

Explanatory note

Tranche One Timeline

1. This explanatory note accompanies the open version of a [timeline](#) the Inquiry has produced to illustrate (so far as possible) the start and end dates for:
 - a. those former members of the Special Demonstration Squad ('SDS')¹ the Inquiry is investigating in Tranche One ('T1');² and
 - b. those in the SDS supervisory chain of command during the period July 1968 – December 1983 (inclusive).³

It sets out the Inquiry Legal Team's current understanding and must be read subject to the evidence to be given during the Tranche One Phase Three ('T1P3') hearings scheduled for May 2022.

Overview

2. The timeline is structured as follows:
 - a. Towards the bottom (coloured yellow) are former SDS undercover officers. Of the 45 officers who feature in this category on the timeline, the Inquiry has taken statements from 29 (or 64%). Of the remainder:
 - i. 13 are deceased;⁴
 - ii. One suffers ill health;⁵ and
 - iii. Two are outside the Inquiry's jurisdiction.⁶
 - b. Immediately above the undercover officers (coloured blue, green and orange) are former members of the SDS who we understand were generally office-based and performed managerial and/or administrative roles (the Inquiry's 'Module 2a'). For the best part of the period covered by

¹ The Inquiry uses the term 'Special Demonstration Squad' to describe the undercover policing unit that existed within the Metropolitan Police Special Branch (and latterly the Counter Terrorism Command, SO15) between 1968 and 2008 (inclusive). It was referred to variously throughout its lifetime as 'the Hairies', the Special Operations Squad, the Special Demonstration Squad, and the Special Duty Section.

² 'Tranches', 'Phases' and 'Modules' are described in Counsel to the Inquiry's opening statement dated 1 November 2020, at paragraphs 43-47: <https://www.ucpi.org.uk/publications/cti-opening-statement/>.

³ July 1968 being the month the SDS was formed, and December 1983 being the latest month that any of the officers the Inquiry is openly investigating in Tranche One remained deployed. HN20 is included on the timeline for the sake of chronological context, but his deployment will be investigated in Tranche Two.

⁴ HN13, HN68, HN135, HN297, HN300, HN318, HN323, HN327, HN331, HN335, HN338, HN346 and HN356.

⁵ HN303.

⁶ HN296 and HN344. At the time of writing the Inquiry has not sought statements from either on account of the practical difficulties associated with their being outside England & Wales (exacerbated by COVID-19, in HN296's case).

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the timeline these were Chief Inspectors, Inspectors and/or Sergeants, although there were also two Constables during the first two years or so. In this category, and of the 23 individuals the Inquiry is treating as 'Tranche One/Module 2a officers', 30% are deceased at the time of writing.⁷ Of the remainder, the Inquiry has taken statements from all but one.⁸

- c. At the top of the timeline (coloured lilac) are former senior members of the Metropolitan Police Service (Superintendent and above, to whom the Inquiry refers as 'Module 2b managers'). These individuals were not members of the SDS at the time they held those ranks, but they did then exercise varying degrees of supervision over the unit. At the time of writing, 78% of the people listed on the timeline as 'Module 2b managers' are deceased. Of the remainder:
 - i. One (Geoffrey Craft, HN34), will be called to give evidence during T1P3 as both a 'Module 2a manager' and a 'Module 2b supervisor';
 - ii. Statements have not been sought from two, on account of their ill health;⁹
 - iii. Evidence will be sought from two in the context of Tranche Two (if evidence is sought from them at all);¹⁰ and
 - iv. Evidence was heard from Barry Moss (HN218) in Tranche One Phase One about his service as an undercover officer, and we will also hear evidence from him in T1P3 about his role as a 'Module 2a manager'. Further evidence will be obtained from him later in the Inquiry concerning his subsequent work, vis-à-vis the SDS, in still more senior rank.

Caveats

3. Any data set should be treated with caution, and the above is no exception. The following 'health warnings' apply:
 - a. As already alluded to, some individuals fall within the scope of more than one category:
 - i. Geoffrey Craft (HN34), HN332, Derek Kneale (HN819) and Kenneth Pryde (HN608) are 'Module 2a managers' by virtue of their having served as Inspectors and/or Chief Inspectors on the SDS, but also 'Module 2b managers' because they later went on to supervise the unit as Superintendents and/or Chief Superintendents.

⁷ The deceased are: HN135, HN294, HN325, HN819, HN1251, HN1668 and PN1748.

⁸ The Inquiry did not seek a statement from HN332 on account of his ill health.

⁹ HN332 and HN357.

¹⁰ HN116 and HN587.

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- ii. Similarly, three officers (Barry Moss (HN218), Raymond Wilson (HN318) and Michael Ferguson (HN135)) were undercover officers who later took up management and/or supervisory roles in respect of the SDS.

As a result, the figures in paragraph 2 above contain double counting.

- b. Some of the early SDS officers are potential 'hybrids', in the sense that they held 'Module 2a' positions but may also have concurrently spent time undercover. Conrad Dixon (HN325), for example, was the Chief Inspector in charge of the SDS, but he also attended activist meetings.¹¹ These officers only feature once on the timeline (as 'Module 2a' officers), with the effect that undercover officers may be underrepresented as a category.

Limitations

4. The timeline does not (and cannot) present a comprehensive picture of the SDS, for the following reasons:
 - a. Whilst the information in the timeline derives from a thorough review of all the contemporaneous documents obtained by the Inquiry,¹² the timeline inevitably contains gaps because the documents only take us so far. For example, we know HN1668 was a Sergeant in the SDS back office by no later than 5 August 1975,¹³ but the documents do not tell us when he joined the unit.
 - b. These 'known unknowns' also have implications for the order in which the undercover officers have been placed on the timeline, thus:
 - i. The undercover officers are arranged chronologically according to: (i) their deployment start date; or (ii) in cases where the start date is unknown (or the start date has been redacted/gisted), their earliest known deployment date.
 - ii. Where the start dates for two or more officers are the same, the officers are ordered alphanumerically by Herne nominal.

¹¹ See e.g. Appendix "B" to 'Penetration of Extremist Groups', which describes Dixon as "*i/c squad and Camden VSC*": MPS-0724119, p9. The 'potential hybrid' category may also include HN332, HN294 and HN1251. The evidence is uncertain as to whether these officers attended activist meetings in an undercover or 'plain clothes' capacity. HN294 may not have attended any meetings at all.

¹² A non-exhaustive list of examples follows: (i) Personnel files which record the dates an individual joined or left the SDS; (ii) SDS intelligence reports evidencing the fact an undercover officer was deployed at that time (and which SDS managers were then signing the reports); and (iii) Memoranda and annotations by senior managers indicating who was (or was not) then within the supervisory chain of command of the SDS.

¹³ Because his signature appears on an SDS intelligence report dated 5 August 1975 (UCPI000007430) and his (unpublished) Central Record of Service tells us he was then a Sergeant.

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- iii. Unavoidably, therefore, it may be that some officers are wrongly ordered. By way of example: The earliest known deployment dates for both HN338 and HN339 are recorded as April 1970 on the timeline, because: (i) we can see from a contemporaneous memorandum that the SDS financed those officers' cover flats at that time; ¹⁴ and (ii) there is no documentary evidence of either officer having deployed prior to then. The officers are therefore ordered by their Herne nominals, notwithstanding the possibility that HN339 deployed before HN338.
 - c. Restrictions under section 19 of the Inquiries Act 2005 prevent the disclosure or publication of information about some undercover officers' deployments. In this regard, the following officers have been entirely omitted from the timeline because no meaningful entry could be made in respect of them: HN21, HN41, HN86, HN109, HN125, HN241, HN302, HN337, HN341, HN349 and HN355.
 - d. Some T1 undercover officers were recruited to the SDS weeks or months before they deployed, whereas others deployed immediately. ¹⁵ In a number of the cases where the officer did not deploy immediately, the timeline indicates the month during which he joined the SDS. However, the absence of any such any indication on the timeline in any given case should not necessarily be taken to mean that the officer did not join the SDS some time before he deployed. There are cases where we know the officer did so but there is no corresponding entry on the timeline, because:
 - i. We simply do not know when he joined the SDS; or
 - ii. We know when he joined SDS but the underlying evidence has not been published (or has been gisted).
5. Overall, the reader should keep in mind that:
- a. the timeline can only be as good as the information on which it is based, and the information on which it based is incomplete; and
 - b. blank spaces on the timeline may reflect an *absence* of evidence that *something* was happening, and should not be treated as *positive evidence* that *nothing* was happening.

¹⁴ MPS-0724099.

¹⁵ HN80, for example, says: "I joined the SDS and went into the back office in around December 1976 and was there for approximately three months": UCPI0000033626, p2, para 11. By contrast, HN329 says: "I was deployed straightaway": MPS-0738576, p6, para 19.

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6. It may also be worth noting here that the timeline only intends to depict those individuals the Inquiry has identified as having been members of the SDS, or who evidently fell within the supervisory chain of command of the unit as a whole. The SDS was not hermetically sealed off from rest of Special Branch, and it is clear there were others in the Branch who knew the SDS existed and had some involvement with its operations (see further below).

Context

7. Following is a summary of the organisational history of SDS management during the period covered by the timeline, which for present purposes can be subdivided as follows:

Period	Begins
The first year or so	July 1968
No dedicated Chief Superintendent	Meteorological summer of 1969
'C' Squad	c. late 1972 or 1973
'S' Squad	July 1974

The first year or so

8. This first phase is straightforward. The principal managerial architects of the SDS were Ferguson Smith (then Commander), Arthur Cunningham (Chief Superintendent) and Conrad Dixon (Chief Inspector). These three set up the unit in July 1968, and for a time thereafter were responsible for its management and oversight.¹⁶
9. There is no evidence of any Superintendents having formed part of the SDS chain of command during this period, and it seems the SDS was a standalone unit within Special Branch – i.e. it was not attached to any of the 'Squads'.

¹⁶ HN218 (who was one of the original 'Hairies') says this in his witness statement dated 7 January 2019: "... the Detective Chief Inspector of the squad was Conrad Dixon, the Detective Inspector was Phil Saunders... Above them was Chief Superintendent Arthur Cunningham and his boss in turn was Ferguson Smith": MPS-0740354 p25, para 73. This is consistent with the contemporaneous evidence, thus: (i) A file note of a meeting on 1 August 1968 records that Smith, Cunningham and Dixon were involved with "arrangements to cover the demonstration in Grosvenor Square on 27th October" (UCPI0000030045); (ii) As to Dixon, Appendix "B" to 'Penetration of Extremist Groups' tells us he was still Chief Inspector in charge of the SDS as at 26 November 1968 (MPS-0724119, p9), and he prepared memoranda re SDS matters on 8 & 27 November 1968 (MPS-0747100; MPS-0724114), and 5 May 1969 (MPS-0724112); (iii) Chief Superintendent Cunningham features on the SDS policy file as at (e.g.) 8 November 1968 (MPS-0747100), 13 January 1969 (MPS-0724115) and 20 May 1969 (MPS-0728973); and (iv) Smith features on the SDS policy file as at (e.g.) 27 November 1968 (MPS-0724114), 13 December 1969 (MPS-0724117) and 27 May 1969 (MPS-0728973, p1).

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10. This state of affairs continued until the meteorological summer of 1969, which saw the following developments:
 - a. In June 1969, Cunningham was promoted to Commander, and Smith became Deputy Assistant Commissioner; and
 - b. In or around July 1969, Chief Inspector Dixon left the SDS and Philip Saunders (then Inspector) inherited command of the unit.¹⁷

No dedicated Chief Superintendent

11. During this second phase the arrangements continued much as they did during the first, inasmuch as: (i) the SDS remained under the supervision of Cunningham and Smith (albeit from their now elevated positions); (ii) it was not part of any of the Special Branch 'Squads'; and (iii) there is still no evidence of any Superintendents.
12. However, the position is somewhat nebulous in terms of Chief Superintendents, thus:
 - a. On the SDS policy file, there is no evidence of routine involvement in SDS affairs by a Chief Superintendent after June 1969, when Cunningham was promoted to Commander. It seems the Head of the SDS now reported directly to the Commander, and Cunningham's former role as SDS Chief Superintendent had ceased to exist.¹⁸
 - b. This situation appears to have persisted until at least October 1972, when a diagram produced by Special Branch recorded that the SDS did not fall under a Chief Superintendent at that time.¹⁹
 - c. Nevertheless, we know that in the intervening period there were some Special Branch Chief Superintendents who were signing SDS officers' probationary reports and annual qualification reports.²⁰ This must mean, at the very least, that there were Chief Superintendents who were aware of the unit's existence and knew the real identities of the SDS officers, albeit it

¹⁷ The last known instance of Dixon having signed SDS intelligence reports as Chief Inspector was 16 July 1969 (UCPI0000008667). For the remainder of that year, Saunders signed the lion's share of SDS reports.

¹⁸ Before Cunningham's promotion we see (for example) memoranda re SDS expenditure addressed to 'Chief Superintendent Cunningham' (see e.g. 27 November 1968, 13 January and 5 May 1969 (MPS-0724114; MPS-0724115; MPS-0724112)). Afterwards those memoranda are addressed to 'Commander Cunningham' (see e.g. 13 June and 13 October 1969 (MPS-0724107; MPS-0724105)).

¹⁹ MPS-0737399.

²⁰ Chief Superintendents who signed the (unpublished) probationary reports and annual qualification reports of active or recently deployed SDS undercover officers during the period June 1969 – January 1972 include Rodger (HN585), Dixon (HN325), Pendered (HN2838), TN39 and Watts (HN1254). Obiter: As to Pendered, see further the witness statement of HN345: MPS-0741109.

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seems they had no formal line management responsibility for those officers (nor any supervisory role in respect of the unit itself).

- d. It also appears that some 'non-SDS Chief Superintendents', or those deputising for them, countersigned SDS intelligence reports during this period (see further paragraph 17b below).

'C' Squad

13. The SDS was subsumed by 'C' Squad at some stage during late 1972 or 1973:

- a. The 'October 1972 diagram' tells us that the SDS was not then part of 'C' Squad – rather, it sat alongside it (although there were plans for that to change);²¹
- b. A memorandum by then Head of SDS (HN294) dated 17 January 1973 refers to the "*Special Demonstration Squad ('C')*", suggesting that the SDS was by then part of 'C' Squad. However, the note of a meeting that took place less than a week earlier suggests that the Chief Superintendent of 'C' Squad (Rollo Watts, HN1254) did not consider himself to have yet taken *de facto* control of the SDS.²²
- c. By the meteorological summer of 1973:
 - i. Minutes dated June 1973 show that Watts was then still Chief Superintendent of 'C' Squad, and directly involved with SDS affairs;²³ and
 - ii. A diagram dated July 1973 puts the SDS within 'C' Squad.²⁴

'S' Squad

14. In July 1974 the SDS was incorporated within a newly created 'S' Squad. At first, 'S' Squad was headed by a Superintendent (David Bicknell, HN357), but by at least December 1974 a Chief Superintendent had been added to the rank structure.²⁵

²¹ MPS-0737399.

²² The note says: "*I called on Chief Superintendent Rollo Watts on 11 January. He has been in charge of C Squad for about three months but for a number of reasons (which he did not explain) has only been in his office for about three weeks of this time... Watts said that there had been three groups within SB charged with gathering information about the extreme left - C Squad, the rump of X Squad and Inspector [HN294]'s "hairies". He did not think this was a satisfactory situation and proposed to take steps to end it. He had not yet succeeded in taking over full control of the "hairies"...*".

UCPI0000031257.

²³ MPS-0729093.

²⁴ MPS-0737401.

²⁵ Bicknell gives the following account: "*My direct interaction with the SDS came in June, 1974; surveillance and covert intelligence functions within SB were brigaded together under a new Squad known as 'S' Squad, this included the SDS. I was a Superintendent at this time in charge of managing*

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15. The SDS continued as part of 'S' Squad throughout the remainder of the T1 period,²⁶ and it seems 'S' Squad had a dedicated Superintendent and Chief Superintendent for the best part of that time.²⁷

A note re SDS intelligence reports

16. Some SDS intelligence reports were signed exclusively by members of the unit, but others were not. Practice varied over time, and this can be illustrated by reference to the examples below. Readers should:

- a. be mindful that SDS officers would often go on to work in other parts of Special Branch after they left the unit (and in almost all instances had already done so before they joined); and
- b. therefore guard against assuming that the appearance of these peoples' signatures on the SDS intelligence reports necessarily means they were members of the SDS at that time. In very many cases they were not.

17. Examples follow.

- a. The report of a meeting of the London Branch of Peoples Democracy on 15 May 1969 was completed exclusively by members of the SDS; it was signed by HN68 (who was then actively deployed as an undercover officer) and countersigned by Conrad Dixon (who was then Head of SDS).²⁸
- b. By contrast, and following Dixon's departure in July 1969, there were typically three signatures on the reports: one by the undercover officer, a second by Head of SDS, and a third by an individual who was not a member of the unit (or within its supervisory chain of command).²⁹

this change... As a Superintendent I was in charge of 'S' Squad for four to six months in 1974. The D.A.C. then came to the conclusion that the sensitivity of 'S' Squad warranted a Chief Superintendent being in charge. This ended my direct supervision of the SDS but I remained as Deputy for a few more months": MPS-0726608, pp3-4, 6. This account is consistent with the contemporaneous evidence, thus: (i) Superintendent Bicknell annotated memoranda re SDS expenditure on 15 August and 1 October 1974 (MPS-0724150 and MPS-0724144). (ii) Chief Superintendent HN332 prepared a minute re SDS staff changes dated 9 December 1974 (MPS-0724140, p3), and it is clear from a minute dated 11 December 1974 that he was "Chief Superintendent 'S' Squad" at that time (MPS-0724141, p3). (iii) The SDS annual report for 1974 (dated 4 February 1975) states: "Since July 1974, the SDS has been a part of the newly created 'S' Squad which was formed to co-ordinate the various technical and support functions performed by Special Branch, and as such, now has the added benefit of a Chief Superintendent and Superintendent": MPS-0730906, p8, para 1.

²⁶ Obiter: The SDS would later transfer back to 'C' Squad, in September 1988 (during the Inquiry's 'Tranche Two'), and then back to 'S' Squad again in January 1995 (Tranche Three).

²⁷ On the timeline, at Superintendent level, there is a blank space between June 1976 and November 1977. Despite best efforts, the Inquiry Legal Team has not been able to determine whether 'S' Squad had a Superintendent during that period (or, if so, who it was).

²⁸ UCPI0000009872.

²⁹ For example: The first countersignature on a report dated 28 August 1969 (UCPI0000008556) is that of Riby Wilson (PN1748, who was then second-in-command of the SDS), but the second countersignature came from Inspector TN35 (and there is no evidence he was ever a member of the SDS). Reports dated 22 September, 3 October and 9 October 1969 (UCPI0000008571;

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- c. In his first witness statement, Geoffrey Craft (Head of SDS 1976-7 and Chief Superintendent of 'S' Squad from 1981) describes the process by which SDS intelligence reports were produced and disseminated:

*"I had no involvement in the writing up of SDS intelligence reports. It was mostly the office Sergeants who were involved in this, rather than undercover officers in the back office. Rough information was put into the office... We had one guy in the back office, Dick Scully, whose job it was to plough through the paper. He would do a rough draft of the report on the typewriter which would then be sent off to the typists and 1 and 3 copies would be made. Those copies would come back to the SDS office and we would pass them to C Squad. C Squad decided what action would be taken; I had no involvement in this. Reports were generally signed by a Chief Inspector of C Squad and not by the SDS, unless there as something specifically to sign. Minute sheets were all done by C Squad. Filing was all dealt with by C Squad."*³⁰

This account is certainly consistent with the contemporaneous evidence as at (for example) January 1977 (when the SDS formed part of 'S' Squad), as can be seen from:

- i. A report stamped 'SDS' and dated 4 January 1977, which was signed by Craft (then Head of SDS) and countersigned by Superintendent Kneale (HN819).³¹ The manuscript "A/" (for 'acting') tells us that Kneale was signing the report on behalf of the Chief Superintendent, and the manuscript "C" indicates he was then a member of 'C' Squad.
 - ii. Another SDS intelligence report dated 24 January 1977, which was also signed by Craft, and countersigned by HN332.³² The absence of a manuscript "A/" tells us that HN332 was Chief Superintendent at the time, and the manuscript "C" indicates he then headed up 'C' Squad.
- d. By at least 1980 there had been another change to the format of the SDS intelligence reports (they were now signed only once, by Head of SDS or another member of 'S' Squad), but we can see from the associated minute sheets that those reports were still being referred to 'C' Squad for onward circulation.³³

UCPI0000007770 and UCPI0000008583) were countersigned by Saunders (then Head of SDS) and also (respectively) by Chief Superintendent Rodger, Chief Inspector TN39 and Chief Inspector PN1740. Again, there is no evidence these latter three officers were members of the SDS or its supervisory chain of command.

³⁰ MPS-0747446, p16, para 35.

³¹ UCPI0000017639.

³² UCPI0000017683.

³³ See, for example the report dated 12 August 1980, which was signed by the Chief Superintendent of 'S' Squad, forwarded to 'C' Squad by Head of SDS, and circulated by the Chief Superintendent of

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18. The Inquiry is currently looking into whether there are surviving former senior managers from 'C' Squad, who countersigned and/or disseminated SDS intelligence reports in this way who may be able to assist the Inquiry better to understand their role, vis-à-vis the SDS.
19. Investigations continue.

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'C' Squad: MPS-0729029. Another example is the report dated 2 September 1980, which Head of SDS signed and referred to 'C' Squad: MPS-0729027.