

BRIEFING NOTE

OPERATION ZULU CRICKET

1. Operation Zulu Cricket was conducted by Team 13 in conjunction with Drugs Team Z of Her Majesty's Customs and Excise. To date one person, Roger CHARLES, has been arrested and charged with unlawful possession with intent to supply of 15 kilos of high-grade heroin with a street value of about £4,000,000.
2. This operation arose on Monday 8th June 1992, when DI SMITH and DS BROWN attended a meeting at Customs House chaired by Mr Dave CAMPBELL. It was stated that information had been received from an informant controlled by the United States Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), of an organisation willing to supply up to 20 kilos of heroin in London for onward transmission to the USA. This organisation was apparently willing to supply this amount on a weekly basis.
3. It was stated that the informant, SERGIO, had worked for the DEA for some years and had numerous successes to his credit.
4. The information given was that SERGIO was in contact with an Irishman called Steven ROBERTSON, claiming to be part of this drug supplying organisation. ROBERTSON was offering heroin at \$60,000 per kilo if delivered in Belgium or France, or \$80,000 per kilo if delivered in London. SERGIO had indicated to ROBERTSON that he would meet him in London to complete the first transaction at a cost of \$1,200,000 claiming to already have that money in place in London.
5. It was stated that SERGIO would arrive in London on 9th June 1992 from Boston, USA and would contact Juan SUAREZ of Customs Drugs Team Q who he had spoken to on the telephone, but had never met.
6. It was established, via the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), that ROBERTSON was believed to be involved in robberies, drugs and illegal firearms dealing. This coincided with information that ROBERTSON had been willing to accept firearms in payment for future loads.
7. As there was no intelligence on the method of importation and because of the possible terrorist links, Customs requested that Police take operational control, and that Drugs Team Z would cooperate. It was agreed that prosecution would be on a "best evidence" approach.

8. Accommodation was arranged for SERGIO at the Churchill Hotel, Portman Square, W1 and audio monitoring equipment installed there by the covert team of SO11(2).
9. On arrival in England, SERGIO contacted SUAREZ by telephone and then travelled to the hotel where he was met by SUAREZ, DI SMITH, and DS BROWN. A discussion took place as to the best method of progressing the operation and the type of undercover officer most suitable for introduction. It was finally agreed that a Spanish speaking officer would be suitable, and SUAREZ offered his services. SERGIO indicated that he would be willing to work with SUAREZ.
10. A further meeting was then held at Her Majesty's Customs, and Deputy Assistant Commissioner of Specialist Operations (DAC'SO') authority was sought for SUAREZ's participation even though he had not been formally trained. DC BLEKSLEY (PETER) was nominated to act as the next undercover officer.
11. On the evening of 9th June 1992, SERGIO met with ROBERTSON at the hotel. ROBERTSON was with a man he introduced as Rog, now identified as Roger CHARLES. Surveillance established the presence of two "minders" in the hotel bar. During the meeting SERGIO arranged the introduction of his "money man", SUAREZ, for the following day. After the meeting, the two men were followed to a service flat in Knightsbridge.
12. On Wednesday, 10th June 1992, SERGIO introduced SUAREZ to ROBERTSON at the hotel. SUAREZ then successfully introduced PETER (BLEKSLEY) before flashing £750,000 in Selfridges Safety Deposit Room. Surveillance had established that CHARLES travelled with ROBERTSON to the vicinity of the hotel but did not go into the meeting.
13. During subsequent contacts it was agreed that the exchange of drugs should take place between CHARLES and PETER (BLEKSLEY) at the Hilton Hotel, Gatwick, while SUAREZ and ROBERTSON took care of the money at Selfridges. SERGIO, due to an expiring passport, would have returned to the USA by then.
14. Vodaphone numbers were exchanged between SUAREZ, CHARLES, and ROBERTSON and accordingly a report seeking monitoring submitted and approved.
15. As is common the targets experienced difficulties marrying up the drugs with transport. It became apparent from the telephone intercepts that whenever a problem arose CHARLES and ROBERTSON immediately contacted a man now identified as Timothy MEAD. Both men had mentioned to SERGIO that 'Tim' was the main man.
16. On 15th June 1992 MEAD attended a meeting with SERGIO and SUAREZ at the Churchill Hotel and the trade was initially set for 16th June 1992. Further delays unfortunately beset

the targets and were confirmed by the telephone intercepts. Surveillance identified MEAD at Heathrow with ROBERTSON and JOHNSTON.

17. After a series of false starts the trade was set for Saturday 27th June 1992, with all arrangements as previously agreed. Intercept intelligence led to a suspicion that either JOHNSTON or ROBERTSON would have armed "minders" with them at the trade. Accordingly, the assistance of Metropolitan and Sussex Police Tactical Firearms Units was sought, and an operation mounted. Once again, the targets had transport problems and asked for a one-day delay. SUAREZ was then instructed to set the deal for Monday 29th June 1992.
18. On that date CHARLES arrived alone at the Gatwick Hilton carrying an obviously very heavy holdall. He booked a room and was allocated a room already fitted with audio and video monitoring equipment. He then met with PETER (BLEKSLEY) and the testing and weighing took place in the monitored room. On leaving the room CHARLES was arrested.
19. SUAREZ had meanwhile met with ROBERTSON in the vicinity of Selfridges. This meeting was under Customs surveillance. Eventually SUAREZ and ROBERTSON split up having not heard from either PETER or CHARLES.
20. Since CHARLES's arrest, enquiries have continued into the backgrounds of all three targets. It has now been established that ROBERTSON is a former RUC officer having served from 1959 to 1966. Although it is common knowledge amongst RUC of his involvement in criminal matters no intelligence docket can be located.
21. CHARLES is a well-known smuggler in Northern Ireland ostensibly operating as a second-hand car dealer. Despite being a protestant, he has been seen with MEAD meeting with middle ranking IRA members. RUC officers believe that this shipment of heroin was funded in part by the IRA.
22. MEAD had been previously been arrested in December 1991 by West Midlands Police. He was in possession of £250,000 in cash and had been seen to meet two men found with £500,000 worth of LSD, cocaine, and cannabis in their possession. He was not charged. Since CHARLES's arrest Mr David TURNER of the Security Services (MI6) has visited our offices. He stated that since December 1991 MEAD had been offering information to his organisation. The facts of this case were explained fully to Mr TURNER who stated that his organisation would not wish to impede our investigations. He stated that MEAD had requested a meeting with him outside the UK and that if MEAD passed him any drugs information, he would relay it. He further stated that it was unlikely that he would continue to meet with or contact MEAD. Mr TURNER has recently informed Police that he has had no recent contact with MEAD.

23. On 1st July 1992, Mr Clive THALLON, Drugs Liaison Officer (DLO), New York, contacted Detective Sergeant BROWN requesting full details of the operation for the information of the DEA. A discussion followed as to whether the DEA would allow a debrief with SERGIO if it became necessary. THALLON stated this would cause no problems as the DEA already allowed him unlimited access.
24. On 15th July 1992, SERGIO was contacted by ROBERTSON. MEAD then took over the conversation and made it clear that they knew PETER (BLEKSLEY) was a policeman and that his people did not intend to let the matter rest. They were unsure about SUAREZ and in a further call MEAD spoke of putting a team on PETER BLEKSLEY to “do the hit”. This information was relayed to Customs by fax from the DEA on 18th July 1992 and Detective Inspector SMITH informed by telephone. A copy of the fax was relayed on 20th July 1992.
25. As a result of the threats made it was decided to seek to interview SERGIO to obtain the full story. A report seeking permission to travel to the USA to debrief SERGIO, obtain details of the threat and to pay an interim reward was submitted on 20th July to DAC’S O’. Attempts to contact THALLON, the DLO, proved fruitless as he was on holiday in the UK. Fortunately, the DEA had included on the fax details of the informant handlers, Agents EVANS and RONALDO and their contact numbers.
26. Permission for the enquiry was given by DAC’S O’ and it was decided to travel to the USA as soon as possible after THALLON’s return to New York. This was in order that he could facilitate and be present during the interview. In order to ensure SERGIO’s availability, Agent EVANS of the DEA was contacted by Detective Chief Inspector BONNER. EVANS stated he was willing to make SERGIO available but wanted to be present at any interview. This was naturally agreed.
27. On 3rd or 4th August 1992, SUAREZ of HM Customs contacted Detective Sergeant BROWN enquiring when SERGIO was to receive a reward payment. He was told of the arrangements being made and immediately became highly agitated, stating that he would not permit such contact. He went on to claim SERGIO was solely his informant and only available with his permission. It was pointed out to him that SERGIO had been presented throughout as a DEA source and that he had spoken to the DEA handlers. At this point SUAREZ became abusive and the conversation was terminated.
28. On 6th August 1992 Detective Sergeant BROWN attended a meeting at Customs ostensibly to discuss with THALLON (DLO), Mr ANDERSON his supervisor, and Detective Sergeant DOUGLAS of the National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS), the enquiry in the USA. ANDERSON did not attend this meeting, but Brian GLOVER (SUAREZ’s supervisor) did attend. GLOVER’s manner from the outset was highly offensive to Detective Sergeant BROWN, and he openly accused police of “going behind their back to the DEA”. Having

listened to the reason for police action he grudgingly agreed that access to SERGIO was important. He claimed that SERGIO was working for Customs in addition to the DEA.

29. It is relevant at this point to mention that SERGIO tapes all conversations with targets and during the meeting with GLOVER, Detective Sergeant BROWN stated that the DEA claimed SERGIO had a recording of the threat against PETER (BLEKSLEY). At the end of the meeting, THALLON agreed to make the necessary arrangements for the officers in New York the following week. THALLON also apologised for the behaviour of GLOVER. He reiterated this apology to Detective Chief Inspector BONNER and Detective Sergeant BROWN when in New York.
30. On Monday 10th August 1992, GLOVER contacted Detective Sergeant BROWN querying whether he was travelling to New York on 11th August. He was informed that the arrangements were in place and he then disclosed that Customs had been in possession of the tapes of the threat conversation for at least 2 weeks. GLOVER then arranged for delivery of the tapes.
31. On Wednesday, 12th August 1992, Detective Chief Inspector BONNER, and Detective Sergeant BROWN met with THALLON in New York and he stated that he had been in contact with EVANS of the DEA. It was stated that SERGIO would be available in New York without EVANS being present. It was implied that this was with the agreement of EVANS.
32. The meeting with SERGIO went well and was fruitful. Further detail of the threats made, and of ROBERTSON were obtained. SERGIO stated that he would give evidence in the case if necessary.
33. On Friday, 14th August 1992, Detective Chief Inspector BONNER, and Detective Sergeant BROWN met with SERGIO's handlers, Agents EVANS and RONALDO, in Providence, Rhode Island. This meeting took place in the presence of their supervisor, Mr KRESKI. It is an understatement to say that the reception was frosty, the officers were initially quite hostile. As the meeting progressed the reasons for the hostility became apparent and well-founded. The DEA were unhappy 1) that they had commenced the operation and handed it to the DLO when it became apparent that ROBERTSON would not deliver the heroin direct to the USA, and had not then been kept informed of progress; 2) that having asked to be present when SERGIO was interviewed by police that the interview went ahead without them; and 3) that EVANS had received a call from SUAREZ telling him that SERGIO was SUAREZ's informant and had signed a contract in London to that effect.
34. It quickly became apparent to the DEA that the machinations of Customs have been carried out without Police knowledge or agreement and that we accepted fully that SERGIO was their resource. The meeting then progressed satisfactorily.

35. The meetings established a number of options;

- 1) That the case against CHARLES go to trial as it stands, i.e., with only PETER BLEKSLEY's undercover role being disclosed. That, of course, may result in arguments for further disclosure at court with the risk of acquittal if refused.
- 2) That the roles of SERGIO and SUAREZ are both disclosed to the court. This would of course strengthen the evidence against CHARLES with the added advantage of allowing the arrest of both MEAD and ROBERTSON.
- 3) That all evidence is made available to the DEA who will seek extradition of all three targets to stand trial in the USA for conspiracy to supply heroin in the USA.
- 4) That SERGIO is permitted to contact ROBERTSON with a view to organising a further deal to be completed in the USA.
- 5) That SERGIO is authorised to release some agreed detail of PETER BLEKSLEY with a view to obtaining sufficient evidence to charge MEAD and ROBERTSON with conspiracy to murder.

Option 2 was the preferred option, and this was agreed by Assistant Chief Investigating Officer CAMPBELL, Senior Investigating Officers HURT and GLOVER at a meeting at Customs House. As a result of that agreement the evidence potentially available was researched and a presentation made to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), on 1st October 1992. They fully agreed that there would be sufficient evidence to charge and convict MEAD and ROBERTSON for conspiracy to supply with CHARLES. They further stated that if they were arrested abroad, they would recommend extradition proceedings. Senior Investigating Officer HURT of Drugs Team Z was informed of the CPS decision on 2nd October 1992 and was asked to obtain SUAREZ's statement. Despite numerous requests Police did not obtain possession of the statement until 20th November 1992 and then only an unsigned, uncorrected draft version.

It has since been learned that CHARLES is considering mounting a defence of duress. He may claim to an RUC informant and that this fact was discovered by ROBERTSON and MEAD who then threatened him with exposure unless he complied with their instructions. He may state that ROBERTSON is an ex-RUC officer with very good sources within the RUC and the judiciary, and that MEAD has excellent sources within the Irish Police. If he does choose to run this defence it would be necessary to disclose SUAREZ's role, and that of SERGIO, in order to prove he was a willing participant.

CHARLES's claims of ROBERTSON and MEAD having Police contacts receive some corroboration from an Irish female who has regularly contacted this office since CHARLES's

arrest. The identity of this female is unknown, but it is believed that she may be a Police or Customs employee. She appears to have excellent knowledge of the internal workings of the Irish Police and of current Irish Customs and Excise targets and operations. This woman has refused all personal details and to meet with any police officers. Her reasons for this are that she fears for her own personal safety if she was ever identified.

36. This woman has claimed that MEAD is part of a money laundering operation on behalf of the IRA and that monies are cleansed through an Irish company called CAVALIER LTD. This company allegedly owns hotels and clubs in both Eire and UK. One of the directors of CAVALIER is called Trevor POWER who is allegedly known to MEAD. His brother and co-director is Chief Superintendent Tony POWER of the Irish Police. The source states that Chief Superintendent POWER has actively inhibited any enquiries about MEAD and associates, allegedly by misuse of his authority whilst Head of Personnel by transferring "troublesome" officers. This source has stated that the company solicitor is Kevin MULVANNEY, whose IRA connections are apparently well-known in Eire. Also employed is Patrick MASON a former Irish Customs officer, allegedly still very well connected within that organisation.

37. Corroboration of this woman's claims about MEAD can be given by Detective Sergeant JONES of the West Midlands Constabulary. He arrested MEAD as he collected £250,000 in cash from a drugs trafficker called Delroy BAKER. There was insufficient evidence to charge MEAD with any offence, but BAKER was convicted of a number of drugs offences and did not query the confiscation of the £250,000. BAKER is believed to have been working on behalf of the IRA. MEAD claimed that he thought that he was assisting in a commercial fraud/tax evasion operating in Eire and that he was being paid £1,000 to collect money and take it to Spain. He told Detective Sergeant JONES that he had moved about £7,000,000 in the previous few months.

38. The meeting with the DEA in the USA established without doubt that HM Customs have sought to "steal" the DEA's informant, SERGIO, through SUAREZ, and have been caught out. The extent of the damage they may have caused to the DLO system can only be guessed at. It seems that THALLON, the DLO in New York, was caught in the middle trying to do a good job for all concerned but with inherent loyalty to his parent organisation. Customs machinations have caused difficulties for Police in progressing this operation resulting in a lack of trust by the DEA. This lack of trust is perhaps reasonable as it was agreed at the Boston meeting that the DEA would be kept fully updated on progress and were, by Police. They were, however, informed on at least two occasions by SERGIO that he had to fly to London on police instructions in connection with the case. On each occasion the DEA contacted Detective Sergeant BROWN for verification, only to be told that these trips were nothing to do with this operation and beyond the knowledge of

Police. It was not perhaps surprising that the DEA later decided to put their own aims first with regard to operations against ROBERTSON and MEAD. SERGIO later informed Detective Sergeant BROWN that he had been setting up an operation for Customs and that these trips had been planned in connection with that operation but had never taken place.

39. Having partially alienated the DEA, HM Customs then informed SERGIO that they had negotiated the release from New Scotland Yard of the rest of his reward money and that the case officers were holding it back in order to pressurise him. There is no doubt that SUAREZ was the officer responsible for this as THALLON the DLO was present in New York when DCI BONNER explained to SERGIO that the remainder of his reward monies would only become available after the trial.
40. Having received CPS approval of the proposed course of action to arrest MEAD and ROBERTSON it was decided to obtain SERGIO's statement and then to use SERGIO to lure MEAD and ROBERTSON to a meeting where they could be arrested. In order to maintain contact SERGIO had made and received a large number of telephone calls concerning the threat to PETER BLEKSLEY and about the possibility of a future deal once BLEKSLEY had been "terminated". MEAD made it quite clear in these calls that PETER BLEKSLEY must be killed and that he could put a team onto him if SERGIO could supply a location. There is little doubt that MEAD was highly suspicious of SERGIO and was equally keen to lure him to a meeting where he could take whatever action he thought fit, and he used the future deal as bait.
41. Unfortunately, the DEA decided that there was a possibility of a future deal and decided to try to engineer that deal by arranging a meeting in Paris between SERGIO and MEAD. This was arranged without our knowledge and before SERGIO's statement had been taken. The DEA were prevailed upon and arranged for SERGIO to fly to London en-route to France. Whilst in London his statement was obtained, and he attempted to reschedule his meeting with MEAD. He made telephonic contact with MEAD in Paris and arranged a meeting in Marseilles which MEAD later cancelled. Upon SERGIO's return to the USA, MEAD again made contact and arranged a meeting in Jamaica. This too was later cancelled. MEAD and ROBERTSON remain wanted.
42. We are currently trying to arrange a meeting with the RUC and Irish Police to ask their assistance in the arrests, although it must be said that the CPS advise that extradition from Eire would probably prove too difficult.
43. The latest development in this operation is that SERGIO has received pager messages using MEAD's code "17". These resulted in him calling a Boston, USA telephone subsequently found to be in an Irish bar. When he telephoned, SERGIO was told "SERGIO

you're fucking dead." The phone was then hung up. A report has been submitted asking for relocation expenses. The DEA advise that they believe that MEAD's associates in the Boston area probably could locate SERGIO.

Richard BROWN
Detective Sergeant