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Sean Hayden

SPECIAL BRANCH

Thanks for your letter of 20th August. I think it would be helpful were there to be a circulation to Chief Constables of a document to remind and encourage them to act in concert on basic principles concerning the role of Special Branches, without intending to inhibit them in the day to day deployment of resources in that area. Furthermore, I agree with you that it is a subject best dealt with through the ACPO CID Committee. The difficulty as I see it is that whilst it is one thing to say that the climate of opinion against which we work has altered since 1970, it is another to conclude that the essential elements of the work and the approach to them have undergone a similar change.

The question of going public is different and is clearly one which you might also consider raising with the ACPO CID Committee. My own view is that it would be prudent to have something contingent in hand which I would prefer not to use from a defensive posture. It follows that on balance I would support the concept of issuing a statement of our own volition, but here again timing and circumstance are extremely important and I would need to be convinced that now or the immediate future would be right, not least because, on the one hand, much if not all that Special Branch does in principle has already been published in one form or another whether in Parliamentary replies, security enquiries, press articles and books; on the other hand, the malign minority would be stimulated rather than satisfied by anything we do say. An additionally important argument against publication, in my view, is that it might assist the drift towards excessive freedom of information such as has emasculated and embarrassed the F.B.I., and is currently troubling the R.C.M.P.; also, by detailing constraints of SB work there might well be an inhibiting influence on any necessary extension of that work in the future.

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You may be interested to see the enclosed fact sheet on Special Branch currently contained in our "Schools Pack" which I (in pouch) had prepared soon after taking over the Branch in 1977.

Insofar as the draft paper is concerned may I say that I dislike the format of dividing it into "FUNCTIONS" and "TASKS". The one tells us the "what" and the other, whilst to some extent repetitive of the former, also moves towards the "how", and I am against that. It might be helpful were the functions aspect to be enlarged so as to include those aspects of the tasks which do not appear within the functions and those which relate to Metropolitan Special Branch specifically.

Concerning training, I enclose two sample programmes for the Initial and Senior Courses. The Initial Course lasts three weeks and is intended for officers of all ranks up to Detective Chief Inspector who have recently been transferred to their respective Special Branches. The Advanced Course lasts two weeks and is aimed at those with at least two years Special Branch experience, although in practice most who attend have served in the Branch for considerably longer periods; an endeavour is made to limit the course to supervisory officers. Six Initial Courses and two Advanced Courses are held annually with approximately 24 Provincial and four MPSB officers attending each one. I regard the Courses as a very important aspect of each Special Branch officer's work, and, while some detailed written guidance for reference purposes is obviously essential - we have our own comprehensive "Standing Orders", the overall importance of the courses for all the reasons you have perceived cannot be underestimated.

Please let me know should you think I might be able to assist in any other way.

*Yours ever,*

*Bob.*

*P.S. I have discussed this briefly with the Security Service & will be handing a copy of this letter to*

SyS Officer

*( 'police liaison' ) for*

SyS Officer

*I am also seeing Leslie PEARSE (Inspectorate) next week & he will also get a copy.*

[Redacted]