt Gen Sir Nick Borton will not be exposed to it in any way (i.e. talked to about it, asked about his view on it, asked for help progressing it).*
- d. If it is unclear whether or not a project is a risk to compliance with the Conditions, or is assessed as not being a risk to compliance with Conditions, Lt Gen Sir Nick Borton will be briefed on the project and asked to confirm whether he can identify any potential risk to compliance with the conditions. If it is a risk, it will be designated as such. If it is not a risk then Lt Gen Sir Nick Borton may be asked to provide advice on the project.*
- e. When a potential project is contracted to a client, its delivery (and risks associated with it) will be managed via our 'Projects' register. ACOBA Conditions will be added to this register and assessed on a weekly (and ad hoc as required) basis in the same manner as outlined above. This mechanism will ensure that should the nature or reality of a project shift during its delivery, that Lt Gen Sir Nick Borton does not compromise the ACOBA Conditions.'*