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## 3,500 military staff join arms firms

Guardian research shows scale of 'revolving door' between MoD and private sector

Nick Hopkins  
Rob Evans  
Richard Norton-Taylor

Senior military officers and Ministry of Defence officials have taken up more than 3,500 jobs in arms companies over the past 16 years, according to figures that reveal the extent of the "revolving door" between the public and private sector.

The data, compiled by the Guardian from freedom of information requests, shows how the industry swoops on former officials and military personnel once they have left service, with hundreds of senior officers being given jobs every year.

The figures for 2011-12 show 231 jobs went to former officials and military personnel - a rise from the previous

year's total of 101. Another 93 have been approved since January. In total 3,572 jobs have been approved since 1996.

The disclosure comes in the aftermath of a "jobs for generals" scandal that led yesterday to the resignation of the president of the Royal British Legion, Lieutenant General Sir John Kiszely, who was embarrassed in a newspaper lobbying sting.

Kiszely was one of several former senior members of the military caught on film by Sunday Times reporters who were pretending to seek lobbyists for a South Korean defence company.

Boasting about his connections, Kiszely described the annual Festival of Remembrance as a "tremendous networking opportunity" and said he was spending Christmas with the armed forces minister, Andrew Robathan.

In his resignation letter, Kiszely admitted he had made "exaggerated and foolish claims", but denied any impropriety.

Admiral Trevor Soar, second in command of the Royal Navy until the spring, has also quit his role as an advisor at the large UK defence and engineering company Babcock. The firm said Kiszely had been sacked from his role at the company, too.

The MoD began its own inquiry yesterday into the access that former members of the military have to serving officials. This may lead to a tightening of current restrictions and blanket bans on certain individuals approaching senior staff in the ministry.

Figures obtained by the Guardian relate to the number of jobs approved under business appointment rules for armed forces

personnel and MoD civilians. They show that there has been a regular flow into the private sector every year since records began in 1996. There has never been fewer than 101 and the highest is 360.

Bernard Jenkin, the Conservative MP who chairs a Commons committee that oversees the rules governing the appointment of former military personnel and ministers, told the Guardian it was time the government legislated in this area to bring proper transparency and accountability.

Jenkin said the advisory committee on business appointments (Acoba), which scrutinises when the top brass can accept new jobs, was toothless because it could be ignored.

"The Acoba is merely advisory and it will not do," he said. "There is no way

that the present arrangements provide the reassurance to the public or protection to anyone that might be crossing from the public sector to the private sector."

The furore began at the weekend with the Sunday Times investigation in which six former members of the military were approached for help by journalists purporting to be working for a defence firm.

Those fooled by the sting included Lord Dannatt, a former head of the army; Lieutenant General Richard Applegate, a former head of procurement at the MoD; and Lord Stirrup, a former chief of the defence staff.

All of those involved intimated they knew people at the top of the MoD who could help the firm. Some bragged about

Continued on page 6 »

“The UK government and the Scottish government have agreed to work together to ensure that a referendum on Scottish independence can take place”

*David Cameron*  
*Alex Salmond*

4»

ANDREW MILLIGAN/PA

## Britain accused of helping arm loyalists in bar massacre

Ian Cobain

Allegations that the government helped to arm loyalist gangs at the height of Northern Ireland's Troubles are to surface in court proceedings arising from one of the most notorious massacres of the 30-year conflict.

The Ministry of Defence and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) are being sued by relatives of six men murdered by a loyalist gunman who opened fire inside a bar crowded with people watching football on television in Loughinisland, County Down, in June 1994. While the families are claiming compensation, they say their aim is to uncover the truth about the killings.

The authorities are alleged to have assisted - or at least turned a blind eye - as about 300 automatic rifles and pistols, hundreds of grenades and an estimated 30,000 rounds of ammunition were smuggled into Belfast in 1987. One of the rifles, a Czech-made VZ-58 assault rifle, was used in the attack in the village.

According to a number of those involved in the shipment, the weapons were provided by Armscor, the arms sales and procurement corporation of apartheid-era South Africa. A deal was struck between Armscor and leading loyalists after a British agent, who infiltrated the paramilitary Ulster Defence Association (UDA) for the army and MI5, visited South Africa in 1985.

The agent was shopping for arms for

the UDA. But the MoD has conceded that the trip was funded by the taxpayer, with an army intelligence unit paying his expenses.

There is no conclusive proof that the agent's South Africa trip led directly to the arsenal being smuggled into Belfast two years later. But Niall Murphy, lawyer for the families, said: "We are confident that evidence of British involvement does exist, and we look forward to applying to the high court for its disclosure."

A number of people in South Africa and Belfast who were involved in the talks after the agent's visit told the Guardian they believe the government must have been aware that an arms deal was being arranged, and took no action to prevent the weapons from being smuggled into

Northern Ireland, where they were divided between three paramilitary groups.

Within weeks of the consignment arriving in Northern Ireland, loyalist gunman Michael Stone was hurling several of the grenades and firing one of the pistols in an attack that claimed the lives of three people at the funeral of three IRA members at Milltown cemetery in west Belfast. From then on, the number of killings by loyalists rose sharply: during the six years before the weapons were landed, loyalists had killed about 70 people; in the six years that followed, they killed about 230.

Many of the victims were Catholics who had no involvement

Continued on page 2 »

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