

From: Sir Brian Cubbon  
10 December 1984

cc Mr Taylor

Mr Partridge  
Mr Hilary  
HMCIC



Mr Harrington

SPECIAL BRANCH GUIDELINES

You thought that it would be useful if I recorded the questions which we discussed on the telephone last week.

My main point was at the heart of the accountability question. Is it our position that a chief constable, in remaining responsible for everything done by a member of his Special Branch, can in theory at any rate decline to accept a task which the Security Service wish his Special Branch to carry out? I can see that that might be stated as the theoretical position, particularly since we know that the Security Service go to great lengths to establish good liaison and goodwill with chief constables, so that in practice the question of declining a Security Service task could never arise. But do we go on to assert that everything a Special Branch officer does is within his duties and functions as a constable? That would fit with a total acceptance of the chief constables responsibility and authority in these matters; but what do we say about the payments which I understand the Security Service sometimes make to chief constables for the services of Special Branch officers? What is the rationale for these, in terms of accountability? And what is our position about revealing these payments to the police authority and its treasurer?

These are all questions for the briefing for the Home Secretary's eventual appearance before the Select Committee. I should like to see the proposed answers myself in good time before that appearance.

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