

Mr Pilling

REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR SPECIAL BRANCHES

As requested, I attach below a draft of the revised "Terms of Reference" we discussed with a draft confidential annex providing guidance notes for its operation. A copy of the "Terms of Reference" currently in use is flagged 'A' on QPE/83 1/8/8.* You may also wish to refer to doc 19 on the same file (flagged 'B') which is Mr Hewett's own suggested version of a revised "Terms of Reference".*

2. I hope that the drafts attached are acceptable as a first effort. Unfortunately, the result is a fairly lengthy piece. Views expressed over the past few years have favoured a clearer and briefer document. While the drafts proposed are, I hope, clearer, they do not have the virtue of brevity. In some of the vaguer areas of Special Branch activity it is difficult to be both brief and avoid leaving either the Terms of Reference or the guidance notes open to a wider and less desirable interpretation. The approach is consequently somewhat defensive and 'safe', although I consider not overly so. Additionally, as far as I can establish, there is nothing in the proposed revised Terms of Reference which has not already been made public in one form or another. Therefore, as the Security Service now appear to be less concerned about the attention which might be drawn to Special Branch activities by the publication of such a document, I foresee no obvious objections to its contents in respect of publication.

3. I shall be happy to discuss with you any points which concern you and to work on the documents again, with your criticism in mind, in the time we still have available before the meeting.

1 July 1983

* These documents have now ~~been~~ placed within this folder as requested.