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NOTE OF A MEETING TO DISCUSS GUIDELINES FOR SPECIAL BRANCHES AT 2.30 PM ON
3 NOVEMBER IN THE HOME OFFICE, QUEEN ANNE'S GATE

Present

Mr Pilling (Chairman)
Mr Oxford
Mr Hewett

Home Office
ACPO
Metropolitan Police
Box 500
Box 500
SHHD
Home Office
Home Office

The Chairman opened the meeting by suggesting that each of the revised drafts should be considered paragraph by paragraph. [redacted] Sys Officer [redacted] distributed copies of a note containing revised drafts of some sections of the guidelines and the covering letter to chief officers.

GUIDELINES

2. Paragraphs 1 to 5 were considered acceptable as drafted and were agreed upon by the meeting with a minor revision to the second sentence of the first paragraph. [redacted] SHHD [redacted] agreed to provide a re-drafted version of this sentence.
3. It was agreed that, immediately following paragraph 5, a new paragraph would be inserted. This would comprise paragraph 7 on page 3 of [redacted] Sys Officer [redacted]'s note but without the final sentence. The words "tasks of ... to the State" would be underlined. The paragraph would be cross-referenced to paragraph 14 for the sake of clarity.
4. It was agreed that paragraph 8 would be replaced; the definitions of espionage, sabotage and subversion proposed by Box 500 were agreed. [redacted] Sys Officer [redacted] and [redacted] Sys Officer [redacted] agreed to re-consider the draft concerning the definition of terrorism, and undertook to let those present have their views in writing in due course.
5. It was agreed that paragraph 6 of the Home Office draft would become paragraph 8 of any new version, and that all subsequent paragraphs would be re-numbered accordingly. Paragraph 13 was now considered unnecessary and would be deleted, and some very minor amendments to paragraphs 14 and 15 were agreed. The reference to "ethnicity" in the final sentence of paragraph 17 would be deleted, as would the prohibition there stated.

COVERING LETTER

6. Paragraphs 1 to 3 of the revised draft of the covering letter to chief officers were agreed without amendment. Paragraph 4 would be replaced by Box 500's revised version, deleting only the final words "and ... separately", while adding a further sentence concerning refresher courses. Mr Oxford was content that there need be no reference to ACPO approval in this paragraph, as paragraph 1 made it clear that the entire letter carried ACPO's agreement. It was agreed that the first sentence of paragraph 5 should be deleted and the remainder of the paragraph, together with paragraph 6, moved to the end of the letter.

7. It was agreed that paragraphs 7 to 10 of the revised draft would be replaced by the alternative version prepared by Box 500. The replacement paragraph did not list exhaustively all areas of particular sensitivity, but it was agreed that such a list would be inappropriate. After some considerable discussion about whether the letter should include some reference to investigations which might concern members of major political parties, it was agreed that no specific mention of the subject should be made. Safeguards in this area were a matter for Box 500, who would ensure that police officers were aware of them when appropriate.

8. As [Sys Officer]'s replacement paragraph would require the annexing to the covering letter of two circulars issued by Box 500, he undertook to review these letters, and write to the Home Office with his comments when he had completed his review. It was then agreed that it would be advantageous to have the comments of all present on the content of these letters, and that all would write to the Home Office in due course.

9. Finally, it was agreed that an additional paragraph should be drafted by the Home Office, and inserted at the end of the letter, which would invite chief officers to seek Home Office guidance in cases of difficulty about the advice which they should give to their police authorities about Special Branches. It was considered important to encourage consistency in the statements made by chief officers to police authorities about Special Branch work.

F4 Division
Home Office

9 November 1983

Circulation

Those present