

From: [REDACTED], F4 Division, 18 December 1984

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cc Mr Taylor

[REDACTED]
Mr Partridge
Mr Hilary
Mr Harrington
HMCIC
[REDACTED]

Mr [REDACTED]

HOME AFFAIRS SELECT COMMITTEE: SPECIAL BRANCHES

The Home Secretary has agreed that the recently completed Home Officed guidelines on the work of Special Branches should be issued to Chief Constables as soon as possible, and should be made available at the same time to the Home Affairs Committee in connection with its current enquiry into Special Branches.

2. The guidelines will be circulated this Wednesday, 19 December. I attach a draft letter for your use in sending a copy of the guidelines to the clerk of the Home Affairs Committee. This should not go out before Wednesday, though it would be helpful if it could reach Mr Panton on Wednesday or Thursday, so that he has an opportunity to circulate it to the Committee before the recess. I understand from Mr Taylor that the Home Secretary does not consider it necessary to hold the guidelines back until after Questions on Thursday.

[REDACTED]

F4 Division
18 December 1984

S Panton Esq
Clerk to the Home Affairs
Select Committee
House of Commons
LONDON
SW1

Guidelines

Mr Taylor
Mr
Mr
Mr
Mr

Parliamentary Clerk

SPECIAL BRANCH GUIDELINES

The Committee is aware that the work of Special Branches is guided by terms of reference drawn up and issued by the Association of Chief Police Officers in 1970. A review of these terms of reference was begun in 1983, as a result of which it was decided that they should be replaced by guidelines issued under the authority of the Home Office. The review has taken account of the changes in Special Branch duties since 1970, particularly in relation to the growth in terrorist activity since then and the consequent responsibilities placed on Special Branches by the prevention of terrorism legislation.

Work on these new guidelines has just been completed, and they are today being issued to chief constables. The previous terms of reference contained classified information and were not therefore made available outside the government and police service. But it has been found possible in drafting the new guidelines to avoid reference to confidential matters. It may be of assistance to the Committee in completing its review of Special Branch work to have the new guidelines before it, and I accordingly enclose a copy of them.