

[REDACTED] Esq
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1. With reference to the draft paper you left with me on the Security Service's ideas under the heading of "Guidelines for the Police in connection with Enquiries at Government Departments and Others".
2. I have taken quite some time in framing my reply following consultation with my senior colleagues in the Branch for the tenor of your paper has considerable importance in regard to future practical operations by Special Branch officers.
3. The main issue in my estimation is that you fail to distinguish properly between two quite separate issues - (a) the passing of security information to employers about employees and (b) the manner in which police officers of the Special Branches make enquiries of persons involved or suspected of being involved in subversive activities.
4. As the national co-ordinating authority for all intelligence relation to subversion, the Security Service has an absolute right to collect, assess and disseminate information on subversive matters in any way it thinks fit. That responsibility is accepted without question but I do not believe it should extend to imposing sanctions on police officers who are making enquiries as independent agents, albeit on occasions at the request or on behalf of the Security Service.
5. I feel it relevant at this stage to draw attention to the fact that the national Special Branch training centred on Scotland Yard, and the Standing Orders and procedures within the Metropolitan Special Branch, are designed to enforce strictly the rule that no security information is passed to employers about any employee (except in the case of IRA suspects which even then can only be dealt with at senior level and not by the enquiry officer of his own volition). Such passing of security information, if it is to occur, is the concern of your Service. The separate issue of how Special Branch officers conduct enquiries is the responsibility only of the accountable senior officers of the Force concerned. In this Branch no enquiry can be undertaken without an express direction of a Chief Superintendent,

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who is in turn responsible through the DAC to the Commissioner for the probity of those enquiries and for the conduct of the officer who actually makes them. In an area such as ours it is inevitable that occasionally something goes wrong but I hope you would agree it is a tribute nevertheless to the overall ability and good sense of the vast majority of Special Branch officers, to whom the Security Service after all has a considerable debt, that such occasions are the rare exception.

6. As far as the Civil Service, armed forces and other organisations referred to are concerned, the ground rules are no different. Like the Security Service, this Branch has also built up its own contacts in these organisations, most of which have headquarters in London, and there exists generally a close and mutually profitable relationship between SB officers and the contacts which over the years has worked well and without prejudice. This might be because a considerable number of these contacts happen to be retired police officers, and as far as I am concerned these contacts (former policemen or otherwise) are usually well aware of our function and that of the Security Service.

7. Summarising, therefore, I would say that whilst we in Metropolitan Special Branch will continue to consult the members of your Service wherever necessary or advisable, any measure tending to restrict or inhibit our enquiry work cannot be acceptable to us.

8. It may be that the essence of your note has a degree of relevance for some provincial Special Branch officers with their limited sources of information, a smaller number and less experience. I would recommend, however, that the points raised in your paper could best be dealt with on the joint Special Branch/Security Service training courses.

Yours sincerely,

