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Investigated: Darleen Druyun

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PROFILE: DARLEEN DRUYUN

The Pentagon's 'dragon'

By Marianne Brun-Rovet and
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In spring 2002 Darleen Druyun was still a top procurement official at the US air force. But in an e-mail on April 1, later made public by a Senate investigation, Boeing executives related how Ms Druyun had told them several times in a meeting that Airbus was to bid less money than Boeing over a deal to supply the air force with refuelling aircraft.

Eight months later, Ms Druyun left government employment to become an executive at Boeing. At the time, the watchdog Project on Government Oversight called her appointment "one of the most egregious examples in recent memory of the revolving door between the federal government and defence contractors".

That "egregious example" has led to the firing of both her and Mike Sears, Boeing chief financial officer, while controversy around the tanker deal has led to a Pen-

tagon inspector general review of her role in negotiating the contract.

Ms Druyun spent 33 years in government before joining Boeing in January as vice-president and deputy general manager of the company's Missile Defense Systems.

She served as principal deputy assistant secretary for air force acquisition and management working on several deals involving Boeing. She has also worked as chief of staff for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration as well as in its procurement department.

During this time, she negotiated some of the Pentagon's biggest procurement contracts, including the C-17,

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an aircraft to carry heavy equipment around the world. Her control over all procurement and tough negotiating skills at the Pentagon earned her the nickname "dragon lady". But it is not the first time Ms Druyun has been investigated for getting too close to defence companies.

In 1990 the Pentagon watchdog launched an inquiry into the roles of her and four other air force officials in funneling \$349m in expedited payments to McDonnell Douglas in an attempt to keep the defence contractor afloat.

McDonnell Douglas had run out of money allocated for a prototype of the C-17 transport aircraft and the air force allowed the company to backdate its books and misclassify some development costs as production costs so it could tap into new funds to complete the prototype, according to a 1992 defence department audit report.

The inspector-general recommended disciplinary

action against Ms Druyun and four others but he did not refer the matter for criminal prosecution. In April 1993, the air force challenged the inspector-general's conclusions and issued its own report, which exonerated Ms Druyun of wrongdoing.

In addition to probes into these two deals, the National Legal and Policy Centre has asked the inspector-general to look into whether Boeing indirectly funnelled favours to Ms Druyun by giving her daughter a job soon after college and arranging to have her home purchased by John Judy, a Boeing lawyer.

