

BEFORE THE CHIEF CORONER HHJ LUCRAFT QC
INQUESTS ARISING FROM THE DEATHS IN THE WESTMINSTER TERROR
ATTACK OF 22 MARCH 2017
INQUEST INTO THE DEATH OF PC KEITH PALMER GM

SUBMISSIONS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITIES (PIH 2 JULY)

AGENDA ITEM 1. Update on investigations and disclosure

1. This brief submission updates the Chief Coroner and the other Interested Persons on the Parliamentary authorities' progress regarding scope Topic C(v), "Security arrangements and precautions at the Palace (but only so far as relevant to his death)".
2. The Corporate Officer of the House of Commons and The Corporate Officer of the House of Lords (together, with the staff of the two Houses, referred to in this submission as the "Parliamentary authorities") sought Interested Person status under s. 47(2)(m) CJA 2009 solely in relation to the inquest into the death of PC Palmer. This was granted on 6 June. Mr Eric Hepburn has been the Director of Security for Parliament since 1 September 2016. He will give evidence at the inquest on behalf of the Parliamentary authorities. He appears on the witness list in that capacity.
3. The request for a statement from Mr Hepburn was first formally communicated on 4 June. Mr Hepburn has been provided with the helpful 'Note of Counsel and Solicitors to the Inquests on Palace of Westminster Security Issues'. That note set out nine sub-topics of interest. It stated more generally that:
 - *"...in addressing the question how PC Palmer died, it will be relevant to consider the protections against armed attack which were present in the place and at the time when he was attacked, and how Khalid Masood was able to breach those protections to a limited extent."* (§1)
 - *"As the Indicative Scope document makes clear, this topic is only be considered to the extent relevant to PC Palmer's death. The Inquests will not be carrying out a comprehensive review of Palace security. That exercise is for other official bodies, and necessarily involves considering a far wider range of topics than may be relevant to the events of 22 March 2017"* (§2)
 - *"The Coroner's legal team has requested that the Metropolitan Police Service ("MPS") provide assistance to the Coroner by supplying one or more witness statement(s) explaining the physical and human security measures in the New Palace Yard area and otherwise of relevance to the attack on PC Palmer, as they were in March 2017. It is understood that there may be separate statements from a senior MPS officer and a civil servant with responsibility for Parliamentary security".* (§3)

- *“The Coroner’s legal team is acutely aware of the need to ensure that the evidence is relevant to the Inquests, and that care should be taken to avoid including material which is not relevant and may impair current Parliamentary security” (§5)*

4. As set out in §9 of Counsel to the Inquests’ submissions, Mr Hepburn’s statement will be provided to the inquest in early July. It is fully appreciated that the Chief Coroner, PC Palmer’s representatives and the other IPs will wish to receive this, and other witness statements, as soon as practicable. Mr Hepburn and the Parliamentary authorities have been working hard to that end, although it has not been possible to provide the statement ahead of the 2 July PIH. Mr Hepburn’s statement will of course be finalised as soon as practicable. In brief terms, the principal reasons why the statement is taking some time to finalise are as follows:

- (1) As would be expected, over the years there has been a number of reviews of Parliamentary security and the management of that security. These vary from ad hoc reviews following particular incidents to larger reviews. Work has been ongoing to address those past reviews that may fall within the inquest’s scope.
- (2) Much of the underlying material is sensitive, relating to operational security matters. It is necessary and appropriate to present all relevant information within the statement in a way which is fair and accurate, but limited to that which is relevant and without impairing current Parliamentary security. Considerable care is required in this exercise.
- (3) Parliamentary security involves both the Metropolitan Police Service and the Parliamentary authorities. There is a need for the respective legal representatives to liaise to ensure that, between them, each aspect of the inquest team’s note on Palace of Westminster security issues is appropriately covered while having proper regard to the security sensitivities involved.
- (4) The underlying relevant past security reviews and reports will be made available to Counsel to the Inquest, and this process is ongoing. Some further guidance from Counsel to the Inquest may be required ahead of the finalisation of the statement.

OTHER AGENDA ITEMS.

5. Without discourtesy to the Chief Coroner, PC Palmer’s family or the other IPs, the Parliamentary authorities’ proper role is confined to the Palace of Westminster Security issue. No further submissions need to be made on the other agenda items.

NICHOLAS MOSS

29 June 2018

Temple Garden Chambers