

Britain's Secret State: Members of Armed Forces Prohibited from Talking to Journalists

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New official guidelines impose strict controls on anyone from the armed forces making contact with journalists, even in a social setting.

The rules state that when a member of the armed forces has any contact with a journalist they must immediately notify press officers.

This applies even if a member of armed forces staff meets a journalist socially, or through their family.

The rules don't just apply to journalists, they also apply if a soldier should accidentally come into contact with any individuals who are known to have close links with the media – such as “academics, representatives of industry and think-tanks”.

The new guidelines came into force this month amid revelations that the police have secretly used the Regulation of Investigatory Powers to obtain details of journalists' phone records in order to find their sources.

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