

 1st Witness Statement of M H Rumble

Statement Number: 1

Date: 12.10.2022

IN THE MATTER OF AN INQUIRY UNDER THE INQUIRIES ACT 2005
INTO UNDERCOVER POLICING

FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF MICHAEL HUGH RUMBLE

**I, MICHAEL HUGH RUMBLE, C/O GOVERNMENT LEGAL DEPARTMENT, WILL SAY
AS FOLLOWS:**

1. I, Michael Hugh Rumble, make this statement for the purpose of the Undercover Policing Inquiry ('the Inquiry') in response to the Inquiry's Rule 9 request dated 11 August 2022.
2. This statement addresses the questions set out in the Rule 9 request. In summary, I understand that the Inquiry seeks evidence as to matters relating to the purpose and remit of the Special Branch of the Metropolitan Police, the Home Office's

[REDACTED]
understanding of and attitude towards the work of the Special Branch, and the knowledge within the Home Office of the existence and work of the Special Demonstration Squad ("SDS"), including the nature of its relationship to the Security Service).

3. I make this statement based on my recollections from the relevant time and after reviewing all 142 of the documents included in the witness pack appended to the Inquiry's Rule 9 request.
4. In so far as the contents of this statement are within my personal knowledge they are true. In so far as they are not within my personal knowledge they are true to the best of my knowledge and belief. I have worked through all of the documents provided to me by the Inquiry with care and have sought to address all of the questions contained in the Rule 9 request to the best of my ability. Unfortunately, however, and for the reasons explained below, most of the matters of interest to the Inquiry are not within my knowledge and so the assistance I have been able to provide is necessarily limited. As set out in further detail below, I worked in the F1 Division of the Police Department between 1981 and 1986 and my areas of responsibility were primarily focused on the Metropolitan Police's expenditure and accounts. I had no knowledge of the operation of Special Branch or the SDS, or of any interaction between the SDS and the Home Office. In the vast majority of cases I have not seen the documents provided to me prior to preparation for this witness statement.

Answers to the Inquiry's questions

Q1: Please give your full name and date of birth

5. My name is Michael Hugh Rumble and my date of birth is [REDACTED] 1938.

Civil Service Career

Q2: Please provide a short summary of your Civil Service career together with relevant dates, if known. This summary should include at least the following information:

Q2.1: When you joined the Civil Service.

Q2.2: As best you can recall, an outline of the positions you held within the Civil Service and at which grade.

Q2.3: Details of any roles or positions (even if informal) in which you were required to oversee, coordinate or otherwise interact with the Metropolitan Police Service Special Branch ("MPSB").

Q3: Please provide an explanation of the departments, sections or agencies within the Home Office which existed to direct or superintend the police, and, to your knowledge, how these changed over time.

6. I joined the Civil Service in 1956 when I was posted to the Charity Commission as an Executive Officer ("EO"). I then completed my National Service in the Royal Air Force between 1956 – 1958, with postings to the Joint Services School for Linguistics, GCHQ, and RAF Gatow in Berlin.
7. I returned to the Charity Commission on completion of my National Service at the EO grade in 1958, promoting to Higher Executive Officer ("HEO") by the time I left in 1966. I then joined the Land Commission in Nottingham at the HEO grade and stayed there until 1970.

- [REDACTED]
8. I then moved to the Home Office in 1970, joining the Criminal Department in 'C2' division. I stayed in C2 until 1978, promoting from HEO to Senior Executive Office ("SEO") and then to Grade 7 in my time there. In 1978 I moved to the Prison Department within the Home Office which was known as 'P3', at Grade 7.
 9. In 1981 I moved to the Police Department within the Home Office, in the 'F1' Division. My role involved supporting the Home Secretary in his capacity as the Police Authority for the Metropolitan Police. My primary responsibilities were as follows: advising on the Force's expenditure and accounts, liaising with the Commissioner and the Receiver, writing speeches for ministers and senior officials on police matters, and facilitating meetings between London MPs and the Home Secretary. I was promoted to Grade 6 during my time in the F1 Division.
 10. In 1986 I became Head of the Home Office's Security Branch. I remained at Grade 6. In this role I dealt with the Department's physical and personnel security, the security vetting of staff, and managing the security guard force.
 11. In 1992 I moved to the Judicial Co-Operation Unit within the Home Office known as 'C2', in which I headed the European Section. I remained at Grade 6. In this role I dealt with developing the UK's role in the field of judicial co-operation within the European Community and the Council of Europe. I also assisted with proposals for the International Criminal Court. More generally, I prepared briefings, advice, and speeches for ministers and senior officials on a range of judicial co-operation matters.
 12. I retired from the Civil Service in October 1998 at Grade 6.

[REDACTED]

13. None of my roles or positions across my career required me to oversee, co-ordinate, or interact with the Special Branch of the Metropolitan Police. All of my dealings were with the force itself, primarily the Commissioner and the Receiver. The sole and limited exception was that I granted authority for the Special Demonstration Squad ('SDS') to continue for 1983 – 1984. However, as detailed more fully below, this did not involve any contact with the SDS and I had no knowledge whatsoever of its activities. I provided authority on behalf of my manager, Hayden Phillips, who was on annual leave at the time.

14. There were a number of divisions within the Home Office's Police Department. I was in F1, which dealt primarily with expenditure and accounts. There were F2 and F3 divisions, but I cannot now recall their areas of work. F4 was the division that dealt with security-type matters and any sensitive or politically sensitive matters. I had no interaction with the F4 Division in my work. I knew the officials in F4 in a social sense; I had come across many of them in other parts of the Home Office and we would pass each other on the corridor and the like. However, I had no knowledge whatsoever of their work.

Special Branch

Q4: What was the purpose and remit of MPSB as you understood it?

Q5: What was the nature of the relationship between the Home Office and MPSB?

Q5.1: Did this change over your time within the Home Office? If so, how?

Q6: During your time within the Home Office, what interaction, if any, did you have with officers or managers of MPSB?

[REDACTED]

15. I had no knowledge of the purpose and remit of the Special Branch. It follows that I have no knowledge of the relationship between the Home Office and the Special Branch, or how it may have changed over time. I personally had no interaction at all with officers or managers in the Special Branch.

16. In my experience, the work of each of the divisions within the Home Office's Police Department was separate from the others. There was unlikely to be any contact from the other divisions unless there was some financial question that would involve me. The work of the F4 Division was not in my consciousness and I never knew about their work: they were secretive as I remember and kept themselves to themselves.

Q7: Please consider MPS-0733126, specifically page 5, which concerns a request to Special Branch from the Home Office for an assessment of the proposed demonstration to coincide with the anniversary of the death of Blair Peach in 1980.

Q7.1: Did the Home Office consider that the justice campaign which followed the death of Blair Peach was a proper target for Special Branch investigation? Why so?

Q7.2: What was the purpose, as you understood it, of such assessments (including post-demonstration assessment such as UCPI0000035151) prepared by MPSB for the Home Office?

Q7.3: In your experience, how frequently were such assessments sought?

Q7.4: As far as you are able to assist, how were the responses received from MPSB (see pages 6-9 and 29-32) regarded within the Home Office?

Q7.4.1: Were they considered to be of value? Why so?

[REDACTED]

17. I had no knowledge of the assessment of the demonstration coinciding with the anniversary of Blair Peach's death in 1980. I had never seen any of the documents provided by the Inquiry until I was asked to provide this statement and I was not aware that the Home Office commissioned assessments of this kind from the Special Branch. I cannot comment on the purpose of that assessment or similar assessments, nor on the Home Office's view of them.

Q8: Please consider UCPI0000035096 which appears to be a note authored by Hayden Phillips concerning the Home Office reaction to a report provided by MPSB (which is not within the Inquiry's possession but appears to concern 'Political Extremism and Campaign for Police Accountability within the Metropolitan Police District').

Q8.1: If possible, please can you explain what this MPSB report contained and why it prompted 'very serious concern' within the Home Office?

Q8.1.1: If you are unable to recall the report, based on the documents provided, why do you consider that this report is likely to have promoted the concern it did?

Q8.2: As far as you can recall, was there any awareness within the Home Office that MPSB may be pushing to the limit a 'broader concept of public order intelligence'?

Q8.2.1: If so, why was this a concern and what, if anything, was done in response?

Q8.2.2: If not, please explain why this appears to have been of particular concern to the Home Office.

Q8.3: Were the action proposed within paragraph 3 in fact taken in response? What was the result?

[REDACTED]

Q8.4: What did Hayden Phillips mean when he said he considered that this was 'dangerous in implication'?

Q8.4.1: Was this a concern based on the limits which were considered to properly apply to Special Branch activities? If so, what did you consider these to be in this regard?

Q8.5: What did he mean by 'that particular skeleton is still in our cupboard'?

Q8.6: Was the 'review of the role of Special Branches' (paragraph 3) a reference to work which was ongoing at this time to update the Special Branch Terms of Reference?

Q8.7: How did Hayden Phillips consider that this review would deal with this issue?

Q8.7.1: As far as you are concerned did this take place?

Q8.7.2 Do you now consider this to have been adequate?

18. I had no knowledge of the report on political extremism and accountability in the Metropolitan Police. I had never seen the note of Hayden Phillips prior to providing this statement. I cannot comment on the report, the concerns of the Home Office, any actions taken in response to the report, the activities of the Special Branch, or Hayden Phillips' opinion of the same. Hayden Phillips was my manager. I knew him well and got on with him well, but our interactions concerned only my portfolio of work in F1.

Q9: The Inquiry has seen documents relating to public concern articulated to the Home Office about the involvement of Special Branch officers within trade unions and industrial disputes (see, for example UCPI0000035102, UCPI0000035101, UCPI0000034700, UCPI0000035100, UCPI0000034699 and UCPI0000035086).

from the 1970s, when I was in the Criminal Department. I had never seen them prior to providing this statement. I have no knowledge of these matters and so I cannot comment on the Special Branch's activities or the attitude in the Home Office to them.

Subversion

Q10: What role did you understand Special Branch played in countering subversion?

Q10.1: How did you understand this role to correspond with that of the Security Service?

Q11: During your time within the Home Office, what did you understand the applicable definition of subversion to be?

Q11.1: Did you understand it to be that given by the then Home Secretary, Sir David Maxwell-Fife, as a directive to the Security Service in 1952 (UCPI0000034262)?

Q11.2: Thereafter, did you understand it to be that (privately) defined by John Jones of the Security Service and, later, publicly espoused by Lord Harris of Greenwich in 1975 (UCPI0000034264 and UCPI0000034265)?

Q11.2.1: Did you understand that both limbs of this definition would need to be met before an activity or group could be deemed subversive, as the then Home Secretary explained to Parliament in 1979 (UCPI0000004431, p7)?

Q11.2.2 If so, as far as you understood it, how realistic or immediate would the threat posed by a group or activity to the safety or wellbeing of the state need to be to fall within this definition?

[REDACTED]

Q14.1: Was it accepted that 'political views of potential subversives' were a legitimate area of interest to Special Branch?

Q14.1.1: If so, was monitoring of potential subversives considered consistent with the first limb of the test for subversion (requiring an actual threat to the safety or wellbeing of the state)? In answer to this question you may wish to refer to the comments made by David Heaton in November 1979, with the context of the revision to the Terms of Reference to Special Branch (UCPI0000004716, paragraph 2).

Q14.2: Was it accepted that Special Branch officers would need to become involved on the fringes of legitimate political activity?

Q14.2.1: If so, why was this considered justified?

Q14.3: Were you aware that Special Branch faced difficulties in distinguishing between legitimate political activity and subversion as suggested?

Q14.3.1: If so, given that this was leading to some public concern, what was done to ensure that Special Branches were able to act appropriately in this regard?

Q14.4: Did you understand Special Branch officers to be 'highly skilled and well supervised'?

Q14.4.1: Where did this understanding come from? Was this based on anything other than reassurances provided by those who managed them?

Q15. Please consider the F4 discussion paper, likely authored in 1980, within UCPI0000004437. The Inquiry understands that UCPI0000004459 represents the underlined 1970 Terms of Reference, referred to as Annex A with paragraph 15 of the

[REDACTED]

discussion paper. The author appears to have underlined the terms 'which may be judged to be subversive' (para 2), 'subversive or potentially subversive' (para 3(d)) and 'a subversive or political [objective]' (para 3(e)) as difficult aspects of this document.

Q15.1: Do you agree that this suggests that the author considered there was a problem with how broadly subversion was drawn?

Q15.2: Did you or others within the Home Office share this concern? Why/why not?

Q16: Please also consider the proposed revision to the Special Branch Terms of Reference at Annex B to this discussion paper UCPI0000034701. At paragraph 4 the understood definition of subversion is repeated, but this is then supplemented with the words 'activities of organisations or individuals which, while operating at present within the law, have as their long terms aim the overthrow of Parliamentary democracy'.

Q16.1: Did you consider this to be a widening of the definition or a clarification?

Q16.2: Did you or others within the Home Office consider this proposed extended wording of the accepted definition would have unequivocally caught activity which was lawful and posed no present threat to the continuation of Parliamentary democracy?

Q16.3: Was this extended definition of concern? Please give reasons for your answer.

Q17: The Inquiry notes that this proposed amendment was not repeated within the revised Guidelines which were later published, but was included within the unpublished covering letter addressed to Chief Constables (UCPI0000004538) and UCPI0000004584, paragraph 5).

[REDACTED]

Q17.1.1: What consideration was given by you or others within the Home Office to the appropriateness and implications of taking this course of action?

Q17.1.2: Why was this considered desirable and justified?

Q17.1.3: Why was this not included within a published document, but rather remained only within a confidential covering letter?

20. Subversion was never an aspect of my work in F1. I therefore never addressed the issue of subversion or definitions of it, as I never had occasion to. I have reviewed all of the documents provided by the Inquiry, the majority of which pre-date my time in the Police Department. I have no knowledge of any of these matters and had never seen any of the documents prior to providing this statement.

21. As above, I had no knowledge of the activities of the Special Branch. I had no knowledge or understanding of the Terms of Reference for the Special Branch and I cannot comment on the relationship between the Special Branch and the Security Service, nor can I comment on the Special Branch's or the Home Office's understanding and application of the definition of subversion.

Special Branch Terms of Reference

Q18: The Inquiry understand that Terms of Reference for Special Branch (UCPI0000004425) were finalised on 8 April 1970 and promulgated by ACPO [Association of Chief Police Officers] on 15 June 1970 (UCPI0000004459). These were later supplemented by letters from the Security Service to Chief Constables dated 29 May 1974 (entitled Subversive Activities in Industrial Disputes (UCPI0000004545)) and dated 16 December 1975 (entitled Subversive Activities in Schools (UCPI00000034698)), and

represented the (unpublished) documents governing the activities of English and Welsh Special Branches until 19 December 1984. Does this accord with your understanding?

Q19: Did you play any role in the drafting or promulgation of these original Terms of Reference or their revision in the 1970s and early 1980s? If so, please explain the nature and extent of your involvement?

Q20: Comments by David Heaton of 2 October 1978 (UCPI0000035084, p3-4) suggest that he anticipated increasing public scrutiny and questioning of Special Branches, and so felt that public guidance would be helpful to deploy in response. He drew an analogy to the published Security Service Charter (see the 'Maxwell-Fire Directive' (UCPI0000034262)).

Q20.1: As far as you can recall, was responding to public scrutiny the only or main reason why the Terms of Reference were considered worthy of updating?

Q20.2: If not, please explain what else prompted the initial exercise to update the Terms of Reference?

Q21: Please consider the note prepared by [REDACTED] in April 1979 (UCPI0000004719) which refers to comments made by HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary ('HMCIC') that 'the Security Services sought more information from Special Branches than they really needed' and that the 1970 Terms of Reference were unclear on the proper limits of this relationship. Similarly, a comment by David Heaton on 13 October 1978 (page 4 of UCPI0000035084), repeats a view apparently expressed by Sir Colin Woods (who was, at that time, HMCIC) that MPSB might well do less work for the Security Service.

[REDACTED]

Q21.1: Were you aware of any concern (expressed by HMCIC, MPSB or any other body) that excessive or improper demands were placed on MPSB by the Security Service?

Q21.1.1: If so, please explain the nature and origin of this concern and any action which was taken in response.

Q21.1.2: If not, please explain how you believe the Home Office would have approached such an issue?

Q21.2: Do you recall that the Terms of Reference issued in 1970 were considered insufficient in this or any other regard?

Q21.2.1: If so, please explain the nature and origin of this concern and any action which was taken in response.

Q22: Please consider UCPI0000004718, which is a letter from Hayden Phillips to Rex Bryan of the MPS, sent in August 1979, which proposes the possible revision to the 1970 Terms of Reference.

Q22.1: Please explain the circumstances, as you recall them, which led to the sending of this letter.

Q22.2 Page 2 repeats comments made by Sir Robert Armstrong; 'the climate of opinion in which Special Branches... operate has changed quite considerably since 1970'. Is the Inquiry correct to infer that he considered the existing Terms of Reference were inadequate for the work Special Branch was doing in the late 1970s?

Q22.2.1: Did you share this view? Why?

[REDACTED]

Q22.3: This letter suggests that Hayden Phillips did not consider that a revision was likely to lead to the end of 'disturbing' incidents, as that was better addressed through proper supervision and experience. Was the purpose of the proposed revision, at least in part, therefore intended to address and/or reduce such incidents?

Q22.3.1: What overview, if any, did the Home Office have of the adequacy of Special Branch recruitment, training and deployment? (In response to this question you may wish to consider the final paragraph of the MPSB letter received in reply (UCPI0000035109) and the comments at the end of page 1 of UCPI0000004417).

Q22.3.1.1: Was the role of HMCIC considered important in this regard? Why?

Q23: Please consider UCPI0000035108 which was a note from HMCIC, received in reply, which opposes any publication of a revised Terms of Reference for Special Branch.

Q23.1: Did you and/or others within the Home Office agree that publication could be 'emotive or even provocative' amongst some groups?

Q23.2: How was this response viewed generally within the Home Office?

Q23.3: What effect did the reluctance to publish expressed have on the proposed revision?

Q23.4: Please also consider a similar letter sent in September 1983 (UCPI0000004666). Are you able to explain why HMCIC appears to have consistently taken a more conservative view regarding publication than the police themselves throughout this process?

[REDACTED]

Q24: Please consider UCPI0000004426. This letter from the Security Service suggests that a meeting chaired by Sir Robert Armstrong in December 1978 did not conclude that there was a pressing need to revise the 1970 Terms of Reference.

Q24.1: Does this accord with your understanding, notwithstanding the documents referred to above?

Q24.2: Within this letter the author also suggests that they considered little advantage would be gained from redrafting the Special Branch Terms of Reference as had been proposed. What effect did this reluctance have on this process?

Q24.3: How was this response viewed generally within the Home Office?

Q25: Is the Inquiry correct to understand that this reluctance to publish a revised Terms of Reference from HMCIC and the Security Service led to such plans being dropped in the autumn of 1979 (see the comments of Phillipa Drew at p8 of UCPI0000035084)?

Q26: Please consider the subsequent submission made to Sir Brian Cubbon by David Heaton (UCPI0000004715), along with a paper prepared by F4 on the topic (UCPI0000004437), the proposed revision to the Terms of Reference (UCPI0000034701) and Sir Brian's response (UCPI0000004427).

Q26.1: Does the paper prepared by F4 accurately reflect the issues behind attempts to update and publish the Terms of Reference of Special Branch at this point in time? If not, why not?

[REDACTED]

Q26.2: Did the view expressed by David Heaton that attempts to consolidate the existing guidance had resulted in a 'poor thing' (UCPI0000004715, p4) reflect the general view within the Home Office at the time?

Q26.3: In your view is the Inquiry correct to infer that the questions posed by David Heaton at paragraph 11 of his submission were considered to be of significant importance by the Home Office? Why?

Q26.4: Do you recall that ministers at this time (late 1980) failed to share the same disquiet about the work of Special Branches as their predecessors (paragraph 14)? Presumably a reference to ministers in the previous Labour Government. If so, please explain what you mean.

Q26.5 Is the Inquiry correct to conclude that work on revision to the Terms of Reference was paused after the meeting proposed by Sir Brian Cubbon? In answer to this question you may be assisted by reference to paragraph 4 of UCPI0000035095.

Q26.5.1: If so, can you explain why this occurred, despite the comments by David Heaton within the final sentence of page 1, paragraph 2 of UCPI0000004437?

Q27: Please consider UCPI0000035095 and UCPI0000004431. Did this note and letters authored by Hayden Phillips, which appear to signal the resumption of the process of revising and publishing the Terms of Reference, come at the prompting of the police (specifically, Ken Oxford)?

Q27.1: What view did you take of the 'veto' which had been used by the Security Service?

Q27.2: Did you consider their position to be overly conservative?

[REDACTED]

Q27.3: Do your comments in paragraph 5 ('the relationship with the Security Service might be made more explicit to discourage any private enterprise by police forces on subjects where the Security Service should be taking the lead') suggest that you understood this was a problem which needed to be addressed?

Q28: Please consider UCPI0000004434. To your knowledge, was this the first time that a draft of the new Guidelines (as they become known by this time) was shown to the Home Secretary?

Q28.1 Was this process undertaken with the Home Secretary's knowledge and/or agreement? If not, why not?

Q29: Please consider UCPI00000035090. Is the Inquiry correct to understand that the announcement of an investigation into Special Branches to be held by the Home Affairs Select Committee in the spring of 1984, prompted the acceleration and conclusion of the process or revision which has been resumed a year beforehand? As far as you are able to recall, why this change matter?

Q30: Please consider UCPI0000004645, a note of a meeting chaired by Roy Harrington. Why was the decision taken not to publish the covering letter to the Special Branch Guidelines 'under any circumstances' (paragraph 5)?

Q31: Please consider UCPI0000004637. It appears that the passage in question concerning 'potentially subversive' organisations was then included within the covering letter to the Guidelines (UCPI0000004415, page 6 and UCPI0000004678). Why did Roy Harrington consider that these comments could be accommodated 'without difficulty'?

You may wish to note that [REDACTED] also took a similar view (UCPI0000035129, paragraph 6).

Q31.1: Was the original omission of this category deliberate? If so, why?

Q31.2: Was any consideration given to the fact that addition of this category would theoretically increase the range and scope of Special Branch activities into groups which did not, at that moment in time, meet the test for subversion? If so, what was the result?

Q31.3: Was the inclusion of this passage intended to provide authorisation for the reality that groups of this nature were already covered by the activities of Special Branch?

Q31.3: Why was this category omitted from the Guidelines which were to be published (UCPI0000004542), and only explicitly included within the covering letter?

Q31.4.1: Was this based on concern at possible public reaction to the scope of Special Branch activities which this would reveal?

Q32: Please consider UCPI0000004632. Did you consider the comments on the increasing need for better intelligence on public order to be a reference to the work of the SDS? If so, how did this aspect of MPSB's work affect the attempts to review the Terms of Reference?

Q32.1: More generally, to what extent, if at all, were the work and operational practices of the SDS, as opposed to Special Branch, considered when work was done to revise the Special Branch Terms of Reference?

22. I had no knowledge of the Terms of Reference for the Special Branch. None of these matters were relevant to my work in F1; the majority of the documents

referenced by the Inquiry pre-date my time in the Police Department and I cannot comment on them.

23. I had no role in framing the Terms of Reference and have no understanding of how or why they developed over time. I have no knowledge of the Home Office's corporate position on these matters then or now.

Special Demonstration Squad

Q33: During your career, what knowledge did you have of the Special Demonstration Squad of MPSB?

Q33.1: What did you understand its origins to be?

Q33.2: What did you understand its purpose and remit to be?

Q33.3: What groups did you understand it sought intelligence in respect of?

Q33.3.1: Did you understand these to be primarily left-wing in political nature? If so, why?

Q34: how much information regarding the detail of authorisation or operation of the SDS was shared with the Home Secretary?

Q34.1: What was the rationale behind this approach?

Q35: As far as you were aware, did knowledge of the SDS extend outside the Home Office into other parts of Government?

Q35.1: if so, did this extend to Downing Street and/or the Cabinet Office and/or the Prime Minister's Office, and what was the level or extent of detail known?

[REDACTED]

Q36: *What methods did you understand that the SDS used to obtain the intelligence it sought and how did this differ from more traditional Special Branch tactics?*

Q37: *What influence, if any, did the Home Office have over the methods or tactics used by the SDS?*

Q38: *What influence, if any, did the Home Office have over the groups targeted by the SDS?*

Q39: *During your time within the Home Office, what interaction, if any, did you have with officers or managers of the SDS?*

Q40: *To your knowledge, what role did the Home Office play in the establishment, continuation, authorisation and funding of the SDS? In answer to this question you may be assisted by reference to the SDS Annual Reports and corresponding letters from the Home Office authorising its continuation within your witness pack.*

Q40.1: *What, if any, obligation of secrecy did the Home Office attach to its work?*

Q40.2: *What consideration, if any, was given by the Home Office to the legality of the operation of the SDS?*

Q40.3: *Was any other Government department involved in any of these tasks? If so, which?*

Q41: *Please consider document MPS-0730904, including a letter signed by you granting authority for the SDS to continue in 1983/1984.*

[REDACTED]

Q41.1: In your letter to Assistant Commissioner 'C' Kelland (page 1), you note that you are replying while Hayden Phillips is on leave. Did Hayden Phillips provide you with any instructions on how to reply before departing? If so, what were they?

Q41.2: Did you see the Annual Report for 1982 (pages 4-19) before granting this authority?

Q41.3: How familiar were you with the operations of the SDS at the time you signed this letter?

Q41.4: Did you personally make the decision to authorise continuation of the SDS?

Q41.5: You note in your letter on page 1 that "We regard as particularly important your assurance about the close supervision [the SDS] receives". Was any further detail provided to you on the subject of supervision beyond the mention found in the letter from AC 'C' Kelland dated 11 February 1983 (page 2)?

Q41.5.1: Please explain how aware you were of the supervision structure of the SDS at the time?

Q41.6: Were you familiar with the concerns over a special Branch report on Political Extremism and the Campaign for Police Accountability raised the month prior by Hayden Phillips to Sir Brian Cubbon in document UCPI0000035096?

Q41.6.1: Did Hayden Phillips make you aware of these concerns before departing on leave?

Q41.6.2: Did these concerns touch on the work and practices of the SDS?

[REDACTED]

Q43.4: Did this (or any other) concern lead to a requirement from the Home Office that the SDS remained secret?

Q43.5: Why was the early view expressed by James Waddell (MPS-0724177) that the SDS 'should not be a permanent feature of the Branch' not followed?

Q44: The Inquiry has received evidence that police officers deployed within the SDS from the mid-1970s onwards consistently utilised the identities of deceased children in support of their cover identities.

Q44.1: Were you aware of this practice?

Q44.2: Was this practice approved of (either tacitly or explicitly) by you or others within the Home Office?

Q44.3: If not, what is/was your reaction to learning of this practice?

Q45: The Inquiry has received evidence that several officers deployed within the SDS during your time in the Home Office engaged in sexual activity, in their cover identities, with those on whom they reported.

Q45.1: Was this known about in the Home Office?

Q45.2: Was the risk of such behaviour taking place considered within the Home Office? If not, why not?

Q45.3: Was this behaviour approved of (either tacitly or explicitly) by you or others within the Home Office?

Q45.4: If not, what is your reaction to learning of this?

[REDACTED]

Q45.5: Please consider UCPI0000027446 which is a Security Service file note recording a conversation between the then head of the SDS, David Short, and representatives of the Security Service. Within paragraph 5 it is recorded that an SDS officer, HN106, had 'probably bedded' someone on whom he was reporting, thus indicating an awareness of this behaviour amongst the management of the SDS and/or representative of the Security Service.

Q45.5.1: To your knowledge, was such information ever passed on to the Home Office (by the Security Service or MPSB), either in respect of this or other such incidents?

Q45.5.2: Would you have expected to have been informed of such behaviour? If not, why not?

Q46: Please consider UCPI0000027515 which is a further Security Service file note. Within paragraph 5 concern from HN68 (a manager within the SDS) is noted because one of the deployed officers he oversaw ('Phil Cooper') had regular access to an MP at the House of Commons as part of his deployment.

Q46.1.1: To your knowledge was information such as this ever passed on to the Home Office (by the Security Service or MPSB), either in respect of this or other such incidents?

Q46.1.2: Would you have been expected to have been informed of such incidents? If not, why not?

Q46.1.3: If the Home Office had been aware of deployments of this nature would this have been considered acceptable? Why so?

[REDACTED]

Q47: Please consider MPS-0730658 and MPS-0730745. These concern an internal MPSB review, conducted at the instigation of Commander Matt Rodger in 1976, to assess the continued value of the SDS and intended to support a submission to Sir Robert Armstrong for the continuation of the squad. The short review was conducted predominantly by current or former managers of the SDS but did include some input from police recipients of SDS intelligence, and supported its continuation. The subsequent letter sent to the Home Office seeking continued authorisation for the SDS made reference to this review (MPS-0728980, page 13).

Q47.1: To your knowledge, was this review ever sent to the Home Office?

Q47.2: Having now considered the review and learned that it was authored solely by MPSB managers, most with SDS connections, would it have been considered adequate if this had been known and it had been sent to the Home Office at the time? Why?

Q47.3: What view was taken by the Home Office of assurances such as that given in the letter that 'the degree of coverage necessary is under constant review...in order to ensure the minimising of risk and of unnecessary activity by the squad'?

Q47.3.1: Were they considered satisfactory for your purposes at the time?

Q47.3.1.1: If yes, with hindsight, do you consider that the Home Office should have taken a different approach? Why?

Q48: Please consider MPS-0730903 (page 1) and MPS-0737347 (page 9, minute 24) which record that Roy Harrington attended a meeting with Commander Phelan on 5 June 1984. This meeting was arranged at the behest of Sir Brian Cubbon due to concerns about the continued justification for the SDS. At this meeting it appears that Mr Harrington

[REDACTED]
was shown a copy of the 1983 Annual Report and 'expressed a view that he had enough material to allay Sir Brian Cubbon's fears'. It appears that the results of this meeting were reported back, and as predicted, Sir Brian Cubbon was content (MPS-0734164).

Q48.1: To your knowledge, was this the first time that an SDS annual report had been shared with a Home Office official?

Q48.2: If so, what were the concerns which led to this change of approach towards authorisation of the SDS?

Q48.2.1: Did these concerns relate to the public issues surrounding the activities of Special Branches more generally, rather than the SDS specifically, at the time (for example those discussed within UCPI0000004455)?

Q48.2.2: Was this concern prompted by the announcement of an investigation into Special Branches to be held by the Home Affairs Select Committee in the spring of 1984 (UCPI0000035099)?

Q48.2.3: What impact, if any, did the ongoing effort to revise and publish the Special Branch Terms of Reference have on this apparent change of approach towards authorisation of the SDS?

Q48.3: To the best of your memory, what within the 1983 SDS Annual Report (MPS-0730903, page 5 onwards) allayed the concerns Sir Brian Cubbon had expressed?

Q48.4: Are you able to recall what was included within the internal Home Office note which Mr Harrington intended to prepare after the meeting above?

[REDACTED]

24. I had no knowledge of the activities of the SDS. I was aware of it by name and that is all, although I do not now recall how I came to know the name. It follows that I have no understanding of the origins, purpose or remit of the SDS and the groups that it targeted. I had no knowledge of the activities and methods of the Special Branch, much less that the SDS was part of the Special Branch. From reviewing the documents provided by the Inquiry, I understand that the SDS was established in 1968 and this long pre-dates my time in the Police Department.

25. I have no knowledge of the extent to which information about the SDS was shared with the Home Secretary or the degree to which other parts of Government had knowledge of it. I have no knowledge of the extent to which the Home Office influenced the activities of the SDS.

26. To the best of my recollection, I had no interaction with any officers or managers of the SDS.

27. The only involvement I would have had with Special Branch or the SDS was in relation to budgets and monetary matters. I dealt with the money side of the Metropolitan Police's budget as part of my role in F1. However, this was dealing with the budget in the broadest terms and my involvement was never directly with the SDS or its managers, as far as I am aware. I reviewed the Metropolitan's overall budget and my interactions were with the Receiver.

28. The Inquiry references a letter signed by me which grants authority for the SDS to continue in 1983 – 1984. In my role, I reviewed a draft budget prepared by the Metropolitan Police's Receiver on an annual basis, which would detail every area of the force's expenditure. Approval for each budget was required. I do not now

[REDACTED]
recall the specifics of those budgets, but they did not include any substantive information about activities of the SDS.

29. Reviewing the documents, it is clear that I granted authority for the continuation on behalf of Hayden Phillips who was on annual leave at the time. I assume that Hayden and I discussed the work to be covered in his absence prior to his departure, but I do not recall the contents of that discussion.
30. I would not have personally made the decision to authorise the continuation of the SDS. I assume that I would have been told by Hayden that I had authority to do it on his behalf prior to his departure. I would not have been able to authorise it myself, as I was too junior. I would have authorised the expenditure based on instructions to do so from Hayden. However, I do not recall having that conversation.
31. I had no knowledge of the operations of the SDS. Any awareness I had of the existence of the SDS would have been limited to the information contained in the documents provided by the Inquiry, which relate to matters of expenditure and contain nothing about the detail of the SDS's activities or methods.
32. I note reference to Assistant Commissioner Kelland's '*assurance about the close supervision [the SDS] receives*'. I had no further detail as to the supervision of the SDS beyond that contained in the letter from AC Kelland dated 11 February 1983. I would have based my reply on discussions with Hayden prior to his departure. I had no knowledge whatsoever of the supervision structure of the SDS or of any concerns about the report on political extremism. I had no knowledge of Annual Reports prepared by managers of the SDS.

[REDACTED]

33. In regard to the letters of Sir James Waddell, these all pre-date my time at the Home Office and I am unable to comment on them.

34. I was not aware at the time that SDS officers utilised the identities of dead children for their cover identities or that some officers engaged in sexual activity with those they reported on in their cover identities. I learned of this by reading about it in the press. I have no knowledge of whether the Home Office approved of these practices, or whether information about these practices were shared with it. As none of these matters were relevant to my area of work, I would not have expected to have been informed about it – these were all F4 matters. In both respects my personal reaction is disgust.

35. I had no knowledge of SDS officers having access to MPs and so no knowledge of whether the Home Office was aware of such information or whether it would be deemed acceptable. As this was not relevant to my area of work, I would not have expected to have been informed about it.

36. I had no knowledge of the Special Branch review instigated by Sir Robert Armstrong on the continuation of the squad. The review pre-dated my time in the Police Department and I cannot comment on it. I also had no knowledge of the meeting between Roy Harrington and Commander Phelan on 5 June 1984. None of these matters were relevant to my work in F1.

The Security Service

Q49: What did you understand was the nature of the working relationship between the Security Service (MI5) and the SDS?

[REDACTED]

Q50: Did you understand that the Security Service had any influence over the groups targeted by the SDS? If so, what type and/or level of influence?

Q51: Was close cooperation between the SDS and the Security Service (see, for example, MPS-0724116 and MPS-0730719, paragraph 4) considered an advantage of the SDS by the Home Office? If so, why?

Q52: What was the value of SDS intelligence, as you understood it, to the Security Service?

Q53: Did the Home Office consider that intelligence which would be of interest to the Security Service was a by-product of the SDS' core function as a provider of public order intelligence or part of the reason for the squad itself?

Q54: Please consider UCPI0000035089 which is a note from Sir Brian Cubbon to Roy Harrington concerning the question of Special Branch accountability in the context of the revision to the Special Branch Guidelines (considered above). Sir Brian's expressed view was that, although theoretically possible, in practice, the prospect of Special Branch declining a Security Service task could never arise. In note responding, HMCIC commented that Chief Constables do, in fact decline tasks which the Security Service wish their Special Branch to carry out on occasion (UCPI0000035088).

Q54.1: Did you consider that a Special Branch could properly and/or realistically decline to assist the Security Service?

Q54.2: What was your understanding of the limits, if any, which applied to Special Branch in assistance to the Security Service?

[REDACTED]

Q54.2.1: Do you recall being aware of these limits being met or surpassed? If so, please explain the circumstances.

Q54.3: Would you have considered any work undertaken by the SDS in assistance to the Security Service would have been equally subject to any applicable limits? Why so?

Q55: Please consider UCPI0000035119, UCPI0000035124, UCPI0000035123, UCPI0000034284, UCPI0000035121 and UCPI0000035120 which concern a review commissioned by the Home Office into possible duplication of work between the Security Service and Special Branch (before the inception of the SDS in 1968).

Q55.1: Are you able to recall what was the basis for this concern within the Home Office regarding possible duplication of work?

Q55.2: Do you recall whether a similar concern applied to the work of the SDS?

Q55.2.1: If so, what, if anything, was done in response?

37. I had no knowledge of the relationship between the SDS and the Security Service.

I am unable to comment on whether the Security Service influenced the SDS, whether the SDS could decline tasks from the Security Service, or the value of SDS intelligence to the Security Service.

Committee on Subversion in Public Life

Q56: Please consider UCPI0000034266 (an extract from *Defence of the Realm*, by Christopher Andrew), which suggests that the committee on Subversion in Public Life was chaired by Sir Robert Armstrong from its resurrection in 1976. As far as you are able to assist

[REDACTED]

Q56.1: *What was the remit of this committee?*

Q56.2: *What awareness did you have of its work?*

Q56.3: *What involvement, if any, did you have with its work?*

Q56.4: *To what extent was the committee aware of the SDS and its operations and benefit from its intelligence?*

Q56.5: *Did you understand the committee to have any relevance to identification of groups selected for infiltration by the SDS, or any other aspect of its work? If so, what?*

Q56.6: *Were you aware of any other committees or bodies which operated within Government and had similar areas of interest? If so, please explain what these were.*

38. I have no knowledge whatsoever of the Committee on Subversion in Public Life or whether there were other committees within Government that had similar areas of interest.

STATEMENT OF TRUTH

I believe the content of this statement to be true.

Signed:

[REDACTED]

.....
Michael Hugh Rumble

Date:



12/10/22.

