Your reference:

Our reference:

Date 17th October 2002

METROPOLITAN POLICE SERVICE
Special Branch

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You will probably be aware by now about the forthcoming BBC documentary on measures taken by the British State to counter domestic subversion. The programme is to be broadcast under the title 'True Spies' on three consecutive Sunday evenings from 27th October 2002.

The Metropolitan Police has been keen to support this project and, on the basis of firm reassurances from the programme makers that operational and personal security would not be compromised, an invitation was extended to former Special Branch officers to contribute to it in any way they thought fit.

The actual content of the programmes only emerged piecemeal within the last month and I was shown a final script ten days ago. As a former SDS officer, I know that you will have a particular interest in the series and I thought it might be helpful to offer a brief advance summary of its content, specifically from the perspective of the SDS unit:

Episode One will deal specifically with the covert methods used to combat subversion and public order from the anti-Vietnam War protests of 1968. A section of the programme will outline the formation of the SDS and a number of former SDS officers are interviewed on screen (none more recent than 1985). Legend building, tradecraft and areas of targetting are among the issues highlighted and discussed in the first programme. The second and third episodes will examine left and right wing extremism respectively.

I remain convinced that the overall message from the programmes will be enormously to the credit of those who served in Special Branch over the past four decades.

If you have any particular concerns or queries about the series, I would be more than happy to answer them.

Roger Pearce
Commander