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Robert F Quick QPM MBA
Chief Constable

8th January 2007

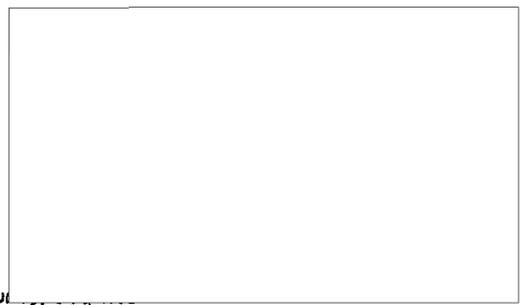
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FOR THE ATTENTION OF ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER JOHN YATES

This is obviously still a draft. I will take it home for a final read through tonight but would welcome any observations/comments.

Robert Quick
Chief Constable

Return to Ac Yates
Sp. Kibble



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DRAFT – FINAL VERSION**FOCUSED SECURITY REVIEW – OPERATION RIBBLE**Introduction

Operation Ribble is a highly sensitive and complex criminal investigation being undertaken by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). This investigation commenced 21st March 2006 and was placed under the leadership of Deputy, now Assistant Commissioner John Yates, who is the Chief Officer overseer. Assistant Commissioner Yates has a significant track record in successfully leading and managing inquiries of this nature.

An experienced senior investigating officer (SIO) and a deputy SIO were appointed at the outset, along with a small but experienced investigative team. The investigation has the support of internal legal and security infrastructures. Security support has been provided following an operational security review in March 2006 which was jointly conducted by the Covert Operations Security Unit SCD14, SO16 Physical Security Branch, DOI IT Security Section and DOI Technical Support. A total of 30 recommendations were made by SO14 in an initial review report dated 4th April 2006. These deal with the security of the inquiry office, the security of telephone communications, security of vehicles (service and private) and the physical security of transported material.

In July 2006, DPS conducted a separate 'internal review' of the handling and storage of Operation Ribble case papers. This resulted in a recommendation that SCD14 undertook a further review of the storage, retention, transportation and security of Operation Ribble case papers. SCD14 made a further 17 recommendations on physical security issues pertaining to the Directorate of Legal Services (DLS) and their handling of Operation Ribble material and archiving.

Detailed security assessments were made of the homes of Assistant Commissioner Yates and both the SIO and Deputy SIO in May 2006.

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Recommendations were made in respect of each of the premises and operational security advice given to each officer.

Terms of Reference

In December 2006, following a number of developments during the course of the investigation and on-going risk assessment, a focused security review was commissioned by the Deputy Commissioner of the MPS.

Chief Constable Robert Quick of Surrey Police agreed to undertake the review and the following terms of reference were agreed on 6th December 2006:

1. To carryout a focused security review of Operation Ribble in support of the senior investigating officer and chief officer overseers in order to ensure that all necessary policies, practices and other safeguards are in place to protect the investigation from the inadvertent or deliberate unauthorised disclosure of material to parties outside of the investigation or the inappropriate disclosure of material.
2. To report any findings of such disclosures and make recommendations as to any further security measures required beyond the extraordinary measures taken to date.
3. To consider the potential for any persons to be motivated to attempt to disrupt or discredit the investigation by means of an unjustifiable professional or personal attack on the reputation of those in charge of the inquiry and identify appropriate steps to safeguard the welfare of any vulnerable officers. This will take the form of a risk assessment and review of welfare and security.

DRAFT – FINAL VERSIONReview

Given the focused nature of the review, the sensitivity of Operation Ribble and the need to meet a tight timescale, the review was conducted by Chief Constable Quick alone. The review has been confined to detailed interviews with key personnel, namely the SIO, the Deputy SIO and Assistant Commissioner Yates, and a full examination of documents pertaining to the security of relevant buildings and the handling and disclosure of sensitive case material. Standard operating procedures relating to security have also been examined. The review also offers a professional assessment from without the MPS of the risks facing the MPS and key Operation Ribble staff as the inquiry moves forward and how these might be further mitigated.

Compliance

It has not been possible to fully and independently test compliance with all SOPs and policy decisions relating to the security and disclosure of inquiry material or the implementation of all security review recommendations. However, I have seen significant documentary evidence indicating various works and actions have been taken in furtherance of all of these.

Whilst not every security recommendation has been implemented, these are discretionary and those not implemented are reviewed by the SIO and Assistant Commissioner Yates routinely. I am of the view that the most important recommendations have been implemented; for example the fitting of appropriate home address alarm systems, the issue of Secta mobile phones to the Assistant Commissioner, SIO and Deputy SIO, the issue of home 'safes' and the issue of 'Caseva' secure briefcases and vehicle safes. Compliance with a disciplined and secure disclosure regime was very evident from the interviews with senior Operation Ribble officers.

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Findings of the Review

Terms of Reference 1 : To carry out a focused security review of Operation Ribble in support of the senior investigating officer and chief officer overseers in order to ensure that all necessary policies, practices and other safeguards are in place to protect the investigation from the inadvertent or deliberate unauthorised disclosure of material to parties outside of the investigation or the inappropriate disclosure of material.

Operation Ribble is staffed by key individuals who are amongst the most experienced in the country in dealing with high risk, sensitive and complex investigations. In relation to the Assistant Commissioner, SIO and Deputy SIO, the reviewing officer has personal knowledge of previous inquiries where they have held senior positions and which have had similar risks in that various interested parties, including journalists, might be proactive in seeking information or material to which they are not entitled. Accordingly these officers are very well versed in the leadership and operational practices which are absolutely necessary to underpin the highest levels of integrity and security in the investigation of its staff.

Assistant Commissioner Yates, the SIO and Deputy SIO have a clear record of managing investigations which have remained secure.

Disclosure & Revelation

I have discussed at length the disclosure and revelation disciplines being maintained as part of the investigation strategy tactics. Disclosure is subject of detailed policy file decisions which are being reviewed and discussed regularly with the Assistant Commissioner and with senior members of the CPS Special Casework Section and Counsel Mr. David Perry.

John C. ...

Clearly it must be recognised that once material or information is properly disclosed as part of the investigative process to individuals who are not in the employ of the MPS then its control over disclosure diminishes. I am aware of

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at least one episode where a disclosure by another agency was not authorised by the MPS. Fortunately the impact of this was effectively contained and additional disciplines have been agreed with this agency to prevent a recurrence.

Throughout the investigation, investigative disclosure has been thoroughly reviewed by the SIO who has ensured compliance with various legal requirements, including provision within the Criminal Procedure & Information Act 1996 and other strictures. Once again it must be acknowledged that the control of sensitive information by the MPS is diminished through the process of required pre-interview disclosure to interviewees under caution and their legal representatives.

Initial analysis indicates a correlation between this form of disclosure and the timing of material subject to the disclosure appearing in media and press reporting. This issue will be dealt with by way of a recommendation. It is also quite apparent that, where witnesses have been interviewed, the questioning they are subjected to inevitably allows them to make informed assessments of police lines of inquiry and of the general nature of evidence that might be held by the investigation. The reviewing officer has examined much but not all media and press reported material on this case and it appears consistent with what could reasonably be expected to be sourced from those interviewed.

This point is reinforced in the entry on BBC Political Correspondent Nick Robinson's 'blog' dated 20th December 2006 where he states reports by the BBC detailing notes kept by Sir Christopher Evans about the offer by Lord Levy of a "K or big P" emanated from witnesses who had had these words put to them by Police Investigators during interview. He claimed his colleague Reeta Chakrabati heard about this and reported it.

(John Lee)

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All Operation Ribble staff have signed a specific Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) document designed for Operation Ribble which draws upon best practice from the MPS. The document sets out the clear procedures to ensure the security of information in the inquiry.

Detective Sergeant Blake, the operations office manager and an experienced supervisor, is the operational security point of contact for Operation Ribble with direct and personal responsibility for ensuring compliance by all staff with the SOP on behalf of the SIO.

The SOP requires staff to be conversant with security procedures and other MPS policies which are relevant (ie Notice 50/2004 [15 September]). The SOP also deals with access to offices, need to know principles in meetings and briefings, revelation and disclosure and the handling and transporting of material and data. Telecommunications, vehicles and IT are also dealt with.

I am satisfied that the revelation, disclosure and security regimes in Operation Ribble reflect MPS best practice which, due to the nature of the organisation, represents some of the best in UK policing. There is clear evidence of strict compliance with these regimes and I consider this to be commensurate with current risks. No obvious weakness is apparent.

Conclusion

I am satisfied that the disclosure regime and its management is of a very high standard and appropriate to effectively counter the risks of unauthorised or improper disclosure of a deliberate or inadvertent nature.

Terms of Reference 2 : To report any findings of such disclosures and make recommendations as to any further security measures required beyond the extraordinary measures taken to date.

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I can confirm that I have found no evidence of any inadvertent or deliberate unauthorised or improper disclosure of material or information by MPS staff.

I have made reference to one episode of unauthorised/improper disclosure by another agency which has been addressed.

As detailed above, the reviewing officer has seen some basic analysis which is indicative of a correlation between the timing of witness or suspect interviews where material is properly revealed or disclosed or where questioning allows reasoned assumptions or informed speculation about lines of inquiry to be made by those being interviewed; and the subsequent appearance of this in media reports. This is highly likely to be the source of any accurate material reported. This should be subject of further work to validate this.

Finally, having been made aware of a number of very sensitive aspects of the inquiry and sensitive evidence held, it is clear that this information has not entered the public domain. This gives further confidence in the security of this investigation.

Conclusion

No evidence of inadvertent or deliberate unauthorised or inappropriate disclosure by MPS staff employees has been found. No additional security measurements are recommended.

Terms of Reference 3 : To consider the potential for any persons to be motivated to attempt to disrupt or discredit the investigation by means of an unjustifiable professional or personal attack on the reputation of those in charge of the inquiry and identify appropriate steps to safeguard the welfare of any vulnerable officers. This will take the form of a risk assessment and review of welfare and security.

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Without rehearsing the detail in this document, the reviewing officer has been verbally briefed separately by the Assistant Commissioner and then the SIO and Deputy SIO on the detailed nature of this inquiry and the evidence secured to date. These briefings have also included detail of the reactions of key individuals and other officials and politicians on the periphery of this inquiry together with other intelligence.

It is not therefore difficult to conclude that there is very significant potential for individuals, groups or organisations to be motivated to attempt to disrupt or discredit this investigation. This could take the form of an attack on the probity and integrity of the investigation or its key staff, particularly Asst Commissioner Yates. As the investigation reaches a conclusion there is potential for a wider attack on the MPS and its leadership.

Security of individuals

In respect of the three key individuals conducting the investigation, Asst Commissioner Yates, the SIO and Deputy SIO, I have reviewed the security measures and advice in relation to their personal security.

The home address of each officer has been the subject of a site visit by in-house MPS security specialists and security advice provided to each officer. In addition measures have been implemented at each address to strengthen physical security and local operation orders are in place in the event of alarm activations.

I have discussed those security recommendations not yet implemented (ie fitting of cctv monitoring at home addresses. These remain under review and can be implemented with short notice in the event that intelligence or events indicate the threat has increased further.

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I believe that at this stage of the inquiry the personal security of Asst Commissioner Yates, the SIO and Deputy SIO is commensurate with, and adequate to effectively mitigate, the threats.

Welfare

I have discussed welfare issues in depth with all three officers. It was clear from the outset that they believe they are receiving strong leadership and "top cover" from the Deputy Commissioner and Commissioner. All officers were appreciative of the Deputy Commissioner asking for this review as an independent 'quality check' on security and welfare.

In interview all three officers demonstrated a very realistic appreciation of the threat and have clearly maintained a sense of perspective. A great deal of mutual support is provided between the three key individuals and this is reinforced by the personal support of the Deputy Commissioner.

All three officers were offered the opportunity to discuss any concerns about welfare on a one-to-one basis in confidence after the initial interviews and nothing further has been forthcoming.

It is my assessment that all reasonable organisational support and strong leadership is being provided to Operation Ribble Staff and particularly the three key officers subject of this reviews.

Risk Assessment

The reviewing officer has reviewed the available information to inform an assessment as to whether there exists a credible risk that persons may be motivated to seek to undermine Operation Ribble directly or indirectly through an attack on any key individual. An assessment is also made of the risk of a more general attack on the motivation, integrity and competence of the MPS in undertaking the inquiry.

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It is already clear that a number of individuals, including some senior politicians, have made adverse comment on the motivations of the inquiry and have suggested that there is no substance to the allegations and consequently the MPS is on a fishing expedition. Clearly some of these comments are likely to have been made by people who are not aware of the detail of the evidence secured by the inquiry. However, others are by now aware of potential vulnerabilities arising from particular lines of inquiry and are able to make informed assumptions of the nature of the evidence that the police may be holding. Some of these individuals are without doubt powerful and influential and may be threatened by this investigation.

Naturally the media and press will remain highly proactive around this investigation with all the attendant risks this implies.

Accordingly, on the basis of the material seen and briefings received on the progress of the inquiry, there is without doubt substantial risk of the following:

- i. An intensifying attack on the motivation, integrity or competence of the MPS by those at risk from the investigation or their allies and supporters;
- ii. An attempt to discredit or compromise the investigation by suggesting the investigation is not secure and information is being leaked;
- iii. Attempt by the media to obtain sensitive material;
- iv. Attempts to discredit or compromise key individuals leading the investigation as a means of undermining the investigation.

The review has found that effective security and welfare arrangements are in place in respect of (iii) and (iv) above although these arrangements will need to be kept under review as circumstances change.