

OPUS2

Manchester Arena Inquiry

Day 59

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1 Tuesday, 2 February 2021
 2 (10.00 am)
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Greaney, good morning. I apologise
 4 we're slightly late starting. I was given a document to
 5 read before I came in.
 6 MR GREANEY: As I indicated at the beginning of yesterday,
 7 the witness today is Assistant Commissioner Neil Basu
 8 who I predict will take some of, but not all of, the
 9 day.
 10 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER NEIL BASU (affirmed)
 11 Questions from MR GREANEY
 12 MR GREANEY: Would you begin, please, by telling us your
 13 full name?
 14 A. My name is Anil Basu, but professionally I am known as
 15 Neil Basu.
 16 Q. Did you join the Metropolitan Police Service, or MPS as
 17 we will describe it, on 30 November 1992?
 18 A. I did.
 19 Q. So that you now have more than 28 years of continuous
 20 service in the MPS?
 21 A. That's correct.
 22 Q. What is your current rank, please?
 23 A. I'm an assistant commissioner.
 24 Q. Is that the London equivalent of a chief constable in
 25 the constabularies?

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1 A. That's correct.
 2 Q. How many assistant commissioners are there in the
 3 Metropolitan Police?
 4 A. There are four that run the four business groups of the
 5 Metropolitan Police and we all answer to Dame
 6 Cressida Dick, the Commissioner.
 7 Q. Your rank is assistant commissioner, but do you in fact
 8 have two roles?
 9 A. I do. I wonder whether it's possible, chair, if I can
 10 just say something before we go into the bulk of the
 11 evidence?
 12 Q. May I apologise to you because you and I spoke before we
 13 started and you did indicate to me that before we
 14 embarked upon your evidence there was something that you
 15 very much wanted to say. So that's my fault and I'm
 16 sure it will be in order for you to say it at this
 17 stage.
 18 A. It's incredibly important to me, chair, that the
 19 families of everyone who has been bereaved, but not just
 20 the bereaved, the people who have suffered in this
 21 horror, people who have been psychologically and
 22 physically injured as a result of this, understand that
 23 I'm here not just as the assistant commissioner from
 24 London or the national lead for counter-terrorism but as
 25 a human being, as a parent to express my deepest

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1 sympathies not just from me personally but from the
 2 entire network that I lead. Effectively, this is
 3 a network that is entirely designed to stop there being
 4 victims and survivors of terrorist incidents and I have
 5 met far too many in my career, so I know the terrible
 6 burden of not just the event but having to sit through
 7 inquests, criminal trials and inquiries has on those
 8 people. I know how brutal it is.
 9 I just want them to know that I have never worked in
 10 my 28 years of continuous service in a part of policing
 11 that tries so hard to improve itself constantly to try
 12 and stop there being any more victims and survivors and
 13 I just wanted to pass on my deepest respects to those
 14 people who are watching this.
 15 Q. And to be fair to what you have just said, assistant
 16 commissioner, in the discussion you had with me you
 17 emphasised how important it was for you to make those
 18 remarks before you started the body of your evidence
 19 today.
 20 A. Absolutely.
 21 Q. So having dealt with that very important matter, let's
 22 return to your evidence.
 23 What I was inviting you to agree and develop for me
 24 was the proposition that although your rank is assistant
 25 commissioner, you have two roles.

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1 A. I do. Those two roles are distinct but connected. The
 2 first role, as we have discussed, is I'm one of the four
 3 assistant commissioners in the Metropolitan Police
 4 Service. There are four business groups. They are
 5 front line policing and specialist crime, Met
 6 operations, professionalism and my business group, which
 7 is called specialist operations, and I'm the assistant
 8 commissioner specialist operations which is where the
 9 acronym ACSO comes from. That London role is designed
 10 effectively to run counter-terrorism and protective
 11 security in the Metropolitan Police district on behalf
 12 of the deputy and the Commissioner.
 13 So within that business group there are five
 14 operational command units. The first is SO15
 15 counter-terrorism command. That's by far the largest
 16 counter-terrorism command in the country. It deals with
 17 about 53% of the threat in the United Kingdom.
 18 The second operational command unit is royalty and
 19 specialist protection. That is the physical protection
 20 of VVIPs, very very important people, the ministers and
 21 members of the royal household and certain other
 22 individuals and certain residences and palaces.
 23 The third business group is parliamentary and
 24 diplomatic protection, which is protecting the Palace of
 25 Westminster and MPs while they are sitting and also the

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1 diplomatic community under the Geneva Convention.
 2 The fourth operational command unit is aviation
 3 policing, so I provide the policing for Heathrow and
 4 City of London airports.
 5 The final operational command unit is called
 6 Protective Security Operations, and that is the unit
 7 which is effectively the right arm to my deputy,
 8 Lucy D’Orsi, who gave evidence to this inquiry, which
 9 effectively run the Security Review Committee, are
 10 responsible for professional search security
 11 coordinators and counter—terrorism security advisers for
 12 the Metropolitan Police district, and the patrols of
 13 iconic sites, the counter—terrorism patrols of iconic
 14 sites called Servitor.
 15 That is my London role.
 16 Q. So that’s, if I may say so, a very clear description of
 17 your role as ACSO. So the second role, please, which
 18 you describe as distinct but connected is?
 19 A. So I have the privilege of being the National Police
 20 Chiefs’ Council lead for Counter—terrorism Policing
 21 in the United Kingdom. So I am effectively the head of
 22 an organisation that coordinates a collaboration between
 23 nine regions of the United Kingdom — of England and
 24 Wales, and works with the Police Service of
 25 Northern Ireland and Police Scotland to manage

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1 counter—terrorism and protective security for the
 2 country.
 3 Q. Have you acted in those capacities since 8 March 2018?
 4 A. I have.
 5 Q. Having been substantively appointed to your role as ACSO
 6 on 22 March 2018?
 7 A. That’s correct, sir.
 8 Q. However, is it the position that you have served in
 9 counter—terrorism since an earlier date?
 10 A. Yes, I have served since March 2015. I’ve actually done
 11 the two deputy roles to this job previously.
 12 Q. We’re going to look at that in due course. But having
 13 served in counter—terrorism since March of 2015, does
 14 that mean that you have been involved in such work
 15 throughout a period of significance?
 16 A. Well, that’s possibly an understatement.
 17 Q. Probably.
 18 A. I think the previous director—general of the security
 19 service, who are the prime domestic intelligence agency
 20 with responsibility for UK security, described it as the
 21 highest tempo of terrorism in his 34—year career. So
 22 I think that’s probably a statement that I would make.
 23 Q. Just to develop that to a limited extent, you’ve been
 24 involved in counter—terrorism policing throughout the
 25 rise of Islamic State?

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1 A. That’s correct.
 2 Q. And the increased threat to Western Europe and the UK,
 3 including the series of attacks that took place in 2017,
 4 of which the Manchester attack was one?
 5 A. Yes, that’s correct.
 6 Q. Right through until the hostile state activity involved
 7 in the Novichok poisoning in Salisbury in 2018?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. And indeed the rising threat of the extreme right?
 10 A. Yes, that’s correct.
 11 Q. So you run what you describe in your statement as an
 12 organisation with wide responsibilities. But is the
 13 main purpose of that organisation to work to stop
 14 terrorist attacks?
 15 A. It is, it’s to protect UK citizens here in the UK and
 16 our interests overseas. We are very proud of the fact
 17 that Counter—terrorism Policing as a network is
 18 effectively a local to global organisation. We have
 19 officers placed overseas that cover over 90 countries
 20 and we have officers working in streets and communities
 21 at the very local level as well.
 22 Q. In your witness statement you say of 2017 that:
 23 "In that year, in five terrorist attacks, 36 people
 24 lost their lives, including the 22 innocents at the
 25 Manchester Arena."

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1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. You add, and I hope you’ll excuse me using your words,
 3 that you think about that fact and those victims every
 4 single day?
 5 A. It’s the reason I took this job, to be frank. So part
 6 of my responsibility, when I was in the deputy role to
 7 this role, was leading the investigations into those
 8 attacks in 2017. Part of my role was reviewing those
 9 attacks and making sure that we could improve the
 10 counter—terrorism machine that is this country, and
 11 of course I had to think about it every day when I was
 12 doing that, about how we could improve, and I have
 13 maintained that perspective right throughout the
 14 3 years, nearly 3 years, I have been doing this role as
 15 the head of the organisation.
 16 Q. You indicated a few moments ago that you performed at
 17 different stages both of the deputy roles to ACSO, and
 18 I’m going to ask you, before we just summarise the
 19 evidence you’re going to give today, to indicate, first
 20 of all, which role you performed between, I think,
 21 March 2015 and October 2016.
 22 A. Then it was called, and still is, the deputy assistant
 23 commissioner specialist operations. In London it’s the
 24 direct deputy to the ACSO role in London. It runs four
 25 of the five operational command units that I described,

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1 everything except SO15 counter—terrorism command, so
 2 effectively it's in charge of protective security .
 3 When I took this job, I made that job the senior
 4 national coordinator for Protect and Prepare for the
 5 country, which is effectively what that job was already
 6 doing, which effectively means it advises
 7 chief constables on their protective security posture in
 8 their force area depending on where the threat level is
 9 in the country. I did that job for that period of time.
 10 Q. So when we're dealing with 2017, we will hear that job
 11 described as DACSO, is that correct?
 12 A. That's correct.
 13 Q. But now, and indeed since 2019, on your initiative that
 14 job is described as senior national coordinator Protect
 15 and Prepare?
 16 A. That's correct.
 17 Q. From October 2016 until your appointment as ACSO, what
 18 role did you have?
 19 A. That role at that time was called the senior national
 20 coordinator. That is the role that is now the senior
 21 national coordinator Prevent and Pursue. So that job
 22 directly line manages, in London, S015, the
 23 counter—terrorism command, and is responsible for
 24 coordinating the activity of the other eight
 25 counter—terrorism units in England and Wales and working

1 with PSNI and Police Scotland's counter—terrorism units
 2 in those countries.
 3 Q. So once more since 2019, I expect on your initiative ,
 4 that role is known as senior national coordinator, or
 5 SNC, Prevent and Pursue?
 6 A. That's correct.
 7 Q. Those terms that we've just used, Protect, Prepare,
 8 Prevent and Pursue, are they a direct reference to the
 9 CONTEST programme?
 10 A. They are. My responsibility in this job is to
 11 effectively deliver policing's purpose for the
 12 Government's CONTEST or counter—terrorism strategy.
 13 Q. And you won't need reminding, but in case others do,
 14 I'll just mention at this stage that CONTEST is the
 15 United Kingdom's strategy for countering terrorism. Its
 16 four strands are Prevent, which involves stopping people
 17 becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism?
 18 A. Correct.
 19 Q. Pursue, the aim of which is to stop terrorist attacks?
 20 A. Correct.
 21 Q. Protect, which we were looking at during chapter 7 in
 22 particular , which involves strengthening or protection
 23 against a terrorist attack?
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. And Prepare, to mitigate the impact of a terrorist

1 attack?
 2 A. Correct.
 3 Q. In terms of the evidence you're going to give, which is
 4 set out in your witness statement, first of all today
 5 we're going to summarise your career, experience and
 6 training to date.
 7 Secondly, we'll summarise the key responsibilities
 8 of the three core CT policing roles, indeed the roles
 9 that we've just described as assistant commissioner
 10 specialist operations and the two senior national
 11 coordinator roles .
 12 Thirdly, you will summarise how the roles of senior
 13 national coordinator and force Gold relate to one
 14 another after a terrorist attack.
 15 And then fourthly, we'll deal with your own
 16 involvement on the night of 22 May to 23 May in the
 17 aftermath of the Manchester Arena attack.
 18 A. Yes, sir .
 19 Q. Before we get to the first of those issues , you're able
 20 to confirm, I think, that the statement that you gave,
 21 and which is dated 13 February last year, is based upon
 22 a number of sources?
 23 A. Yes, that's correct .
 24 Q. Namely your own daybook?
 25 A. Yes.

1 Q. The original notes of your staff officer , Detective
 2 Inspector Pilch?
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. Various other documents that have been received from
 5 electronic sources?
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. National policy documents?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. And of course from your own recollection of what will
 10 have been very striking events?
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. Let's deal with the first of the topics, your career,
 13 experience and training. In general terms how would you
 14 describe your history as a police officer ?
 15 A. Well, I'm proud to describe myself as a career
 16 detective. I did the first part of my career right up
 17 until 2009 in every rank from trainee detective
 18 constable to detective superintendent. But I have
 19 effectively done a third of my career in uniform as
 20 well. But certainly that first part, 1992 to 2009, was
 21 full of varied detective roles .
 22 Q. As a detective, do you have experience as senior
 23 investigating officer or SIO, a term that we are
 24 familiar with?
 25 A. Yes, I was on the first cohort of trained senior

1 investigating officers under the current system in
 2 the Met in the year 2000. I was a senior investigating
 3 officer for and investigating officer for professional
 4 standards, including anti—corruption, and effectively
 5 investigating deaths following contact by police.
 6 I went on to be a detective chief inspector, a senior
 7 investigating officer for homicide. I dealt with
 8 homicide in a unit called Operation Trident, which
 9 investigated shootings in the black community, and
 10 I dealt as SIO with 17, what would have been then called
 11 category A murders, the most complex category of murder.
 12 I went on from there to a career as a detective
 13 superintendent in organised crime and I was one of the
 14 Met's kidnap and extortion commanders, resolving
 15 kidnaps, crimes in action as they're known, and running
 16 practical operations against organised criminal networks
 17 who are running guns and drugs. That's my senior
 18 investigating officer experience.
 19 Q. You were, I believe, trained and experienced as
 20 a tactical and specialist firearms commander between
 21 2002 and 2008?
 22 A. That's correct.
 23 Q. And over the period that you've told us about, did you
 24 receive 10 commendations for bravery, detective ability
 25 and leadership, including two Commissioner's

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1 commendations?
 2 A. I did.
 3 Q. Between 2008 and 2009, in what role did you serve?
 4 A. In 2008 to 2009, I came out of the organised crime
 5 command and I was actually staff officer to, who was
 6 then deputy commissioner, now retired, Commissioner
 7 Sir Paul Stephenson. I stayed with him into 2009 when
 8 he became commissioner for the first 100 days or so and
 9 then I was promoted in 2009 to Barnet Borough Commander.
 10 Q. In 2012, did you attend the Association of Chief Police
 11 Officers' strategic command course?
 12 A. I did.
 13 Q. Requalifying as a strategic firearms commander?
 14 A. Yes. It was required to requalify in certain
 15 disciplines, one was public order Gold, one was
 16 strategic firearms command, and the other was
 17 authorising officer for covert authorisations.
 18 Q. In May 2012, after that period as borough commander in
 19 Barnet borough, to what role were you appointed?
 20 A. After the strategic command course, you're eligible to
 21 apply for roles as a chief officer. In the Met they're
 22 known as commanders, elsewhere they're known as
 23 assistant chief constables. I was appointed the
 24 commander of south—east London, which was to run seven
 25 boroughs in South—east London.

14

1 Q. In May 2013 were you appointed as head of armed policing
 2 for the MPS?
 3 A. Yes, I had two roles. I was in charge of armed
 4 policing, so the business group that's called — now
 5 called MO19, which is the specialist firearms command of
 6 the Metropolitan Police. And I was also in charge of
 7 Operation Weeting.
 8 Q. Something of which the chairman of course will have some
 9 knowledge.
 10 In 2013 did you qualify as a CT commander?
 11 A. I did. That is effectively a strategic firearms
 12 commander with extra specialist training to deal with
 13 high—threat terrorism events.
 14 Q. Are CT commanders trained to work to the SNC?
 15 A. They are.
 16 Q. In August 2014 were you appointed commander gangs and
 17 organised crime?
 18 A. Yes, for a short period, so for approximately 10 months.
 19 Q. Because in May 2015, as we've heard, you were promoted
 20 to the position of DACSO?
 21 A. That's correct.
 22 Q. That being your first policing role in
 23 counter—terrorism?
 24 A. Yes, it was.
 25 Q. Followed by your appointment in October 2016, as

15

1 you have told us, as SNC?
 2 A. Yes, that's correct.
 3 Q. And then in March 2018, your promotion to your current
 4 rank of ACSO?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. Have you been awarded the QPM, or Queen's policing
 7 medal, for distinguished services?
 8 A. Yes, in 2016.
 9 Q. You have told us that you qualified as a CT commander,
 10 but has it been necessary for you to relinquish those
 11 responsibilities?
 12 A. It was, when I became effectively DACSO and then as SNC
 13 the rigours of those two jobs and the fact that those
 14 two jobs effectively have a major role in a terrorism
 15 event meant I couldn't do CT commander at the same time
 16 so I no longer have a current accreditation in that
 17 discipline.
 18 Q. Does it follow that you were in the SNC role in May 2017
 19 when the arena attack occurred?
 20 A. I was.
 21 Q. So unless I have missed anything, that is what I intend
 22 to ask you about your background, training and
 23 experience, and we'll now turn to deal with the various
 24 roles that you've described.
 25 So first of all, the role of ACSO, the role

16

1 of course that you currently hold and have held since
 2 2018. You've already explained that that role in London
 3 is to command one of the four MPS business groups and
 4 you have identified what those are.
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. Your national role as NPCC lead for CT Policing, what
 7 does that role involve, please?
 8 A. As I said, I'm the principal police officer responsible
 9 for delivering on the Government's CONTEST strategy, the
 10 policing nature of that. We are probably the only
 11 agency that delivers across all four of the pillars of
 12 the CONTEST strategy that you described, Prevent,
 13 Pursue, Protect and Prepare.
 14 I chair the Counter-terrorism Coordination
 15 Committee, so effectively it is a collaboration rather
 16 than direct line command. So I have direct line command
 17 of all of the counter-terrorism protective security
 18 assets in London, but outside of London I'm effectively
 19 the coordinator of those assets on behalf of the
 20 43 chief constables of England and Wales. The reason
 21 for that is the independence that's enshrined in law of
 22 the chief constable. So the collaboration agreement
 23 allows me to control those assets because
 24 chief constables have signed up to say in two particular
 25 occasions if there is an extant CT threat, so a live

1 threat that is leading towards a public endangerment, my
 2 organisation steps in and takes control at that point.
 3 If there is an actual terrorist attack, my
 4 organisation then steps in and takes control. Outside
 5 of those two, where it is what you'd, in rather an
 6 understated way, describe as business as usual, which is
 7 investigating terrorism, we coordinate the work of those
 8 eight other counter-terrorism units I described.
 9 Q. Given the autonomy which individual chief constables
 10 have, does what you have just described occur pursuant
 11 to an agreement which exists?
 12 A. Yes, it's the section 22A collaboration agreement under
 13 the Police Act 1996.
 14 Q. In a moment, when we reach that part of your statement,
 15 we'll look at a few pages of that so we have some
 16 familiarity with it.
 17 The endeavour --- I will just pause for one moment
 18 because Mr Suter is going to pass me a document that
 19 I asked for.
 20 The endeavour that you have described, which
 21 involves the Metropolitan Police Service and other CT
 22 policing bodies around the country, collectively is that
 23 known as the CT Policing Network or just "the network"?
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. Does the network operate in close partnership with MI5,

1 the UK's lead intelligence agency for domestic national
 2 security?
 3 A. Very close partnership. It's developed over many years
 4 into a partnership where we effectively --- MI5 take
 5 primacy for the intelligence gathering, we take primacy
 6 for evidence gathering and prosecuting terrorists, but
 7 we work in very close partnership, and also with the
 8 Office of Security and Counter-terrorism, the part of
 9 the Home Office that deals with national security.
 10 Q. Indeed. Do you, together with the director-general of
 11 MI5 or the DG, have responsibility for briefing the Home
 12 Secretary, Security Minister and the Home Office
 13 Permanent Secretary on operational matters affecting
 14 national security each week?
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. A point that you've made already, but which bears
 17 repetition, is that it is important, as you explained,
 18 to note that despite your role and the existence of the
 19 network, each chief constable retains their
 20 accountability for counter-terrorism in their force
 21 area.
 22 A. Yes. So it's probably worth spending some time
 23 describing what the Counter-terrorism Coordination
 24 Committee actually does.
 25 Q. Yes.

1 A. Because each chief constable is effectively responsible
 2 and accountable for policing in their area, which
 3 includes terrorism, and they're answerable to their
 4 Police and Crime Commissioner post--2013 and they take an
 5 individual responsibility for that. I'm sure you'll go
 6 to parts of the collaboration agreement which describes
 7 what that chief constable's role is, but of the
 8 43 chiefs in the nine regions, excluding London where
 9 I represent London, there is a single chief constable
 10 who represents the individual forces in that region and
 11 that chief constable is normally the chief constable of
 12 probably the biggest force in the region and who acts as
 13 the host for the local counter-terrorism unit.
 14 That chief constable sits on the Counter-terrorism
 15 Coordination Committee with me. So effectively, that is
 16 nine of us sitting on that committee with me as chair.
 17 We give two seats to Police Scotland and the Police
 18 Service of Northern Ireland, and we also give seats
 19 which are attendees rather than voting rights,
 20 effectively to the Deputy Director-general of MI5, the
 21 chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council, and other
 22 partners in the National Police Chiefs' Council, such as
 23 the head of armed policing.
 24 So that committee is quorate if five people are on
 25 it with me as a casting vote. My executive authority

1 comes from the work that is done in that committee, so
 2 we agree in that committee things that will increase our
 3 capability and capacity to deal with terrorism in the
 4 UK. If necessary, and if we require the agreement of
 5 all 43 chiefs, I will take those agreements to the
 6 chiefs' council once a quarter where the chair of the
 7 chiefs' council, Assistant Commissioner Martin Hewitt,
 8 will allow me to present and gain agreement from the
 9 43 chiefs.

10 Q. So the network is run in the way that you've described
 11 for us under an agreement which is entitled, I'll give
 12 it its full title for the purposes of the transcript:
 13 "A Collaboration Agreement — National Counter
 14 Terrorism Police Services Version 1.0.
 15 "National Police Collaboration Agreement Relating to
 16 Counter Terrorism Activities Made Under Section 22A of
 17 the Police Act 1996."

18 A. It's a very legal document, yes.

19 Q. And given that it's a legal document and that the
 20 chairman is a lawyer, we're not going to have to look at
 21 many parts of it, we'll just look at a few pages.
 22 Mr Lopez — and I checked, sir, today and everything
 23 was certainly in working order before we started, let's
 24 hope that continues — the reference is {INQ023875/1}.
 25 As you described, it's a legal document, indeed

21

1 we can see, I think, the name of the firm of solicitors
 2 who were involved in drafting it or assisting at any
 3 rate in its drafting.
 4 If we go to page 2, we'll see the contents page
 5 {INQ023875/2}. We can enlarge that just to give us an
 6 idea of the topics that are covered.
 7 {INQ023875/3} and {INQ023875/4}.
 8 We can see that this is a formal deed of agreement
 9 and we can see who effectively has signed up to the
 10 agreement?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Over to {INQ023875/5}, which we'll dwell on for a little
 13 extra time because it deals with the background. Could
 14 you enlarge the top two-thirds of the page, please.
 15 Under the heading "Background":
 16 "The Parties to this Agreement recognise that the
 17 response to Terrorism by the Police Forces in England
 18 and Wales requires..."
 19 And then a series of points are set out, which the
 20 chairman will be able to read at his leisure.
 21 So this is the agreement pursuant to which the
 22 network operates and had operated for at least a number
 23 of years prior to the May 2017 attack?

24 A. Yes.

25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And the date of this agreement?

22

1 MR GREANEY: This particular version is 2017. I confess
 2 I don't know the precise date. I don't know if there
 3 was a precise date on the front sheet. We can no doubt
 4 identify that in due course.
 5 Mr Lopez, we can now take that from the screen.
 6 Are you responsible for setting the United Kingdom's
 7 counter—terrorism policing strategy?

8 A. I am.

9 Q. Along with the business plan, as it's described, to
 10 deliver that strategy?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. And the key performance framework to monitor its
 13 delivery?

14 A. Yes, I am.

15 Q. Through the work of the committee that you've described,
 16 the CTCC?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. And as you have told us already, you are accountable to
 19 both the Commissioner and AC Hewitt in that national
 20 role?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Is your government oversight through the Security
 23 Minister?

24 A. Yes, I have a ministerial oversight group every quarter
 25 to discuss the performance of the network.

23

1 Q. And as we know already, as ACSO you have two policing
 2 deputies who, in 2017, would have been referred to as
 3 DACSO and SNC?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. So next, please, we will deal with the role of DACSO.
 6 In London, what does DACSO command?

7 A. She commands the four operational command units
 8 I described as royalty sand specialist protection,
 9 parliamentary and diplomatic protection, aviation
 10 policing, and protective security operations.

11 Q. How is that responsibility or those responsibilities
 12 discharged?

13 A. There is — well, obviously she runs those on a daily
 14 basis through the chief superintendents who run those
 15 particular OCUs. She also runs a security review
 16 committee once every 2 weeks. That is a committee
 17 that — effectively all of the national security
 18 partners sit on that committee and attend that
 19 committee. They hear an update on the intelligence and
 20 the current state of threat in the United Kingdom and
 21 they decide what the advice should be to the country
 22 around its protective security posture based on that
 23 update.

24 Q. In the event of a terrorist attack or a grave and
 25 imminent threat of attack, what may occur in this

24

1 context?
 2 A. The Security Review Committee will then meet in
 3 exceptional circumstances, so it's called an SRCE, it
 4 will normally be directed by ACSO or the SNC who's
 5 dealing with the terrorist attack, and DACSO will set up
 6 that committee to take the latest information that's
 7 coming from that attack or that threat and translate
 8 that into protective security advice.
 9 Q. On 22 May 2017, when the attack occurred, was the DACSO
 10 Lucy D'Orsi?
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. As of today, does she remain DACSO?
 13 A. Yes, she is.
 14 Q. Albeit, as is publicly known, only for a short period?
 15 A. Unfortunately, yes.
 16 Q. As is widely known now, she is shortly to be appointed
 17 Chief Constable of British Transport Police?
 18 A. Absolutely, yes.
 19 Q. Next, the role of the SNC or senior national
 20 coordinator. In general terms how would you describe
 21 such a person or what quality must they have?
 22 A. Well, they have to be, in my view, a very seasoned,
 23 experienced and professional detective. They have to be
 24 a very good executive level officer because they're
 25 effectively going to have to manage across a great many

1 jurisdictions and key stakeholders in order to deliver
 2 their role. They have to be exceptionally calm in
 3 a crisis because their job is fundamentally continually
 4 dealing with crisis, either developing threat, current
 5 investigations or an attack that's actually happened.
 6 Q. Is the national responsibility of the SNC to coordinate
 7 the work of the detective chief superintendents who head
 8 up the regional CTUs and the regionally appointed
 9 assistant chief constables for CT in the various
 10 regions?
 11 A. Yes and it's interesting because of that section 22
 12 collaboration agreement, they don't have direction and
 13 control over those officers, that is retained within the
 14 chief constable of their area, but effectively they act
 15 on the instructions of the SNC. Because of that
 16 collaboration agreement, any chief constable could
 17 withdraw that or overturn that instruction literally on
 18 a phone call. It would be extraordinary if they did
 19 that, that's the whole purpose of the agreement, to
 20 allow the senior national coordinator to effectively
 21 manage the day-to-day threat to the country through
 22 those counter-terrorism units.
 23 Q. And as you say, it would be extraordinary if any
 24 chief constable ever were to do that. Has any
 25 Chief Constable ever done that or sought to do that?

1 A. Not that I'm aware of.
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: What's the point of having the power if
 3 they would never use it?
 4 A. They might use it in extremis but I am proud to say
 5 I think it is because we have won their confidence that
 6 we are a fundamental capability for the UK, a capability
 7 that couldn't be delivered and, forgive me, for my
 8 London colleagues, but even London couldn't cope with
 9 a terrorist attack without help from the rest of the
 10 network. That has unfortunately proven to be the case
 11 many times.
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 13 MR GREANEY: If there is either an attack in any region or
 14 a high-threat operation with the possibility of an
 15 imminent public threat, what is the SNC responsible for?
 16 A. It sounds a bit prosaic, but they run a meeting called
 17 the Executive Liaison Group, so either the senior
 18 national coordinator, who is effectively briefed every
 19 week on the highest threat operations in the UK, as am
 20 I, will see that threat developing and will call for an
 21 executive liaison group, where all of the national
 22 security partners and the local constabulary where that
 23 threat might be originating are called to a meeting to
 24 discuss the investigative strategy and the tipping
 25 points that might lead us forward to what we call

1 executive action, which in lay terms would be to arrest
 2 and to gather evidence against the perpetrators.
 3 Q. So this form of meeting, the executive liaison group, is
 4 commonly referred to as an ELG in your world?
 5 A. It is.
 6 Q. And as you have told us, you were the SNC on
 7 22 May 2017?
 8 A. That's correct.
 9 Q. And we are going to see, when we turn to deal with your
 10 actions on that night, that such meetings were held?
 11 A. They were.
 12 Q. In the event of such an attack or threat of such attack,
 13 may other specialist departments or advisers be
 14 necessary?
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. And how would that operate?
 17 A. In the event of an attack, and there is -- we all have
 18 our own roles and we all have key stakeholders that
 19 we would immediately contact. So there are a number of
 20 really important initial calls. If an attack happens --
 21 it wasn't in this case, but it would normally be
 22 notified by the force who would ordinarily be the very
 23 first people to hear of an attack. It would go to what
 24 we call SO15 Reserve, that is a 24/7 desk effectively
 25 sitting within the counter-terrorism command in London,

1 which is the first point of contact for a force that is
 2 experiencing what they think is a terrorist attack or
 3 a terrorist incident. Reserve would then contact the
 4 senior national coordinator and the senior national
 5 coordinator would then make a number of phone calls.
 6 The first would be to MI5 to find out if they knew
 7 anything about the threat that was either developing or
 8 had taken place. The second is normally to military
 9 colleagues.
 10 The third would obviously be to brief this role,
 11 ACSO, and the fourth would be to brief the Government,
 12 to get the Government ready for what might be a COBR or
 13 might be the need to authorise specialist capabilities
 14 beyond the capability of policing.
 15 Q. What we've understood is that in the event of an attack
 16 or threat of sufficient significance, the SNC will
 17 assume national strategic command?
 18 A. That's true. So when a terrorist attack has been
 19 confirmed as one, the only person in the country who can
 20 actually declare it -- which is unusual, in other
 21 countries it's normally a political statement -- is the
 22 senior national coordinator. Once that is declared, the
 23 senior national coordinator is effectively taking
 24 strategic national command.
 25 Q. Once there is no continuing threat, what will the SNC

1 do?
 2 A. If there's no continuing threat, they will stand down
 3 from national command and revert to the business as
 4 usual of coordinating the network.
 5 Q. You have now described for us those three posts, ACSO,
 6 DACSO and SNC, and also the relationship between those
 7 roles and the chief constables. Are the roles of all of
 8 those persons and indeed their responsibilities
 9 described in the document to which you've already made
 10 reference --
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. -- the agreement?
 13 In your witness statement -- and sir, for your note
 14 I'm now at paragraph 34 -- you describe various
 15 governance arrangements that are in place. Could you
 16 tell us something about that, please?
 17 A. May I refer to the statement?
 18 Q. Of course, yes. Paragraph 34. You say:
 19 "The governance arrangements in the immediate
 20 response to various CT threat scenarios."
 21 A. Yes. That's a piece of work, a policy that I am
 22 responsible for called the National CT Command and
 23 Control Doctrine. That refers to a number of scenarios
 24 of an attack, everything from an attack that is
 25 developing, so one that hasn't actually manifested

1 itself as an attack but is a high-threat operation, all
 2 the way through to a no-notice attack, and also includes
 3 maritime and air attacks as well. Effectively, it
 4 describes how that attack should be dealt with in terms
 5 of national and local command structures.
 6 Q. Of the various scenarios that are dealt with in that
 7 document described as the National CT Command and
 8 Control Doctrine, which scenario is the most relevant
 9 description for what occurred on 22 May?
 10 A. Well, actually that's scenario 4. I'm looking at
 11 paragraph 34 and I've said scenario 2. There is
 12 a difference between scenario 2 and 4. They are both
 13 no-notice attacks. Effectively, we didn't know that an
 14 attack was developing. In scenario 2 it would assume
 15 that there was already effectively a policing plan
 16 around a major event. So there would have been
 17 a Gold/Silver/Bronze structure already in place in order
 18 to police an event, just a normal policing operation.
 19 In scenario 4 there wouldn't be a Gold/Silver/Bronze
 20 structure and that would have to be set up in response
 21 to the attack and that more adequately describes the
 22 Manchester attack.
 23 Q. I see. Let's say, for example, Notting Hill Carnival.
 24 There will inevitably be a very significant policing
 25 operation already in place. If there were to be, heaven

1 forbid, a no-notice attack there, that would be
 2 scenario 2 --
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. -- because a policing arrangement is already in place?
 5 Here, of course, an event at the arena, there was no
 6 such arrangement in place so it is scenario 4, a
 7 different type of (inaudible: distorted)?
 8 A. That's correct.
 9 Q. It might be helpful, if for no other reason so it's
 10 recorded in transcript and the chairman has seen the
 11 document, just to have a look at this on our screen.
 12 This is {INQ023817/1}. We'll skip through the first
 13 four pages.
 14 This is the document that you've told us about that
 15 contains the governance arrangements and has within it
 16 the various scenarios. Then if we go through pages 2 to
 17 4 {INQ023817/2-4}, we'll see the executive summary,
 18 which, as you observe in your statement, is a most
 19 helpful summary of what the document contains. I'm not
 20 going to read out every word because that's wholly
 21 unnecessary, but we'd invite the chairman to do so in
 22 his own time.
 23 {INQ023817/3}, please, and {INQ023817/4}.
 24 Then I hope that if we go to {INQ023817/13}, we'll
 25 find scenario 4:

1 "No—notice terrorist attack. Non—CBRN (chemical,
 2 biological , radiological , nuclear)."
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. "Phase 1, steady state. A no—notice attack takes place,
 5 which could, for example, be a marauding terrorist
 6 firearms attack or a bomb explosion. The initial
 7 response would be directed in accordance with local
 8 command protocols with a spontaneous armed response
 9 vehicle (ARV) response commanded by the local force's
 10 initial tactical firearms commander."
 11 Then the response is thereafter set out in various
 12 different phases:
 13 "Phase 2, enhanced initial response. Phase 3,
 14 confirmed terrorist attack."
 15 Is this what you were talking about earlier, that
 16 it's for the SNC to decide whether to declare this thing
 17 that's happened a terrorist attack or not --
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. -- with enduring high threat to the public. And phase 4
 20 is "threat mitigated".
 21 We can take that from the screen now.
 22 As you will appreciate, assistant commissioner,
 23 bearing in mind the nature of these proceedings, we
 24 don't need to go through every word of these documents,
 25 it's there for the chairman to have regard to.

1 So those two documents, the agreement and the
 2 command and control doctrine that we've now looked at to
 3 a limited extent, are complex documents, are they not?
 4 A. They are.
 5 Q. And they contain information in relation to the work of
 6 the network?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. The governance of the collaboration?
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. So the collaboration between the SNC and others and the
 11 individual chief constables?
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. And how the network should respond to an attack or
 14 threat of an attack?
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. And indeed, the role of the force Gold commander and SNC
 17 acting in the immediate aftermath of an attack?
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. So let's turn next, against that background, to the role
 20 of the force control room supervisor, Gold SNC and CT
 21 commander in the aftermath of a terrorist attack.
 22 Is it the responsibility of the SNC, so you on the
 23 night, to coordinate the immediate policing response to
 24 an attack?
 25 A. No, it's not. That's the responsibility of the local

1 force.
 2 Q. Why is that?
 3 A. Well, the Counter—terrorism Policing Network, we are
 4 policing and therefore an emergency service, but all of
 5 the roles and responsibilities are not on duty 24/7,
 6 they have to be stood up in response to an attack.
 7 Therefore every chief constable, and this is in the
 8 collaboration agreement, has a responsibility to
 9 maintain a capability to deal with a terrorist attack as
 10 it's happening.
 11 Effectively , that involves two things. One is
 12 making sure that the counter—terrorism unit is resourced
 13 and is led by an experienced and qualified professional ,
 14 and the second is that its capabilities in its force
 15 area are capable of responding to an attack. That might
 16 be everything from how the force control room responds
 17 to how armed policing responds to how unarmed police
 18 officers deal with the event.
 19 Q. As you explain in your witness statement, the immediate
 20 policing response will be the responsibility of the
 21 force control room supervisor?
 22 A. Mm—hm.
 23 Q. Who would in the first minutes of such an attack have
 24 the authority to declare Plato?
 25 A. They would.

1 Q. And your colleague, Richard Thomas, will be giving us
 2 evidence tomorrow to understand Plato in further detail.
 3 And deploy armed assets?
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. Either acting as or through the force tactical firearms
 6 commander to authorise that deployment and call out the
 7 force Gold commander on call?
 8 A. That's correct.
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So in our case the force control room
 10 supervisor is the force duty officer , the FDO, we've
 11 been referring to?
 12 A. That's correct, sir .
 13 MR GREANEY: And of what rank would you expect the
 14 Gold commander in respect of a terrorist incident to be?
 15 A. To have a chief officer rank, so to be an assistant
 16 chief constable or a commander in the Met.
 17 Q. What would be the role of the Gold commander, having
 18 been contacted by the FDO in this case?
 19 A. Effectively to set up a command structure to resource
 20 the immediate response, so to appoint a Silver, to
 21 appoint Bronzes and to set a strategy. A strategy will
 22 always have a number 1 priority, which is to save life .
 23 Q. Will the strategy have other priorities or aims?
 24 A. Oh, absolutely. So the first strategy is obviously to
 25 protect life and in doing that, and firearms commanders

1 will be the same, it's to minimise the risk to the
 2 public and to maximise the safety of the first
 3 responders. It is then to make sure that any
 4 perpetrator is identified, located, in the case of
 5 a terrorist attack confronted, and potentially
 6 neutralised. It is to preserve the scene of the attack
 7 as an evidential crime scene and to deploy investigative
 8 resource to start investigating where the threat has
 9 come from.

10 It is also to conduct, effectively, protection of
 11 the individuals who are responding to that scene and
 12 there will be further responsibilities which, as time
 13 goes on, will be delegated, but there is the business as
 14 usual of the force and there's obviously the eventual
 15 return to normality of the force, so the consequence
 16 management, the community impact, and various -- there
 17 will be various other specialisms that they have to
 18 decide on, particularly in this horrific tragedy we're
 19 dealing with at this inquiry, how to deal with mass
 20 fatalities.

21 Q. So I think what you would be keen to emphasise is that
 22 the list you have just given us is not intended to be an
 23 exhaustive list of the strategy of the Gold commander?
 24 A. It is not.
 25 Q. But is the principal aims or objectives?

1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. Is one of the initial actions for the, we'll call him
 3 the FDO or Gold, if they suspect that the attack
 4 involves terrorism to contact the SNC?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. Just in very general terms how is that achieved?
 7 A. It's normally done by somebody in the force control room
 8 contacting SO15 Reserve. As I described earlier,
 9 that is a 24/7 staffed desk effectively which is
 10 available 24/7 and they will contact SO15 Reserve and
 11 SO15 Reserve will contact the SNC.
 12 Q. And on being contacted by SO15 Reserve, what would you
 13 expect the SNC to do?
 14 A. The roles I described earlier, which is effectively
 15 trying to make contact with the force Gold and trying to
 16 get some situational awareness of what is actually
 17 happening. Contacting the counter-terrorism specialist
 18 firearms officer coordinator to ascertain what firearms
 19 asset might be able to help the local force, contacting
 20 the Home Office to make sure that the Government is
 21 prepared, contacting ACSO to brief ACSO on situational
 22 awareness, and making sure the Gold commander has assets
 23 set up to assist them and that would include mobilising
 24 the Counter-terrorism Policing Network, so effectively
 25 policing the local counter-terrorism unit head and

1 a local counter-terrorism senior investigating officer
 2 to act as the detectives to investigate what's just
 3 happened.
 4 Q. So when the call comes through to the SNC it will
 5 presumably come through because there is a belief that
 6 this is a terrorist attack?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. But it's the SNC's job to decide whether that
 9 description should in fact be applied?
 10 A. Yes. On this particular occasion it is obviously -- was
 11 completely apparent to everyone that this looked,
 12 sounded and felt exactly like a terrorist attack. There
 13 had been many occasions, I mean three which are very
 14 famous examples, where people have thought that
 15 something might be a terrorist attack, which has later
 16 turned out not to be. So that's the importance of the
 17 SNC making that judgement call given the ramifications
 18 that would follow from declaring a terrorist attack,
 19 which is the effect on public confidence and the effect
 20 on the mobilisation of some of the most intrusive and
 21 coercive techniques and laws that this country has to
 22 deal with terrorism.
 23 Q. So such a declaration is not to be given lightly?
 24 A. Absolutely not.
 25 Q. We're going to come on to the events of the 22nd and

1 what you did, but just dealing in general terms with the
 2 role and responsibility of the SNC once that call comes
 3 through, he has to make an early decision about whether
 4 this is a terrorist incident or is to be treated as such
 5 until more information is known?
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. And then will start to -- if it is being treated in that
 8 way, then the SNC will start to mobilise the CT Network?
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. Will the SNC also consider, still dealing with matters
 11 in general terms, when and if to take national strategic
 12 command of the incident?
 13 A. Yes. So there's national strategic command as
 14 a concept -- obviously you're still going to need
 15 a local strategic command with eyes and ears on the
 16 ground to actually deliver the initial response. So
 17 when you take national strategic command you are relying
 18 on the force having a fully established local strategic
 19 command structure, the Gold, Silver, Bronze that we talk
 20 about. And that was Assistant Chief Constable
 21 Debbie Ford in these circumstances.
 22 Then you're relying on local strategic command in
 23 terms of the investigation. That is the
 24 counter-terrorism unit, the counter-terrorism head,
 25 which was DCS Russ Jackson, and the counter-terrorism

1 investigating officer that he appointed who was
 2 Simon Barraclough. So you're relying on them as the
 3 local strategic command but you're effectively taking
 4 national strategic command and making the decisions to
 5 set up that system.
 6 Q. I am not going to go into the actions of the SNC in
 7 mobilising the network in any further detail because
 8 that is, for good reason, operationally sensitive .
 9 What I will ask you -- I'm now at paragraph 42 of
 10 your statement -- is to explain to us whether the SNC
 11 will set timings for particular things to occur.
 12 A. The things that would normally be set by an SNC are when
 13 the first ELG in response to this is going to happen.
 14 That won't necessarily be a fully fledged meeting, this
 15 might be as simple as an urgent conference call to try
 16 and get situational awareness from the people who are
 17 dealing with the situation on the ground. He will set
 18 the timings for DACSO to set up a Security Review
 19 Committee because it's obviously going to take time to
 20 get that many people together in one place to hear what
 21 the protective security stance needs to be.
 22 There will be a negotiation with Government on when,
 23 if and when -- and clearly in this case it would
 24 definitely be when -- a COBR was to take place. Were
 25 a COBR to be called too early then there wouldn't be

1 sufficient information to inform senior ministers,
 2 either the Prime Minister or the Home Secretary, about
 3 what was happening.
 4 Q. COBR being the Cabinet Office briefings?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. One of the other matters you identified the SNC will set
 7 timings for is the appointment of a specially trained
 8 officer of chief officer rank as CT commander who
 9 oversee the running of what you describe as the CTPOR
 10 and assist the post-incident investigative response
 11 being run by the CTSIO.
 12 CTSIO is a term we are familiar with,
 13 counter-terrorism senior investigating officer . CTPOR
 14 we haven't encountered before; what is that, please?
 15 A. It's the counter-terrorism police operations room, like
 16 a force control room is managing policing activity
 17 within a force area, we would manage terrorist activity
 18 and it's separated because it obviously receives
 19 classified material as part of its intelligence feed.
 20 Q. I'm now turning to paragraph 43. I'm going to ask you
 21 to help us with the responsibilities of the person
 22 you've just described, namely the CT commander. What
 23 would that person's job involve?
 24 A. Effectively, the most important role of the
 25 counter-terrorism commander is to resolve any enduring

1 threat from an attack that's already happened or an
 2 attack that is about to happen. That will involve,
 3 effectively, coordinating surveillance and armed
 4 activity and the job is to identify, locate, confront
 5 and arrest suspects to effectively preserve life .
 6 Q. CT commander will be expected to coordinate their
 7 response with the force Gold commander, is that correct?
 8 A. Yes, it is very important that the two commanders
 9 actually have a conversation and hand over command
 10 responsibilities between them. You don't want both
 11 effectively in command of armed assets on the ground at
 12 the same time. There needs to be a clear delineation of
 13 their individual command and control responsibilities.
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: The CT commander would not be somebody
 15 who's locally based?
 16 A. Not necessarily. Effectively I have a number of CT
 17 commanders around the country. They work on an on-call
 18 system. So normally it is the person who is on call who
 19 will be mentally prepared to be called out 24/7 for
 20 7 days and will have access to a vehicle, appropriate
 21 staff around them, who will also be on call, to support
 22 them, and therefore they're the people that we would
 23 ordinarily go to first .
 24 The next person on call in Manchester was actually
 25 Chief Constable Matt Jukes, who was deputy

1 chief constable at the time, but he was not the CT
 2 commander that was eventually deployed because we had
 3 a local commander, Tim Jacques, who was able to step up
 4 and was effectively an assistant chief constable in
 5 Lancashire and therefore in closer proximity.
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: But that's coincidence that they're
 7 local?
 8 A. We go to the duty roster normally because, as I have
 9 said, they are mentally prepared and match fit and
 10 effectively they know they have to be able to be called
 11 to duty immediately. But in an incident of this
 12 magnitude, to be frank, you get volunteers from all over
 13 the country to come and help. So we would in those
 14 circumstances, if someone was match fit and ready to go,
 15 have the person who had the least travelling time to the
 16 Counter-terrorism Police operations room.
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 18 MR GREANEY: I suppose what the chairman's question may give
 19 rise to is this issue: if a terrorist incident takes
 20 place in Manchester, is there any problem with the CT
 21 commander being 200 miles away in London or elsewhere?
 22 A. That would not be ideal. We don't have a fixed and hard
 23 rule, but we'd expect somebody to be able to respond
 24 within hours, not within many hours.
 25 Q. During the period that a threat continues to exist or is

1 thought to exist, will both the force Gold and the CT
 2 commander be accountable to the SNC?
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. Once there has been a handover to the CT commander in
 5 respect of the armed assets and so on, what will the
 6 force Gold's responsibility be?
 7 A. Normally that's described as consequence management.
 8 There are a large number of roles still that they must
 9 do. One is to help preserve the crime scene and protect
 10 the crime scene to help manage business as usual. But
 11 the most important thing about consequence management is
 12 the impact the attack has had on the local community.
 13 So it's managing the stakeholder response to what's
 14 happened.
 15 Q. Once the high-threat phase of an operation is complete,
 16 what would the CT commander be expected to do?
 17 A. Well, effectively once the arrest phase is completed,
 18 the CT commander would normally (inaudible: distorted).
 19 The CT commander is there because, as I described
 20 earlier on in my evidence, that they are effectively
 21 strategic firearms commanders with extra training, so
 22 when you are dealing with terrorists, the prospect of
 23 dealing with terrorists who are equipped with explosives
 24 or high-velocity weaponry means there is an additional
 25 level of training given to CT commanders about what they

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1 may or may not do in response to that threat.
 2 Once that threat has gone, either because there are
 3 no other suspects and we have effectively located and
 4 arrested, the CT commander will stand down from that
 5 role and the investigation will be taken forward by the
 6 counter-terrorism senior investigating officer answering
 7 to his hierarchy, Russ Jackson, and into the SNC.
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Does it begin to look like you've got
 9 too many chiefs? You have Russ Jackson in charge, he
 10 delegates and has a senior investigating officer, as we
 11 heard, very, very quickly. And then someone else is
 12 coming in, arriving a bit later, who may have different
 13 ideas.
 14 A. Do you mean the CT commander, sir?
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes.
 16 A. No, the CT commander has a very distinct role.
 17 Effectively, when the investigation team is identifying
 18 suspects, if they are considered to be so high risk in
 19 terms of their arrest, the CT commander takes control
 20 for the investigation team for effectively effecting the
 21 arrest. They're not in charge of the investigation,
 22 they're in charge of effecting the arrest.
 23 The reason they are of such a senior rank is because
 24 of some of the capabilities that they are required to
 25 make decisions on, the National Police Chiefs' Council

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1 has decided that that must be taken by a chief officer.
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 3 MR GREANEY: And moreover, am I correct that whilst the SNC
 4 remains engaged, if that's the right way of putting it,
 5 each of these roles will be accountable to the SNC?
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. The meetings that you described earlier, the ELG, are
 8 an important meeting in the context we're describing,
 9 and it would be not likely that the SNC would be located
 10 where the attack has taken place and may be many miles
 11 away. So when would you expect the first ELG to take
 12 place and in what form? I'm now at paragraph 47 of your
 13 statement.
 14 A. Certainly within a number of — a few hours,
 15 effectively. You need in that first ELG to get
 16 situational awareness so you need somebody who knows
 17 what is going on on the ground to give you that update.
 18 My preference would always be that it's the
 19 Gold commander but there's a practical reality to that
 20 depending on what the Gold commander is dealing with
 21 at the time and so it might be a representative. You'd
 22 also expect the local chief constable to be in that
 23 meeting along with the boss of the SNC at that time,
 24 which is my current role, ACSO. So it could be
 25 literally a conference call on the telephone. It could

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1 be we have secure video links. I know that seems rather
 2 obvious now, but it's —
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We're more used to it now.
 4 A. We're so used to it now that everybody would think that
 5 we would do that automatically and actually it was the
 6 first time in my policing career that we used that
 7 regularly because of our national and international
 8 responsibilities. So we would try and do it by secure
 9 video link but you have to have access to secure video
 10 links to do that or we do it, because of the extremeness
 11 of the situation, simply via a phone call.
 12 MR GREANEY: So you must tell me if this isn't the right way
 13 of describing it, but where an event like the arena
 14 attack occurs, in the minutes and hours that are
 15 following obviously there will be operational issues to
 16 deal with to try and help people on the ground, to help
 17 those who have been injured, to address the fact that
 18 people have been killed, to preserve the scene, and to
 19 protect people from the possibility of secondary attack.
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. So that obviously is one highly important issue that is
 22 being addressed. Alongside that, is this a sensible way
 23 of looking at it, there will be an investigative
 24 requirement, and I don't just mean identifying those who
 25 may have been involved to bring them to justice, I mean

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1 if there has been a bomb, finding out where the bomb has
 2 been created, whether there is additional explosive
 3 that is still around that might be used to create
 4 a further device, and whether other people have been
 5 involved who need to be arrested so that they can do no
 6 harm themselves. Are those two separate strands things
 7 that are occurring in the situation we are talking
 8 about?
 9 A. Yes, that's a perfect description of what was happening
 10 in this case. So the most important thing in my mind
 11 was that one bomb had gone off, we didn't know whether
 12 there were other bombers, other bombs in existence. We
 13 didn't know where it had been manufactured, where the
 14 addresses were, which associates may have helped this
 15 person do this terrible act. All of that is an enduring
 16 and constant threat in our minds about trying to
 17 discover and stop that next threat coming on and that is
 18 separate from dealing with the immediate response as it
 19 was unfolding in the arena. So you do need to — this
 20 is your point, sir, about too many chiefs. You do need
 21 people looking at both of those. That is far too much
 22 work for one individual, which is why we have the
 23 Counter—terrorism Policing Network.
 24 Q. I don't want to go too much at the moment into what you
 25 actually did and what others actually did on the night,

1 but in terms of the operational aspect of this,
 2 obviously decisions are being made about the declaration
 3 of Plato, if it's been declared, communicating that to
 4 other emergency services, standing down from Plato,
 5 whether a major incident should be declared, those kind
 6 of decisions are being made.
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. As the SNC, is your focus upon making or auditing those
 9 decisions or is your primary focus somewhere else?
 10 A. The primary focus for those decisions will be the
 11 Gold commander on the ground. It would be — well,
 12 wrong and idiotic for someone who was sitting 200 miles
 13 away in London to be trying to make those decisions
 14 about what was unfolding on the ground in Manchester.
 15 The only time I'd want to be in a position to do that is
 16 if I could see and hear what was happening. That's the
 17 whole purpose of having a local strategic commander. My
 18 focus in that scenario is making sure that the
 19 Gold commander has all the assets they need and
 20 particularly the military or the policing assets to
 21 resolve that threat.
 22 The reason I have to make that determination is
 23 I have national strategic command, so I may know of
 24 other threats elsewhere in the country, which means
 25 I shouldn't send all of the armed assets in the country

1 to one location.
 2 Q. Yes.
 3 A. So that's my principal focus in the early minutes and
 4 hours of this, to make sure that the Gold commander has
 5 all the resources they need and all the resources the
 6 country can spare. The second focus is who did it, why
 7 did they do it, who have they spoken to, where is that
 8 threat continuing. That is the focus of managing the CT
 9 police step—up through the counter—terrorism command.
 10 Q. I'm sure you'll appreciate why it's important for us to
 11 understand where the SNC sits and where you were sitting
 12 in relation to events that night because we are here
 13 considering the emergency response.
 14 A. I know.
 15 Q. And it rather seems from what you've said, and indeed is
 16 apparent from your statement, that where we are
 17 considering the appropriateness of decisions made about
 18 the kind of things I've described, Plato, major incident
 19 and so on, we shouldn't be looking to you, we should be
 20 looking to the actual command structure that was there
 21 in Manchester?
 22 A. Yes.
 23 MR GREANEY: Sir, we've been going for an hour and
 24 15 minutes. This isn't for your benefit, assistant
 25 commissioner, it's for the benefit of the stenographers.

1 This would be a convenient moment to take a short break.
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We will take a break for a quarter of
 3 an hour. I made a remark about we discovered something
 4 when we discovered a misprint. That was, for the people
 5 who are not here, I hope they will understand that was
 6 not a serious remark. It seems to me we've discovered
 7 quite a lot of things during this inquiry already and
 8 I trust we will continue to do that.
 9 MR GREANEY: I'm certain that those who have been following
 10 our proceedings so far during chapter 7 will have no
 11 doubt about the correctness of what you have said.
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It's easy to be misunderstood,
 13 particularly when people aren't in the room, so I hope
 14 people won't do that.
 15 Can I forewarn you of something that I would like
 16 your help on later on. One of the problems which may be
 17 self—evident is, even where you have a severe risk of
 18 a terrorist attack, as we did in May 2017, actually
 19 getting people to realise that the attack may actually
 20 happen in their premises at the time, so it's a severe
 21 risk for them and they're not saying it will always
 22 happen somewhere else, and somehow methods need to be
 23 devised to make sure that people do understand that it
 24 actually might happen to them there, obviously that's
 25 a matter which affects the public, which you will

1 of course be concerned with. I am not saying it did in
 2 Manchester, but it may concern police forces who made
 3 all the training for these things to happen but, "Are
 4 they really going to happen where we are?" I would like
 5 your help on how you make sure that the message always
 6 gets across to people that it may happen there and you
 7 don't have to wait for an explosion to realise just the
 8 risk of it. It's a great problem.
 9 A. Of course, sir .
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Someone described it as like the advice
 11 given on an aeroplane every time you get in as to how
 12 you must keep your seat belt on, and things like that,
 13 which no one appears to pay much attention to at all and
 14 there's a risk, isn't there, that the warnings you send
 15 out to police forces and elsewhere will be treated
 16 in the same way? I just wondered how you deal with that
 17 and whether there's any better way of dealing with that.
 18 A. Yes, I understand.
 19 MR GREANEY: Sir, at the risk of being irritating, which I
 20 suspect is always quite a high risk, can I just take
 21 five more minutes and we can then get to the end of the
 22 general advice that the assistant commissioner can give.
 23 We'll go on for a very short additional period and
 24 we'll finish off this part of your evidence and then
 25 move to the events of the 22nd.

1 I'm now at paragraph 48. No doubt as a reflection
 2 of the role of the SNC that you told me about very
 3 recently, will the first call between the SNC and Gold
 4 inevitably involve the SNC reminding the force Gold that
 5 they remain in charge of the immediate operational
 6 response until the network is stood up and a CT
 7 commander is in position to take over?
 8 A. Yes. It's in the doctrine and it's a really awkward
 9 conversation to have because you always want to help as
 10 much as you possibly can a fellow officer who's in
 11 charge of something of this magnitude. But the reality
 12 is, you're not in a position to do that straightaway.
 13 Experienced Gold commanders know that and I was
 14 fortunate on this occasion I had a -- the Gold commander
 15 also happened to be the head of counter-terrorism and
 16 organised crime in the north-west region, albeit I think
 17 ACC Ford had been in post for 6 months, but she knew the
 18 job and she knew her counter-terrorism head in DCS
 19 Russ Jackson and that was of some comfort. But yes,
 20 that is a very difficult conversation that needs to take
 21 place.
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: What we're talking about there is not
 23 the immediate emergency response by the police going to
 24 the scene and doing what they could to help, you're
 25 talking about the other things like making sure there

1 are no other bombs about to go off, looking for suspects
 2 and things like that?
 3 A. Yes. Effectively, the Gold commander is in charge of
 4 all of that until the CT network is stood up and ready
 5 to run.
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And the CT network being stood up
 7 involves the CT commander arriving on the scene?
 8 A. To take on the high-threat operation of finding other
 9 suspects, yes. But until that CT commander is stood up,
 10 the Gold commander is in charge with their own firearms
 11 asset. We will send all of the firearms asset, as
 12 I have described, that we're capable of sending and that
 13 is under the control of the Gold commander until the CT
 14 commander gets on scene and into their operations room
 15 and has the conversation with the Gold commander about
 16 who is now responsible for what.
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you, that's helpful.
 18 MR GREANEY: We were dealing with the first ELG. Will the
 19 information that emerges out of that meeting be briefed
 20 to others?
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. To whom will the information be briefed?
 23 A. It'll go to the assistant commissioner specialist
 24 operations, it will go to the force control room, and it
 25 will go to the CT Police operations room.

1 Q. Is part of the reason for that to ensure that
 2 situational awareness exists?
 3 A. Yes. It's so everyone is working to the same strategy.
 4 Q. Does ACSO have an additional direct report? I'm at
 5 paragraph 50 of your statement.
 6 A. Yes. So alongside DACSO and SNC I have a third
 7 individual who's director-general level in the Civil
 8 Service who runs the National Counter-terrorism Policing
 9 Headquarters. Unlike the other two, they don't have
 10 a London role; their role is effectively the chief
 11 operating officer of the network. One of those roles is
 12 they run a department which is responsible for briefing
 13 Government on my behalf. So effectively the strategic
 14 policy and planning department put together the
 15 information that gets fed into the commonly recognised
 16 information picture. That is a document that is used by
 17 COBR. So everyone understands, it's fed into by other
 18 emergency services as well but that's the unit that
 19 delivers it on behalf of policing.
 20 Q. So that document, the commonly recognised information
 21 picture or CRIP, that draws together, does it, all the
 22 information which is relevant information that is
 23 available at that time?
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. So that Government can be briefed through COBR?

1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. And is it the job of the SNC to sign off on the policing
 3 input within that particular document?
 4 A. It is, yes.
 5 Q. As we know, you were the SNC on the night of the attack
 6 and in your statement you observe that you were at that
 7 time very familiar with your role and responsibilities ,
 8 namely those you've just described; is that correct?
 9 A. Yes, that's correct.
 10 Q. Is that what framed your operational response from the
 11 moment you received your first notification that an
 12 attack had taken place?
 13 A. Yes, it was the third attack that I'd dealt with as SNC.
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Had the other two been in London?
 15 A. Yes. The first was the Jubilee Line bomber in October,
 16 4 days after I took on the role, and the second was
 17 Westminster.
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Did it make it any more difficult for
 19 your role as SNC the fact that this was not in London
 20 but was in Manchester?
 21 A. It is more difficult because of the distance, yes, but
 22 we know that when we practice and train for that
 23 eventuality. The short answer to that is yes.
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 25 MR GREANEY: Sir, could we have a break, please?

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. If we start again at 11.40.
 2 MR GREANEY: Thank you very much, sir.
 3 (11.23 am)
 4 (A short break)
 5 (11.43 am)
 6 MR GREANEY: Assistant commissioner, we're now turning, as
 7 I indicated, to deal with your own involvement on the
 8 night of the attack.
 9 On that night were you working as SNC to the then
 10 ACSO, Mark, now Sir Mark, Rowley?
 11 A. Yes, I was.
 12 Q. Were you off duty at the time that you were notified of
 13 the attack and at home?
 14 A. Yes, I was.
 15 Q. But were you also on call for counter-terrorism matters?
 16 A. Well, I'm always on call for counter-terrorism matters.
 17 It's a peculiarity of these three roles. On this night,
 18 my deputy, Assistant Chief Constable Terri Nicholson,
 19 was taking the first call. We had realised through the
 20 pressure of the last few years that effectively you
 21 couldn't be permanently on call all of the time without
 22 a break, so effectively the person triaging the first
 23 call -- I think I described earlier on in my evidence
 24 sometimes we get calls that turn out were not terrorist
 25 incidents, so to avoid mobilising the whole command the

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1 first job of the SNC is to triage the call that they are
 2 getting and Terri was doing that first call on that
 3 night, but yes I was effectively -- if Terri had rung
 4 me, I was there to be deployed.
 5 Q. So the SNC has a national deputy who in May 2017 was
 6 Terri Nicholson, ACC Nicholson?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. And was she, now retired of course, an extremely
 9 experienced CT police officer?
 10 A. She was a former SO15 counter-terrorism command senior
 11 officer .
 12 Q. Did she telephone you at home at about 22.55 hours?
 13 A. Yes. This statement is based on the best of my
 14 recollection , so I know I spoke to Terri and Richard.
 15 I think it was in this order. I think the first call
 16 that I have any memory of receiving was Terri telling me
 17 that she had been notified by her husband, of all
 18 people, so not the rigid command and control protocol
 19 I said earlier , but an informal notification that
 20 something might be happening in Manchester.
 21 Q. Insofar as I'm not probing into any issue that is
 22 sensitive , are you aware of how her husband acquired
 23 information about what had happened?
 24 A. Her husband is one of the most experienced
 25 counter-terrorism SFO specialist firearms officers

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1 in the country, he's an instructor and was on a training
 2 course up in the north of England when he was,
 3 I think -- they must have been listening to the force
 4 radio or heard something happen in that area and he had
 5 contacted his wife and said, "Don't go to sleep because
 6 it looks like something's happening".
 7 Q. And she telephoned you, which was round about 22.55?
 8 A. Yes, I think so.
 9 Q. So about 24 or 25 minutes after the detonation. Did she
 10 tell you that she'd heard from her husband that there
 11 may have been an attack at Manchester Arena?
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. And it might be that the attack had taken the form of
 14 a person-borne improvised explosive device?
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. Did she also say to you at that stage that there may
 17 have been gunshots?
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. But that at that stage she didn't know really much more
 20 about it than that?
 21 A. That's correct.
 22 Q. A moment ago, you also mentioned speaking to a Richard.
 23 Is that a reference to Chief Inspector Richard Thomas?
 24 A. It is.
 25 Q. On 22 May, what was his role?

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1 A. He was the counter—terrorism specialist firearms officer
 2 coordinator, so he was responsible for, in the event of
 3 an attack like this, mobilising the assets of the
 4 highest level of specialism of armed officer we have,
 5 the ones who are trained to intervene in a high—threat
 6 terrorist incident.
 7 Q. So do you recall whether you called him or he called
 8 you?
 9 A. I don't. One of my first calls as SNC would have been
 10 to him. I think he called me. I think he thinks he
 11 called me earlier than Terri did, I don't know. My
 12 daybook is not — he's a professional perfectionist,
 13 I think he was making a contemporaneous record, so
 14 I think he thinks he called me first.
 15 Q. Whichever way round it was, when he spoke to you, was he
 16 already aware that there had been an incident in
 17 Manchester?
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. Did he inform you that, at the request of the force
 20 strategic firearms commander, or SFC, armed assets were
 21 already being mobilised?
 22 A. Yes.
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: About the time of this call, have you
 24 any idea how long after you'd had your first indication
 25 there might have been a bomb?

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1 A. Oh, minutes. So he would have — he was on duty
 2 actually with Terri's husband up in the north of
 3 England, so he was doing his role, so ordinarily I'd be
 4 calling him asking him to do that role.
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes.
 6 A. In this circumstance he was informed before me, so
 7 he was already standing up the role, he was already
 8 doing the very job I would have asked him to do.
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So things weren't exactly operating in
 10 the correct order?
 11 A. No, we were informally — this is not the first time,
 12 for instance, that, for instance, national media footage
 13 has got hold of something before anyone in policing has
 14 found out. So if you happen to have a feed running
 15 in the — a Sky feed running in the office you might
 16 hear of a major incident before you get officially
 17 notified.
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Just for my understanding, the person
 19 who had responsibility under the protocols to notify you
 20 would have been?
 21 A. SO15 Reserve.
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Who would have got it from?
 23 A. The force control room.
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So it's another responsibility of the
 25 FDO?

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1 A. Yes.
 2 MR GREANEY: So that's what you'd have expected, FDO to
 3 SO15 Reserve, SO15 Reserve, I suppose, to Assistant
 4 Chief Constable Nicholson and her then on to you?
 5 A. Just to be clear, the FDO will have a long list of
 6 actions and one of those will be also contacting the
 7 CTSFO coordinator. The importance of doing that is
 8 speed. If we all relied on one individual doing all of
 9 those actions that would be too slow. So I would rather
 10 they called the CTSFO coordinator first if they were
 11 sure they were dealing with an incident so they could
 12 get as much armed asset to them as quickly as possible.
 13 My role being contacted is the one I described
 14 earlier, which is I might know of a concurrent threat or
 15 attack that is happening elsewhere in the UK and I might
 16 have to say, you can't send that amount of asset,
 17 you have to retain some of it elsewhere. But it
 18 mattered not — in the early minutes of an enquiry, the
 19 most important thing is the SNC and the CTSFO
 20 coordinator are both contacted.
 21 Q. So although it occurred in what might be described as an
 22 unconventional way, it sounds as if by 11 pm you'd had
 23 your conversation with ACC Nicholson and with
 24 Chief Inspector Thomas?
 25 A. Yes, I had a second conversation with Terri about

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1 10 minutes later, which gave me more detail.
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: My concern, just so it's made clear, is
 3 not that this caused any problem or that you didn't do
 4 things as quickly as you might, it's actually it is just
 5 another responsibility on the FDO who we've already been
 6 hearing may have been overwhelmed on the night by the
 7 amount of things he had to do.
 8 A. Yes, there's no doubt about it. Anyone who's in charge
 9 of a force control room anywhere has massive
 10 responsibilities.
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 12 MR GREANEY: You may know that one of the issues we're going
 13 to be considering in this chapter of our evidence is
 14 whether the FDO was overwhelmed by the number of
 15 responsibilities he had that night.
 16 A. Yes.
 17 Q. And obviously we're going to get to that in due course.
 18 I'm trying to be clear in my own mind about the
 19 chronology.
 20 By 11 pm, you knew that something had occurred
 21 in the arena, which was believed to be an explosion,
 22 a PBIED. You knew from Richard Thomas that armed assets
 23 were being mobilised, we won't say where from. And you
 24 also, I believe, knew that something called the CTSFO
 25 Coordination Group was already established?

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1 A. Yes, that's correct.
 2 Q. What is the CTSFO coordination group?
 3 A. It is the group chaired by Richard Thomas which decides
 4 where a CTSFO asset is going to come from and where it's
 5 going to be deployed to.
 6 Q. Did you also know from the discussion with
 7 Richard Thomas that Manchester already had a full armed
 8 response vehicle response in train?
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. And that all available ARV and CTSFO assets were being
 11 mobilised in response to the incident?
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. Armed with that information, at 11 pm, did you contact
 14 the MI5 head of operations?
 15 A. I did.
 16 Q. What was the purpose of that contact?
 17 A. As I described earlier in my evidence, it's to find out
 18 whether there is any known intelligence, current or
 19 coming in, about what is happening.
 20 Q. But in the event he had nothing further to add to what
 21 you already knew?
 22 A. Nothing.
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Was he aware of the attack having taken
 24 place, he or she?
 25 A. By then I believe so.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 2 MR GREANEY: Let's use the 24-hour clock so there's less
 3 chance of me getting it wrong. At 23.12 hours,
 4 paragraph 61 of your statement, have you recorded some
 5 further information, presumably in your daybook?
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. Do you presume that the information you've recorded came
 8 from your deputy, ACC Nicholson?
 9 A. I thought it was, following her conversation with
 10 Chief Inspector Thomas.
 11 Q. What information, in general terms at least, did you
 12 record?
 13 A. That Plato had been declared at 22.47. There were
 14 upwards of 15 casualties, believed to be fatalities .
 15 They had deployed ARVs to what was believed to be
 16 a series of explosions inside the venue. That Detective
 17 Chief Superintendent Russ Jackson, who was the head of
 18 Counter-terrorism Policing North-west at that time, had
 19 stood up his counter-terrorism resources. That armed
 20 response vehicles were on scene and counter-terrorism
 21 specialist firearms officers were on the way, having
 22 been mobilised by Richard Thomas.
 23 Q. At that stage was it believed that there was a single
 24 seat for an explosion and that one person alone had been
 25 involved in detonating that device?

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1 A. Not at that stage, to my recollection. We didn't know
 2 exactly what had happened. In fact, I do remember
 3 sitting in my sitting room, putting the television on,
 4 trying to get a news feed about what was happening and
 5 there being nothing reported at the time.
 6 Q. I'm looking at paragraph 62 of your statement.
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It seems to say two different things in
 8 a way, paragraph 62.
 9 MR GREANEY: Yes. I will read it out and then you can
 10 explain. You say at paragraph 62, immediately after
 11 having dealt with the information you recorded at 23.12:
 12 "It was believed now that there was a single seat
 13 for an explosion and that one person alone was involved
 14 but there was a great deal of confusion on social media
 15 suggesting further gunfire. However, at this time there
 16 were no other known suspects."
 17 A. Yes. This was following the second conversation with
 18 Terri. So yes, the assumption was it was a single seat
 19 of explosion because presumably that's all that was
 20 being reported from the scene. But there was knowledge
 21 of or an assumption that gunfire had been heard.
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Some information of gunfire --
 23 A. Some information.
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: -- or suggesting gunfire?
 25 MR GREANEY: At this stage, having had those conversations,

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1 were you still at home?
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. Was this a situation that reasonably you could manage
 4 from home?
 5 A. No.
 6 Q. So did you need to go elsewhere?
 7 A. Yes, I had to go to New Scotland Yard, which is where
 8 the headquarters asset that would support me was being
 9 called in to effectively stand up.
 10 Q. To that end did you call your staff officer --
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. -- Detective Inspector Pilch, as I said earlier, to
 13 instruct him to go to New Scotland Yard --
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. -- to open up the office and start preparing support for
 16 the post-incident investigation phase?
 17 A. Yes.
 18 Q. At 23.30 hours did you have a conversation with the
 19 ACSO, Sir Mark Rowley?
 20 A. Yes, I did.
 21 Q. What did you tell him?
 22 A. The same information that we've just been through.
 23 Q. Did you also, at about the same time, contact the
 24 Home Office duty officer on call and give him that
 25 information too?

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1 A. Yes, I believe it was a her, actually, but yes.
 2 Q. I don't believe it is necessary to record the exact
 3 times, but having had a number of other conversations,
 4 including a conversation about a potential second
 5 suspicious incident involving a male with a backpack --
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. -- which turned out in the result to be an erroneous
 8 report, did you set off from home and drive yourself to
 9 New Scotland Yard?
 10 A. I did.
 11 Q. During that drive did you receive updates from a number
 12 of other people?
 13 A. I did. I was driving on blue lights and two tones.
 14 I wasn't in a position to make any kind of record of
 15 those calls, but I certainly received calls while I was
 16 travelling between my home and New Scotland Yard.
 17 Q. In your statement you record that you received calls
 18 from SO15 Reserve?
 19 A. Yes, that's correct.
 20 Q. From GMP force Gold, ACC Debbie Ford?
 21 A. Yes, I think I received that call from Debbie, yes.
 22 Q. From Detective Chief Superintendent Russ Jackson, as
 23 he was at that stage, the head of the North--west
 24 Counter--terrorism Unit?
 25 A. Yes.

1 Q. And also you recall a call from Deputy Chief Constable
 2 Adrian Hanstock?
 3 A. Yes, that's correct, he was number two at British
 4 Transport Police.
 5 Q. Do you recall whether he called you or you called him?
 6 A. I think he called me.
 7 Q. What was his purpose in calling you?
 8 A. He was also, I believe, making his way to the Yard where
 9 we did meet later on. He was informing me that he had
 10 deployed a senior officer to Manchester to assist.
 11 Q. Were British Transport Police involved, as you
 12 understood it, because of the relationship between
 13 Manchester Victoria station and Manchester Arena?
 14 A. That's correct.
 15 Q. As you have observed, you were unable, given that you
 16 were driving, to make a contemporaneous record of those
 17 calls, but did the information that you were given by
 18 those people feature subsequently in records that you
 19 made?
 20 A. Yes, it did.
 21 Q. Did you arrive at New Scotland Yard at 5 minutes before
 22 1 am?
 23 A. I did, yes.
 24 Q. Who did you meet there?
 25 A. I met a number of people, but ACSO Sir Mark Rowley was

1 there, my deputy Terri Nicholson was there, her
 2 communications director Alistair Campbell was there,
 3 Matthew Pilch, my staff officer and a detective
 4 inspector was there. I think Adrian Hanstock, the
 5 Deputy Chief Constable, was either there or arrived
 6 shortly afterwards.
 7 Q. Had you recorded at that stage a decision for the DACSO,
 8 Lucy D'Orsi, to plan a type of meeting that you referred
 9 to earlier, namely an SRCE?
 10 A. Yes. I believe a message had already gone out earlier
 11 on, actually, asking for that meeting to be set up.
 12 Yes, I asked for that meeting to be set up.
 13 Q. At 00.56 hours, did you make a decision in relation to
 14 what should be communicated to the public?
 15 A. Yes. I asked Alistair Campbell to confirm what Greater
 16 Manchester Police were doing with their communications
 17 at that time, but also to say that this was being
 18 treated as a terrorist incident until we knew otherwise,
 19 effectively therefore declaring it as a terrorist
 20 incident and assuming national strategic command.
 21 Q. And Alistair Campbell was the head of CT communications?
 22 A. He was.
 23 Q. At that stage, shortly before 1 am, was there a high
 24 degree of confidence in your mind that this was indeed
 25 a terrorist incident?

1 A. Absolutely.
 2 Q. I'm now at paragraph 73. At 1 am, did you indicate that
 3 the priority, or a priority, was to identify the
 4 suspect, as you described the person, and understand
 5 what, if anything, was known about him?
 6 A. That's correct.
 7 Q. Why was it important to identify who had done this
 8 dreadful thing?
 9 A. There's lots of very obvious reasons, but the most
 10 important reason was any enduring threat. So once
 11 you've identified the person you can then start
 12 investigating who their associates are, what their last
 13 contacts were, what their last movement was, how they
 14 had been planning or preparing for this and, in doing
 15 that, generate leads that might lead you to closing down
 16 a threat elsewhere.
 17 Q. So this, I suppose, is the concern that the person who's
 18 done this might be part of a wider group or cell that
 19 might be planning some other terrorist activity?
 20 A. Certainly given the sophistication of the method, yes.
 21 Q. So obviously if there is a risk of such other people
 22 existing, you need to get to them as soon as you
 23 possibly can?
 24 A. Absolutely.
 25 Q. And the starting point is to know who you have you got

1 at Manchester Arena in the City Room?
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. I am now at paragraph 74. At 01.03 hours, what
 4 information came to you?
 5 A. One of the other people present in the meeting had
 6 people monitoring the Greater Manchester Police force
 7 radio link and said that there were sounds being
 8 reported of gunfire, which is — that’s what I was told.
 9 Q. Now, of course, we know that to be inaccurate. We’ll
 10 look at when that was known to be inaccurate. Is that
 11 the kind of false information which may occur in the
 12 aftermath of an incident such as this?
 13 A. Yes. Whenever there’s any major incident of any kind,
 14 where there’s an ongoing threat to the public, there
 15 will be reporting generally from all over the area,
 16 saying that, for instance, almost every package that’s
 17 lying in the street or has been discarded somewhere
 18 might be seen as suspicious. So it is not uncommon to
 19 have multiple reports. But nevertheless, every one of
 20 those has to be closed down as a potential threat.
 21 Q. You explain that 1 minute later, at 01.04 hours, you
 22 asked for Border Force to step up inbound and outbound
 23 checks on passengers. And insofar as the answer isn’t
 24 operationally sensitive, can you explain why you decided
 25 to do that?

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1 A. Well, it’s natural to assume that anyone who had been
 2 involved in committing this offence might have been
 3 trying to make their escape. So the idea is — and
 4 of course it depends upon having the intelligence so
 5 that people working at borders can identify anyone who
 6 might be suspicious. But actually to step up an
 7 operation of that magnitude takes time and therefore
 8 early notification is important.
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Inbound checks?
 10 A. I was interested in outbound.
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay.
 12 MR GREANEY: At 01.06 hours, to wrap this up in very simple
 13 terms, I believe you were involved in discussions about
 14 firearms issues relating to the attack.
 15 A. That’s correct.
 16 Q. At 01.10 hours, you attended, paragraph 77, what you
 17 describe as a first Diamond meeting with ACSO. What is
 18 a Diamond meeting?
 19 A. That’s my vernacular in many respects but we have used
 20 it in the past to differentiate from the Gold, Silver,
 21 Bronze structures. These are senior officers who are
 22 being given situational awareness so they can make
 23 resourcing decisions and, in ACSO’s case and the
 24 Chief Constable of Greater Manchester’s case, prepare
 25 them for briefing Government at the highest level, which

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1 is in the COBR meeting. It is described as that to say:
 2 this is the situational awareness of the most senior
 3 people in the network.
 4 Q. You told us, I believe, already that Assistant
 5 Chief Constable Nicholson was there with you at New
 6 Scotland Yard.
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. And at or about this time, paragraph 78, did she tell
 9 you that she had contacted Chief Inspector Thomas,
 10 Richard Thomas, at 23.03 hours?
 11 A. That’s correct.
 12 Q. Who was at that stage, as you’ve explained, training
 13 in the north of England, and that he had told her that
 14 at 22.47, Plato had been called in GMP?
 15 A. That’s correct.
 16 Q. That a PBIED was involved?
 17 A. Yes.
 18 Q. And that ARV and CTSFOs had been mobilised?
 19 A. That’s correct.
 20 Q. And did she add it was believed that there had been
 21 a single detonation on site?
 22 A. Yes, that’s correct.
 23 Q. And that there was no marauding attack or firearms
 24 involved?
 25 A. Yes, that’s correct.

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1 Q. She was telling you that she had been told all of that
 2 at 23.03?
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. At what stage was she saying that to you?
 5 A. When we were at the Yard after 1 am.
 6 Q. What she was saying was that when she spoke, shortly
 7 after 11 o’clock, to Chief Inspector Thomas, he had been
 8 saying to her, from whatever source he’d received this
 9 information, we’ll maybe ask him about that, that it was
 10 believed there had been a single detonation and there
 11 was no marauding attack or firearms?
 12 A. That was the belief at the time, as relayed through
 13 Richard to Terri, yes.
 14 Q. Paragraph 80. You set out that at 00.13 hours, so going
 15 back a little in time, SO15 Reserve had only a Twitter
 16 feed. What do you mean by that?
 17 A. So it looked like they hadn’t been contacted directly
 18 and their only source of information was social media at
 19 that time.
 20 Q. This is therefore a reference to what you told us about
 21 earlier, the ordinary line of communication would be FDO
 22 to SO15 Reserve, but that did not appear to have
 23 occurred by 00.13 hours?
 24 A. No.
 25 Q. You add in your statement that the national fusion cell

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1 had been contacted with an update from Dave Murtagh at
 2 00.13 hours.
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. And I'm going to deal with what the information was at
 5 the moment, but there are a couple of things we need to
 6 understand from that.
 7 First of all, the SIO, Mr Barraclough, may have
 8 explained to us what a national fusion cell is. In case
 9 anyone has forgotten, can you explain what that is,
 10 please?
 11 A. It would have been set up by the counter-terrorism unit
 12 in the north-west to receive all the intelligence
 13 relating to the investigation.
 14 Q. And Dave Murtagh, who had provided an update to the
 15 national fusion cell, who was he?
 16 A. I believe he was a GMP officer who was one of the --
 17 I think he was one of the firearms tactical advisers.
 18 Q. The information that he provided to the national fusion
 19 cell was that there were now 17 confirmed fatalities and
 20 50 wounded?
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. That was the information at that stage. It was believed
 23 to be a lone attacker?
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. That's at 00.13 hours.

1 All ARVs, armed response vehicles, were assigned?
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. But there was also suspicious activity at an unknown
 4 second location?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I just want to unpick one little bit of
 7 that if I may in case we misinterpret something. So by
 8 00.13, SO15 had not received the information from the
 9 force duty officer directly about the attack?
 10 A. I'm assuming that when I'm writing the statement.
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: But that doesn't mean that the FDO may
 12 well have not understood that the information had got to
 13 the people who SO15 would have informed.
 14 A. Yes, there would have been no need to do it a second
 15 time --
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I understand that, but it may be by
 17 00.13 he may have realised there was actually no need to
 18 be contacting --
 19 A. I think that's highly likely to be the case, yes.
 20 MR GREANEY: Sir, you're quite right. That's a fair
 21 qualification.
 22 I'm now at paragraph 81. You describe receiving an
 23 update at 00.18 hours. Could you describe that for us?
 24 A. I recorded that as an update from ACC Ford and
 25 DCS Jackson. I've recorded DCS Jackson as saying that:

1 "An Asian male had entered Victoria Station side of
 2 the arena with explosives strapped to him which he has
 3 ignited and blown back on to the concourse. It's now
 4 believed there are 20 dead and 50 walking wounded. They
 5 are young. ARVs now control the arena and believe it to
 6 be safe. Casualty bureau has mobilised and there is
 7 a night duty superintendent on the scene.
 8 Counter-terrorism Policing North-west had mobilised
 9 a post-incident response which included closed-circuit
 10 television viewers, forensic management teams and
 11 fusion."
 12 (Inaudible: distorted).
 13 Q. So at that stage the information you were receiving from
 14 GMP included information that ARVs, so armed officers,
 15 now control the arena and they believed it to be safe?
 16 A. Yes.
 17 Q. What did you understand "safe" in that context to mean?
 18 A. That there wasn't a marauding firearms terrorist attack
 19 going on inside the arena.
 20 Q. Let's go back to 00.10 hours. At that stage did you
 21 know the identity of the person who was believed to have
 22 detonated the device?
 23 A. No.
 24 Q. At 01.18 hours, paragraph 87, did you receive some
 25 information from the Chief Constable of Greater

1 Manchester Police?
 2 A. I did. Do you want me to read that?
 3 Q. Yes, please.
 4 A. This was Chief Constable Ian Hopkins. He confirmed that
 5 there were now believed to be 19 dead, 85 injured, with
 6 65 minor and 10 serious injuries. I then confirmed that
 7 I would hold the initial ELG at 10 am, after COBR but
 8 before the Security Review Committee sitting in
 9 exceptional circumstances. The Anti-terrorist Hotline
 10 would be resourced for any surge in calls. North-west
 11 Counter-terrorism Policing would be resourced
 12 appropriately with initially the detective chief
 13 superintendent running Counter-terrorism Policing
 14 North-east to support them. And that a secure video
 15 telephone conference with all CT heads from the network
 16 need not take place immediately tonight and that a CT
 17 commander was to be appointed to attend the North-west
 18 Counter-terrorism Police operations room as soon as
 19 practicable.
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Did you ring him or did he ring you or
 21 are you uncertain of that?
 22 A. He would have rung in. He was part of the initial
 23 briefing with Sir Mark Rowley as ACSO. So in these
 24 circumstances ACSO and the local chief constable are the
 25 two pivotal figures who are going to end up managing the

1 media communications and the community impact and are
 2 also going to be the two figures who are in COBR
 3 briefing the Prime Minister or the Home Secretary.
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 5 MR GREANEY: In that discussion with the chief constable was
 6 COBR confirmed for 9 am the next day?
 7 A. I think it had already been confirmed at 9 am by the
 8 Home Office, yes.
 9 Q. And by that stage, or in that meeting, was the SRCE
 10 confirmed for 11 am the following day?
 11 A. Yes, it had been.
 12 Q. As part of that meeting, was a decision made about who
 13 should lead the media?
 14 A. Yes, it was going to be Chief Constable Hopkins in the
 15 first instance, followed up by a statement by
 16 Sir Mark Rowley as ACSO.
 17 Q. Over the page now at paragraph 89. At 01.35 hours, was
 18 it made clear again by you that the identification of
 19 the attacker was a priority?
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. As this would be the best source of any ongoing threat
 22 of further attacks or accomplices?
 23 A. Yes, that's correct.
 24 Q. But you add that this was a precaution, no doubt
 25 an important one, because at that time you did not have

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1 any information to suggest that this was anything other
 2 than a lone actor, as you put it?
 3 A. That's correct.
 4 Q. Next, at 01.40 hours, something occurred that you
 5 describe being part of the normal procedure. What was
 6 that, please?
 7 A. This was the appointment of Deputy
 8 Chief Constable Jukes -- now Chief Constable, well, now
 9 actually Assistant Commissioner Matt Jukes in the
 10 Metropolitan Police, but then he was Deputy
 11 Chief Constable of South Wales -- as the first available
 12 CT commander on call to be notified and to make their
 13 way to the north-west. As I said earlier, he was later
 14 cancelled and replaced by a more proximate CT commander.
 15 Q. Between 01.40 hours and 02.00 hours, what have you
 16 recorded?
 17 A. I was waiting for a Gold update from ACC Ford.
 18 Q. But from what you knew at the time, were you aware that
 19 Manchester Arena had contained around about 21,000
 20 people? That was your information at any rate?
 21 A. That was the information at the time. I think it's
 22 slightly less.
 23 Q. It is, about 14,000 or 14,500, we have heard. And that
 24 the attack had happened shortly before 22.35 hours?
 25 A. That's correct.

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1 Q. You have also recorded information you have told us
 2 about already, namely the number of fatalities and
 3 number of persons injured, as was understood at that
 4 time, that the attacker had not at that stage been
 5 identified, there were no known subjects of interest,
 6 and no wider network had been identified at that stage.
 7 A. That's correct.
 8 Q. So no wider network connected with the attacker?
 9 A. That's correct.
 10 Q. At 02.30 hours did you have an armed asset conference
 11 call?
 12 A. Yes, that's correct.
 13 Q. Paragraph 92. What was the purpose of that in general
 14 terms?
 15 A. This is to make sure that what assets are available in
 16 the country, what CTSFOs are available, that we have
 17 them stationed all across the UK, and how many were
 18 en route, to confirm other specialist capability that we
 19 might require, and to confirm that Gold had had her
 20 request for additional armed response vehicles support
 21 approved through the National Police Operations Centre.
 22 Q. As we know, you had been awaiting an update from Gold
 23 and at 02.35 hours, did you receive such an update in
 24 a meeting?
 25 A. I did.

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1 Q. From documentation available to you and from memory
 2 can you identify who was present at that meeting,
 3 please?
 4 A. Mark Rowley as ACSO. Myself as the SNC.
 5 Terri Nicholson as the deputy SNC. Debbie Ford, who was
 6 obviously on a video link, as opposed to in person, as
 7 the force Gold commander. Russ Jackson as the DCS and
 8 the head of North-west Counter-terrorism unit.
 9 DI Matt Pilch, who was my staff officer, who was taking
 10 some notes. Alistair Campbell, as we have described
 11 earlier, was the director and head of communications for
 12 Counter-terrorism Policing. Adrian Hanstock, who was
 13 the Deputy Chief Constable of British Transport Police
 14 and Andrew Hubbard, who was DCC Hanstock's staff
 15 officer.
 16 Q. Was this an ELG or a different type of meeting?
 17 A. Well, in all effect it is an ELG because it is the first
 18 time you're getting all of the people in one place with
 19 the best situational awareness of what's happening.
 20 Q. I'm now at paragraph 94. During that meeting, what did
 21 you confirm?
 22 A. That I declared it a terrorist incident at 00.56, that
 23 the identification of the attacker remained the priority
 24 for the post-incident investigation, that there was no
 25 further intelligence update available, that

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1 Chief Inspector Thomas had confirmed what armed assets
 2 were available nationally, that the armed response and
 3 support available was comprehensive, and further ARV
 4 support was to be provided at the request of the Gold,
 5 ACC Ford.
 6 Q. Did ACC Ford then give a situational briefing?
 7 A. She did. Would you like me to read it out?
 8 Q. Yes, please.
 9 A. I've recorded the following details from ACC Ford:
 10 "22.33 was the first of a series of public calls
 11 reporting an explosion in the MEN Arena and
 12 Victoria Station concourse, the two areas being
 13 connected. A male had entered, described as Asian,
 14 beard and glasses. He had a rucksack or explosives on
 15 his body. He walked into the arena near seating
 16 area 106 and detonated, forcing him back into the
 17 concourse area and suffering catastrophic injury to
 18 himself. A photograph of the attacker had been sent to
 19 the National Photographic Intelligence Cell in an
 20 attempt to identify him against the CT database of known
 21 offenders."
 22 She went on to declare that:
 23 "To the best of her knowledge at that time there
 24 were 19 fatalities including the suspect, 10 category P1
 25 serious injuries [a categorisation the Health Service

1 uses for the degree of seriousness], 15 category P2, 60
 2 category P3 [who are effectively walking wounded].
 3 There were two more fatalities now at hospital bringing
 4 the total dead to 21 including the suspect. And
 5 casualties were spread across eight different
 6 hospitals."
 7 Q. I'm going to ask you to pause for a moment just to recap
 8 on two details. First of all, it follows that at that
 9 stage, 02.35 hours, a suspect had been identified?
 10 A. Yes, that's correct.
 11 Q. And was that the first time that you knew the identity
 12 of the bomber or had you learned of that earlier?
 13 A. That was the first time, so I believe that meeting was
 14 interrupted in Manchester by the SIO confirming to Gold
 15 that a credit card with a name on, which we believed was
 16 associated with the attacker, had been found, and that
 17 name was Salman R Abedi.
 18 Q. Prior to that point, had you ever heard of Salman Abedi?
 19 A. No.
 20 Q. The second point, and this is in no sense a criticism of
 21 you or indeed of ACC Ford, but you were told there were
 22 19 fatalities, including the suspect. I am certain that
 23 you will agree with me that the innocent victims of this
 24 attack should not be put together with Salman Abedi, but
 25 should be placed into distinct categories, namely the

1 victims on the one hand and Salman Abedi, albeit all
 2 died.
 3 A. I completely agree.
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: There are what we now know to be
 5 a number of inaccuracies in what you've reported
 6 ACC Ford as saying. That's not a criticism of her or of
 7 you, I just want to know whether it's a possibility that
 8 they are inaccuracies due to your note taking. There
 9 are plenty in my notes, I can assure you, or whether you
 10 were actually taking a verbatim slowed-down note of
 11 what was being said.
 12 A. Honestly, there are plenty of inaccuracies in my
 13 note-taking. I've been...
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Judges know that to be true too.
 15 A. I appreciate that. I had been awake since 5.30 the
 16 previous morning, so I was doing my best to record
 17 accurately. I think what is very clear from my evidence
 18 is the fact that this situation was changing minute by
 19 minute, as we were getting — and that is incredibly
 20 common in my nearly 30-year experience as a police
 21 officer. It's why, when we're briefing upwards, we make
 22 clear, "This is all I know at this point in time".
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm certainly not being critical, I hope
 24 you understand that, I was trying to understand where
 25 the inaccuracies may have arisen and they could have

1 arisen in both directions, I understand.
 2 A. I didn't take it as an aggressive comment, sir, I assure
 3 you. It's probably just important for people to know
 4 what it feels like to be involved in something like
 5 this, and I think it's...
 6 MR GREANEY: One of the observations that we've been keen to
 7 make, when we have made our opening statements, is that
 8 none of us who have not had the experience of responding
 9 to this kind of situation can imagine how difficult
 10 it is and the degree of pressure people come under. I'm
 11 certain this inquiry will not lose sight of that fact.
 12 We hadn't quite finished with what ACC Ford was able
 13 to tell you about in that meeting at 02.35 hours.
 14 Paragraph 97. She was able to tell you that the force
 15 duty officer, the FDO, had declared a Plato incident at
 16 22.47 hours and there had been information from the
 17 scene that there was a second potential offender.
 18 A. Yes, that's correct.
 19 Q. Did you understand that this was the person with the
 20 rucksack who in due course was excluded as being
 21 entirely unsuspecting or did you know no more about it
 22 at that stage than that there was a second potential
 23 offender?
 24 A. I believe I knew it was the person with the rucksack,
 25 but I was under the impression — in fact I know that

1 they were actually detained. It was later on that they
 2 were eliminated from the enquiry as an innocent person.
 3 Q. And we were again informed by SIO Barraclough about
 4 that. You were told as well that North—west Armed
 5 Response Vehicle regional capability arrived on scene at
 6 the arena and you added the second scene of Victoria
 7 Train Station and had secured Manchester Piccadilly,
 8 closing the main West Coast line. I have read that out
 9 pretty badly, but essentially an armed response had
 10 secured both of the principal railway stations in
 11 Manchester?
 12 A. Yes, that's correct.
 13 Q. And first responders at the forward control point, you
 14 were told, had a ground—assigned tactical firearms
 15 commander and that the scene had been attended by the
 16 North West Ambulance Service?
 17 A. That's correct.
 18 Q. You added, all shifts, you were told, were being
 19 retained on duty?
 20 A. Yes, that's correct.
 21 Q. What did that mean, all were being retained on duty?
 22 A. It's a way of extending your capability and capacity.
 23 So normally there would be a changeover between late
 24 turn and night duty where the late turn would go home.
 25 They would all have been retained on duty. Any units

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1 and I presume in this case particularly armed units, who
 2 would have been due to go home would have been retained
 3 on duty.
 4 Q. Having been provided with that information did you
 5 record a number of decisions in your daybook?
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Just before you say that, I'm sorry, so
 7 you say you had information of the forward control
 8 point. Is that something that you in your experience
 9 would expect to happen, for there to be a forward
 10 control point?
 11 A. Absolutely, yes.
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: How essential do you regard that as
 13 being?
 14 A. Well, the forward control point is normally where in
 15 a multi—agency response the joint commanders would have
 16 a conversation about what was happening and so people
 17 would have a consistent awareness and be able to make
 18 a joint risk assessment —
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And so they know where to go to report
 20 things in presumably as well?
 21 A. Yes.
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 23 MR GREANEY: So you're describing something that we heard
 24 about yesterday, the idea that coordination between the
 25 various emergency services is critical in the response

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1 to an incident such as this?
 2 A. It is, yes.
 3 Q. We were dealing with the decisions that you recorded in
 4 your daybook as a result of everything you knew at that
 5 stage. Would you explain what decisions you recorded,
 6 indeed what decisions you had made, and I may ask you to
 7 pause from time to time to explain.
 8 A. Certainly. The information from that meeting was the
 9 scene, I have recorded it as, "The scene appears
 10 sorted", in my notes, "and consequence management
 11 remains with Gold". This effectively means to preserve
 12 life and protect the crime scene. ACC Ford will have
 13 set a comprehensive strategy. That's not in my notes,
 14 that's my point that I'm summarising: we did discuss the
 15 following decisions.
 16 Q. We'll go through these. So first, perfectly obvious
 17 what this means: to search for secondary devices using
 18 dogs?
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. To ensure that Victoria Station was also secure?
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. By that do you mean that notwithstanding that the two
 23 were together in a sense, a distinction was being drawn
 24 between the railway station on the one hand and the
 25 arena, which rests above it, on the other hand?

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1 A. Yes. And largely because experience since Mumbai, but
 2 definitely since 2015 in France, had taught us that
 3 effectively risk could be in multiple locations, not
 4 necessarily proximate, by multiple people. Therefore
 5 where there are going to be crowds of people, they are
 6 still at risk until the scene is secure.
 7 Q. Also discussed to ensure the CTSIO was identified and
 8 directing the management of the crime scene?
 9 A. Correct.
 10 Q. Or as you put it, "Fast time preservation of forensic
 11 evidence and to identify the attacker"?
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. And the CTSIO in due course was to be Simon Barraclough?
 14 A. He was. He was already appointed by the time —
 15 Q. He'd already been appointed.
 16 Next, as you put it, that the warm zone was declared
 17 and in place?
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. Would you explain that to us, please?
 20 A. During an Operation Plato there are three zones that
 21 either a ground—assigned or initial tactical firearms
 22 commander will declare. A hot zone is somewhere where
 23 the terrorist threat is still active, so effectively
 24 there's either an attacker who is currently in that
 25 place and trying to find people to kill and therefore

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1 the hot zone can only be entered by specialist armed
 2 units. A warm zone is where there isn't active
 3 terrorist but there's a potential, in other words it is
 4 not cleared, there may be danger in that area. A cold
 5 zone is where it is safe for non—specialist unarmed
 6 responders.
 7 Q. And we'll hear more about this from Richard Thomas
 8 tomorrow. That's important context for what I would
 9 just like to understand, which is at 02.35 hours did you
 10 understand, thereafter, that Operation Plato was still
 11 in place in that it had not been stood down?
 12 A. Certainly from that line in that meeting, yes.
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: But no longer a hot zone?
 14 A. Not a hot zone, but the hot zone will obviously — what
 15 I've just described — for instance, if I went back to
 16 France, the Stade de France was very clearly a hot zone
 17 for a period where a detonation took place. Then it
 18 became the night—time economy in another part of Paris
 19 and multiple locations. So the zones — it's a dynamic
 20 risk assessment all of the time. This would have been
 21 in relation to the arena and the concourse, I would
 22 assume.
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 24 MR GREANEY: The next decision that was discussed was that
 25 a full perimeter was in place to protect the wider scene

1 and those within it.
 2 A. Again, the arena and the concourse, I assume.
 3 Q. That there were no other large scale events that night?
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. And that there was a very high—profile policing presence
 6 in place?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. That GMP had allocated a major crime scene investigating
 9 officer, Detective Chief Superintendent Simon
 10 Barraclough, and a senior identification manager to work
 11 on behalf of the coroner to identify the deceased and
 12 describe and record the most appropriate disaster victim
 13 identification strategy. So to make sure that such
 14 people were in place?
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. A decision that was discussed, another one, that
 17 a victim and family liaison strategy was in place?
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. And ACC Ford had said something, I believe, about
 20 a casualty bureau. Could you explain before you tell us
 21 what she said what that is, please?
 22 A. A casualty bureau is both a technical and physical way
 23 of setting up a site with a single phone number, so
 24 anyone members of the public who are concerned that
 25 their loved one has been caught up in this has a single

1 route to go to to get the information and conversely
 2 we have a single point where we can receive that
 3 information and intelligence.
 4 Q. What did ACC Ford say in the 02.35 hours meeting about
 5 the casualty bureau?
 6 A. She said it was challenging but the chief constable was
 7 talking.
 8 Q. What did you understand her to mean from "the
 9 chief constable was talking now"?
 10 A. That there were problems in setting up the casualty
 11 bureau but the chief constable was trying to expedite
 12 the setting up of the casualty bureau or conversely to
 13 adequately resource it given the demands by the sheer
 14 number of calls that were coming in to
 15 Greater Manchester.
 16 Q. Did Detective Chief Superintendent Jackson confirm in
 17 a CT update that the fusion cell was up and running?
 18 A. Yes, that's correct.
 19 Q. That he had set objectives for scene management?
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. That the DVI and FLO strategies were in place?
 22 A. Yes.
 23 Q. And that a detective superintendent was assigned to
 24 manage the established survivor reception centre?
 25 A. Yes, that's correct.

1 Q. In the next section I'm going to take care not to
 2 describe in too much detail exactly what you were told
 3 for reasons that will be apparent to you from the
 4 statement.
 5 But did Detective Chief Superintendent Jackson also
 6 state that there was a CT liaison officer in with
 7 ACC Ford's Silver commander?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. And that CT officers were at the scene attempting to
 10 confirm the identification of the attacker?
 11 A. Correct.
 12 Q. Using a number of methods that it is not necessary for
 13 us to go into?
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. You were also informed of other suspicious activity;
 16 is that correct?
 17 A. Yes.
 18 Q. Paragraph 101.
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. What was it that you were told?
 21 A. That a second suspect had been arrested at the scene
 22 following the sight of a man with an Audi who had put on
 23 a rucksack and walked towards the arena. He was given
 24 what we call an urgent safety interview and in that
 25 interview, he said he worked in the arena and was being

1 taken in for questioning at a TACT suite, which is
 2 a custody suite used for terrorism prisoners, but that
 3 person was later proved to be non-suspicious. Also that
 4 a suspicious device had been seen near a cathedral,
 5 I think that might be a reference to
 6 Cathedral Gardens --
 7 Q. Yes.
 8 A. -- and had been subject to a controlled explosion and
 9 that there were a series of reports on social media
 10 about firearms being discharged, but they had not found
 11 evidence of that.
 12 Q. In the aftermath of a terrorist attack, is it common for
 13 there to be many messages posted on social media about
 14 what has occurred or is believed to have occurred?
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. Sorry to invite you to state the obvious. Is that
 17 a help to policing or a hindrance or both?
 18 A. Well, it's both. So clearly, it can be a massive help
 19 if parts of that is accurate information and
 20 intelligence. It's a massive hindrance when there's so
 21 much of it that it takes experienced detectives and
 22 analysts a long time to go through the material and that
 23 obviously could divert resources.
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You can have accidental disinformation
 25 and you can have intentional disinformation as well.

1 A. Absolutely. The most important thing is you have to
 2 take all of it at face value and react to it, because
 3 you can't afford to make a mistake that something else
 4 isn't going on.
 5 MR GREANEY: I'm now over the page at paragraph 103. In
 6 fact, we'll deal with 104 first of all.
 7 Did you have information from ACC Ford that it was
 8 intended to hold what we now know as an SCG or strategic
 9 coordination group meeting?
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. You had, of course, by this stage, or at that stage, the
 12 potential identity for the attacker. So what did this
 13 lead to in terms of your decision-making as SNC?
 14 A. Well, this was the importance of finding out as much
 15 about that attacker as we possibly could and, from that
 16 information, generating what we call main lines of
 17 enquiry, effectively leads, to follow up to make sure
 18 the things I described earlier in my evidence, which are
 19 effectively what is the ongoing threat in this
 20 situation, is this person really acting alone or have
 21 they been assisted -- if they have been, how do we find
 22 those people as quickly as possible and effectively take
 23 them into custody to avoid there being any further
 24 threat.
 25 Q. Without going into issues of operation sensitivity, do

1 armed resources play a part in that?
 2 A. Yes, a massive part in that. That is the whole purpose
 3 of appointing a CT commander, they are going to control
 4 armed assets, because my assumption would be that any
 5 police officer coming across somebody who's connected to
 6 this individual is a potentially very, very dangerous
 7 threat indeed. They're either armed or otherwise so
 8 dangerous that the only way to take them into custody is
 9 effectively using armed police officers or other
 10 specialist capabilities.
 11 Q. Paragraph 105. Did you finish the meeting by confirming
 12 the next series of situational briefings and handovers?
 13 A. Yes.
 14 Q. Can you tell us a little more about that, please?
 15 A. The very first thing that would happen would be the
 16 first media statement by Chief Constable Hopkins. That
 17 would have then been supported by a national statement
 18 by ACSO to confirm effectively the declaration of
 19 terrorism. Content would be led by Greater Manchester
 20 Police communications as they had all the information.
 21 The next, Assistant Chief Constable Ford's strategic
 22 coordination group on consequence management. The CT
 23 commander, we've just described their role, being
 24 allocated to our operations room to manage any high
 25 threats and a proactive response to any intelligence,

1 which is what I have just described, relieving Gold,
 2 ACC Ford, of that responsibility.
 3 At 08.30 there would be what's called a closed COBR
 4 brief, that is a sensitive intelligence brief to
 5 Government and at 09.00 there would be the full COBR
 6 meeting chaired by the Prime Minister and attended by
 7 ACSO.
 8 I had set a time for the executive liaison group at
 9 10 am, chaired by me, and the purpose of that is to
 10 determine all the intelligence we know at that time, and
 11 then what the future investigative response, including
 12 potential armed arrest, is going to be, and that DACSO
 13 Lucy D'Orsi's SRCE was going to take place at 11
 14 o'clock, which would be to determine, as I have said,
 15 the UK protective security response to the attack,
 16 effectively what the rest of the country was going to do
 17 to stand up visible protection in response to this.
 18 Q. So one of the things that you'd confirmed along the way
 19 was, as you put it in the statement, the next ACC Ford
 20 SCG on consequence management.
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. Does it follow from that that you understood that there
 23 had been already an SCG and that a further SCG was due
 24 to take place?
 25 A. That's a literal reading of that note, yes.

1 Q. In the period that followed, other steps were taken by
 2 you that it is not responsible, certainly at the moment,
 3 to go into. So we can move forward to 03.40 hours. At
 4 that stage what step did you take? Paragraph 109.
 5 A. I believe this was the briefing to Assistant
 6 Chief Constable Tim Jacques. Yes, effectively
 7 everything we've just described in evidence, giving him
 8 the current intelligence picture, the situation and what
 9 the priorities were, making sure and asking him to
 10 forward deploy to the operations room, to make contact
 11 with ACC Ford as Gold.
 12 We described earlier on the important thing is that
 13 you don't want two commanders doing the same job so the
 14 important thing is at an appropriate time to decide
 15 a handover of the proactive responsibilities to arrest
 16 any further threat, which is what I was asking
 17 Tim Jacques to do, and deduplicate that role from
 18 ACC Ford.
 19 Q. At 04.08 hours, as you explain at paragraph 110, did you
 20 organise a briefing to all members of the Security
 21 Review Committee, calling for an extraordinary SRC, so
 22 an SRCE, to be chaired by the DACSO at 11.00 hours as
 23 you have told us?
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. What is the Security Review Committee?

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1 A. As I described earlier, that is the committee that
 2 normally meets in business as usual every 2 weeks. It's
 3 all the national security partners. You sit in that
 4 meeting and between them they take a threat and
 5 intelligence update and then they decide on a protective
 6 security stance. They do that as business as usual
 7 every 2 weeks but whenever there is a very high-threat
 8 event we are trying to stop or if there has been an
 9 high-threat event, such as this atrocity, that meeting
 10 will be stood up immediately so that they can get the
 11 earliest possible protective stance in place.
 12 Q. At 04.30 hours did you have a further conversation with
 13 Detective Chief Superintendent Russ Jackson?
 14 A. I did. He told me at that point that he had split
 15 investigative responsibilities between two different
 16 counter-terrorism senior investigating officers, one
 17 managing the reactive investigation into what was
 18 effectively mass murder and one to manage the proactive
 19 investigation which, as we have described, is to go
 20 forward and to try and locate and arrest anyone else who
 21 might be a conspirator. That practice was developed
 22 after the Westminster attack as good practice to avoid
 23 overwhelming one CT senior investigating officer with
 24 too many actions.
 25 Q. I want to make sure that I've understood that. There is

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1 situation that is to be addressed, namely there has
 2 been the most dreadful crime committed at the arena and
 3 that needs to be investigated?
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. And there is also, secondly, the need to investigate
 6 whether others have been involved in this attack?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. So what Detective Superintendent Jackson was doing was
 9 saying is, in accordance with what is now regarded as
 10 good practice, "I'm splitting those two parts of the
 11 investigation and different CT SIOs are going to deal
 12 with each one of them"?
 13 A. Yes, both reporting to him and him reporting into me as
 14 the SNC.
 15 Q. At 04.45 hours, I believe you had a further conversation
 16 with Detective Chief Superintendent Jackson and it was
 17 confirmed that this was a suicide bombing from CCTV
 18 analysis.
 19 A. Yes, that's correct.
 20 Q. And at that stage, 19 innocent victims had been
 21 confirmed dead, plus the attacker, who was believed to
 22 be, although still not confirmed as, Salman Abedi?
 23 A. Yes, that's correct.
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Before you go on, I just want to go back
 25 to check something which may turn out to be in the

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1 future of some importance, I don't know. This is
 2 a question of the SCG that Assistant Chief
 3 Constable Ford was going to have. You indicated in
 4 answers just now to Mr Greaney that you assumed from
 5 what she said that there had already been an SCG.
 6 A. That was my assumption, which is why I ---
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You said literally, "That's what it
 8 looks like". I just --- if we're relying on
 9 paragraph 105, I'm not sure that's the literal meaning
 10 of it:
 11 "I finished by confirming the next series of
 12 situational briefings and handovers on 23 May 2017 would
 13 be: the first media statement by Chief Constable Hopkins
 14 supported by a statement from ACSO and the content would
 15 be led by GMP communications. The next, ACC Ford SCG on
 16 consequence management."
 17 Did you interpret it as meaning there had already
 18 been an SCG?
 19 MR GREANEY: I did and I can see that there may be a
 20 different interpretation.
 21 A. In the absence of a comma, you may be correct.
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I have no idea, I doubt if you have
 23 a recollection.
 24 A. I don't.
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Would you have expected there to be

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1 an SCG before the time you were having that meeting?
 2 A. I would have expected ACC Ford to have had a -- it's
 3 a bit like describing the ELG earlier on. Normally, an
 4 ELG is a very formal minuted meeting --
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: But it can be informal --
 6 A. -- but it can be effectively as quick as having all the
 7 right people in the room and talking to them.
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: All the right people in the room.
 9 A. I would still describe that as an SCG.
 10 MR GREANEY: In case this is of any importance in due course
 11 and it may be, by the time we're dealing with
 12 02.35 hours, 4 hours have passed since the explosion and
 13 indeed 4 hours and 2 minutes have passed since the first
 14 999 call that had been made. Are you saying that you
 15 would have expected, whether informal or formal, an SCG
 16 to have taken place by that time?
 17 A. I would have expected a meeting of partners, yes.
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: The purpose is to coordinate the
 19 emergency rescue.
 20 A. Yes.
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And the emergency rescue has been going
 22 on for quite a long time, really, by then.
 23 A. Yes, by then.
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I just thought we ought to clarify that.
 25 MR GREANEY: You're quite right. I read it in one way, but

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1 there's definitely another way of reading it.
 2 I'm now going to move forward to paragraph 123 of
 3 your statement. By now, this is my word, the focus upon
 4 Salman Abedi, the people and addresses associated with
 5 him is really gearing up. Is that a fair way of putting
 6 it?
 7 A. That's correct.
 8 Q. Because at 06.55 hours, ACC Jacques informed you that
 9 he was prioritising the risk assessments and tactical
 10 plans against two addresses, namely the home address of
 11 Salman Abedi and the home address of his brother,
 12 Ismael Abedi?
 13 A. Correct.
 14 Q. And as you recorded at 08.00 hours, the home address was
 15 an urgent priority?
 16 A. Yes.
 17 Q. Why was that?
 18 A. What we had not established was where the bomb was
 19 assembled, in our vernacular the bomb factory. Clearly
 20 if there was other explosive material that had been
 21 developed and was outstanding we needed to locate that
 22 and seize it as quickly as possible and clearly, if it
 23 was with other attackers, make sure they didn't have the
 24 opportunity to use it, so it was considered an ongoing
 25 threat.

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1 Q. Paragraph 125. At this time, and I believe that's
 2 a reference to 08.00 hours, have you recorded that
 3 ACC Ford was handing over her responsibility as Gold to
 4 ACC Gary Shewan?
 5 A. Yes, that's correct.
 6 Q. Have you then recorded notes of a conversation with
 7 Detective Chief Superintendent Jackson on deciding what
 8 the main lines of enquiry should be?
 9 A. Yes, that's correct.
 10 Q. Did they include prioritising those that you describe as
 11 "the top three subjects of interest and their home
 12 addresses"?
 13 A. Yes.
 14 Q. CTSIO command and control arrangements for the day
 15 shift?
 16 A. Yes, that's correct.
 17 Q. What was the point of that?
 18 A. Long experience in my profession that people need to be
 19 changed over to be making good decisions because they'll
 20 be exhausted.
 21 Q. Logistical support for the CTPOR, which you explained
 22 earlier.
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. Intelligence requirements through the fusion cell.
 25 A. Yes.

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1 Q. Disaster victim identification was to sit with the major
 2 crime unit.
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. Is that the major crime unit of GMP?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. And Detective Chief Superintendents Mike Lupton and
 7 Steve Bennett in the National CT Police Operation Centre
 8 were to formulate a resource plan and mobilise network
 9 resources according to the needs of Detective Chief
 10 Superintendent Russ Jackson?
 11 A. Yes, that's correct.
 12 Q. That's about making sure that he has in place the
 13 resources that he needs to ensure that there is the
 14 investigation or investigations that you've told us
 15 about?
 16 A. Yes, that's correct.
 17 Q. Another line of enquiry, establishing any foreknowledge
 18 of the attack through social media posts prior to the
 19 event?
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. Which one can well understand as being a line of enquiry
 22 that you'll be aware I'm certain, and as SIO Barraclough
 23 explained to us, that in the result nothing was found of
 24 that nature.
 25 A. No, it wasn't.

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1 Q. Other lines of enquiry reinforcing the casualty bureau
2 and the family liaison officers ?
3 A. Yes, that's correct.
4 Q. Including Red Cross support?
5 A. Yes.
6 Q. What does that mean?
7 A. Red Cross are obviously a major charity who have
8 experience of dealing with tragedy and events like this
9 and were able to assist with the family liaison strategy
10 that Russ Jackson had put forward, which was an
11 incredibly progressive one. We're very advanced in
12 family liaison , those of us who have worked in the field
13 of homicide, but this was going to be incredibly
14 difficult because of the sheer numbers involved.
15 Q. Determining if there are foreign casualties, given
16 international obligations?
17 A. Yes.
18 Q. So does that mean that if someone who is from another
19 country has been killed in this attack, you have an
20 obligation to ensure that that state is informed of that
21 fact?
22 A. Yes, that's correct.
23 Q. Bomb Data Centre Explosives Ordinance Department support
24 to determine the nature of the device?
25 A. Yes, that's correct.

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1 Q. To assist in search strategies and risk assessments and
2 purchase history lines of enquiry?
3 A. Yes, that's correct.
4 Q. So you need to know as much as you can about the device
5 because that may present a particular risk for those who
6 are searching addresses?
7 A. Yes, a huge risk.
8 Q. And also in terms of investigation , you will want to
9 know whether particular purchases have been made of
10 items that have been used to manufacture the device?
11 A. Yes, and how much.
12 Q. And how much. Then the final in the list of the lines
13 of enquiry, whilst understanding that there will
14 inevitably have been others, research on potential
15 British Libyan extremism and potential jihadists.
16 A. Yes.
17 Q. Was that because it was now believed that Salman Abedi
18 was the bomber?
19 A. Yes.
20 Q. It was known what his heritage was?
21 A. Yes.
22 Q. And there was a strong suspicion as to his motivation?
23 A. Yes.
24 Q. You add at paragraph 127, this is, as I've just
25 indicated, by no means an exhaustive list of

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1 high-priority lines of enquiry, which the detective
2 chief superintendent will have formulated with
3 Mr Barraclough, but it's an accurate record of what were
4 the most important to you in the early hours of 23 May,
5 about 8 hours after the attack?
6 A. Yes.
7 Q. We will aim to finish your evidence, certainly in answer
8 to my questions, before lunch. We've referred a number
9 of times to the ELG or executive liaison group meeting.
10 Only a limited amount can be said in open about this,
11 for reasons that everyone will understand and none of us
12 want to provide assistance to those who would wish to
13 carry out this type of attack, but what we can confirm
14 is that, as you had intended, at 10 am you chaired the
15 first formal ELG on what was by that stage known as
16 Operation Manteline?
17 A. Yes. I'm afraid this is another error in my statement,
18 potentially. My recollection, and I thought I had
19 changed it in the statement, was that the 10 o'clock was
20 delayed because we were in the process of arresting
21 suspects. Clearly, some of the key figures I would have
22 wanted in that meeting were too busy dealing with the
23 multiple arrests that were happening, so we delayed it
24 for a certain period of time, but nevertheless this is
25 the record of that meeting.

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1 Q. Yes. So that I can be clear, although it wasn't
2 a formal ELG, something that very much looked and felt
3 like such a meeting had occurred at 02.35?
4 A. Yes.
5 Q. And at some stage after 10 o'clock there was the first
6 formal ELG?
7 A. Yes.
8 Q. How long did the 02.35 meeting last for?
9 A. I didn't recall the end of the meeting.
10 Q. It rather looks as if it was a fairly lengthy meeting
11 given --
12 A. Yes.
13 Q. -- what you were told.
14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You were saying you had to make sure
15 that officers went off duty to get rest so they could
16 make good decisions, but this doesn't seem to have
17 applied to you.
18 A. It's an unfortunate consequence of these particular
19 roles. That is not entirely fair because of course
20 I had an incredibly experienced, brilliant detective in
21 ACC Terri Nicholson. So there were times, bearing in
22 mind this went on for many weeks, and certainly for the
23 first seven days, where I'd stand down and get some rest
24 and Terri would take charge and that's the way it's
25 always done. It is why we have a deputy at that senior

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1 level. I appreciate the too many chiefs comment earlier
 2 on but actually it is just what is required.
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Obviously you have to have cover at the
 4 right level, and I do understand that, but I was just
 5 talking about people being on duty at the same time or
 6 taking decisions at the same time, but you have
 7 explained how that all coordinated.
 8 A. Much experience since has told us that (inaudible:
 9 distorted) forensic about how we do changeovers and
 10 handovers. We are all so committed to these things that
 11 it's very difficult to wrest the control stick away from
 12 people.
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.
 14 MR GREANEY: I'm turning forward to paragraph 156 of your
 15 statement. In fact, page 35. In simple terms, in the
 16 following days, you chaired further ELGs.
 17 A. I did.
 18 Q. All of which were minuted. They self-evidently will
 19 contain highly sensitive content, but they've been made
 20 available to the inquiry; is that correct?
 21 A. I believe so, yes.
 22 Q. In paragraphs 166 and 167 you make clear that in the
 23 statement from which I've been adducing your evidence,
 24 you have explained that at 00.56 you declared what had
 25 happened at the arena a terrorist attack and at that

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1 stage you took responsibility for national strategic
 2 command.
 3 A. That's correct.
 4 Q. You coordinated the post-attack investigative response
 5 with Gold and the head of the North-west
 6 Counter-terrorism Unit.
 7 A. Correct.
 8 Q. And appointed a CT commander to help resolve the
 9 immediate threat?
 10 A. That's correct.
 11 Q. You then add something that we touched upon earlier:
 12 "I was not responsible for directing Gold in the
 13 immediate response to this no-notice attack."
 14 A. Correct.
 15 Q. "Nor [you say] would she have expected me to do so as
 16 the doctrine establishes that the initial response rests
 17 with the force Gold."
 18 A. That's correct.
 19 Q. Then in paragraph 167 you go on to deal with other
 20 responsibilities that you assumed. Can you tell us what
 21 those are, please?
 22 A. Yes. I'm responsible for ensuring that force Gold
 23 remains in full control of the immediate response but
 24 also that they've got all of the asset that they've
 25 requested. That includes, and this is a primary

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1 responsibility of the SNC, armed assets, including
 2 specialist support. The only reason for denying them
 3 access to that support would be the existence of equal
 4 or greater threat elsewhere in the country. On 22 and
 5 23 May 2017, there was no such competing demand and the
 6 full armed resources of the police and others were
 7 available.
 8 I was also responsible for organising the
 9 Counter-terrorism Network response to support them and
 10 ensuring that DCS Jackson had established a fully
 11 resourced CT operations room to continue the
 12 investigation and the proactive element of the operation
 13 to mitigate the threat and in essence, as we have
 14 described, that is to find any accomplices, find any
 15 further explosive material, and find the bomb factory.
 16 Q. Finally before I indicate an issue that you're not going
 17 to be dealing with, at least not today, I'm going to
 18 deal with your other responsibilities as SNC in relation
 19 to what we know as Operation Manteline, and we can deal
 20 with these in summary.
 21 One of your responsibilities as SNC was to ensure
 22 that ACSO and the Government were accurately briefed;
 23 is that correct?
 24 A. That's correct.
 25 Q. So that was one of your responsibilities in the

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1 following days?
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. Next, Salman Abedi's younger brother, Hashem, was
 4 declared a suspect; is that correct?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. And you were responsible for taking steps, at least in
 7 the initial stages, to pursue him, in short?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. Simultaneously with investigating the attack in
 10 Manchester, did you have four other responsibilities?
 11 A. I did, yes.
 12 Q. Would you tell us what those were, please?
 13 A. So the most important one in the -- which was
 14 effectively my business as usual was very shortly after
 15 Manchester, the Prime Minister, Theresa May, had
 16 effectively turned to policing, my boss Mark Rowley, the
 17 Commissioner, and others, to the director-general of
 18 MI5, and used the phrase, "You need to break the
 19 momentum". In order to do that and on behalf of
 20 Mark Rowley, my job was to organise the police response
 21 to crack down on terrorist activity in the
 22 United Kingdom. Effectively, that involved transferring
 23 as much asset as we could from the other pillars of the
 24 CONTEST strategy into Pursue, mitigating threat actors
 25 at the very earliest opportunity, and basically

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1 a concerted effort from ourselves and MI5 to further
2 disrupt and destabilise the activities of members of
3 proscribed terrorist organisations, particularly the one
4 known as Al-Muhajiroun, ALM, and that surge of activity
5 was described by the operation codename of Roset.

6 The second responsibility was in addition to
7 Westminster and Manchester, I was responsible to ACSO
8 for overseeing the post-investigative response to the
9 attacks that followed at London Bridge, Finsbury Park
10 and Parsons Green, as well as the multiple disruptions
11 to other attack plans and coordinating the intelligence
12 reviews that followed under a review process that was
13 termed the operational improvement review.

14 The operational improvement review was a review
15 commissioned by the Commissioner of the
16 Metropolitan Police, then the director-general of MI5,
17 Sir Andrew Parker to look at whether there was anything
18 we could learn that would help us mitigate terrorist
19 threat in the future.

20 Thirdly, I was responsible for overseeing business
21 as usual. That is the operational response of UK
22 policing to the current terrorism threat, which we
23 manage jointly with MI5. That is the threat that was
24 described in 2017 by my government accountability
25 minister, the Security Minister, Ben Wallace, as around

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1 3,000 active subjects of interest in some 600 operations
2 and over 20,000 closed subjects of interest.

3 I have described it many times in public in the past
4 that actually, although the volume was extreme, it isn't
5 the volume that counts, it's the volatility, so it's how
6 hard those attacks are to see coming, how quickly they
7 come, how quickly people are radicalised and moved to
8 action, the simplicity of the methods that people were
9 using which meant very little planning was required and
10 therefore how difficult they are to see and stop. That
11 was my biggest concern.

12 And lastly, my role in Counter-terrorism Policing,
13 despite our name, is not just counter-terrorism. I'm
14 responsible for what used to be called allied matters
15 and they're described in the collaboration agreement but
16 they can be summarised as counter-espionage,
17 counter-proliferation, counter-insurgency, domestic
18 extremism, which is now referred to as right-wing,
19 left-wing, anarchic or single-issue terrorism, and
20 investigations into Official Secret Act offences and war
21 crimes.

22 Q. Thank you very much.

23 Assistant commissioner, in your witness statement at
24 paragraphs 157 to 165 and 177 to 186, you address
25 reviews and in particular the operational improvement

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1 review which occurred. We've been clear with you and
2 with core participants that you will not be addressing
3 those issues today, but I believe -- well, you've
4 informed me that if it proves necessary for you to give
5 evidence about those issues, you will of course be
6 prepared to return, notwithstanding the pressures of
7 your role.

8 A. Of course.

9 MR GREANEY: What we'll do, sir, is we will make a judgement
10 with your assistance, of course, and with your guidance,
11 later in chapter 10 about whether it is necessary for
12 the assistant commissioner to return to deal with those
13 issues or whether they've been dealt with adequately by
14 others.

15 Assistant commissioner, those are all of my
16 questions at this stage, at any rate. Thank you very
17 much for answering them.

18 Sir, may I deal with things in this way. Only
19 a limited number of core participants have identified
20 even the possibility that they will have questions of
21 the assistant commissioner.

22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Do you mind if I have a couple of
23 questions to ask first? Because the answers may affect
24 whether they want to ask questions.

25 MR GREANEY: Quite.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So there were two things I wanted to
2 raise. I've already mentioned one to you. The second
3 one relates, so everyone is aware where this is coming
4 from, to the question of primacy and particularly
5 primacy between BTP and GMP when you actually have
6 a terrorist attack like this on one of the sites where
7 they would normally be in charge of policing.

8 It seems that you do place considerable emphasis,
9 even in present state of technology and communication,
10 on actually having very senior officers actually on the
11 scene. I mean by that in the area. So you get your own
12 senior CT man actually there and move him from wherever
13 he or she may be in order to do it.

14 A. Yes.

15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: How important do you think it is to
16 actually -- at BTP inevitably most of their senior
17 officers are some way away from, in fact, Manchester.
18 So how important do you think it is to be able to get
19 very senior officers to the scene relatively quickly?

20 A. It's always important to have a very clear command
21 structure whereby you have senior people who have the
22 ability to get good situational awareness. I think
23 we've all learned in the past year that you can't
24 entirely rely on technology to give you that awareness.
25 Everyone has experienced a dropout in feed at some point

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1 in the last year when they've been trying to have
 2 meetings which don't involve life and death decisions,
 3 so you do want people in the best place to get
 4 situational awareness. That is normally in a force
 5 control room, a command module is how I think GMP
 6 describe it, but a GT operations room in the Met. You
 7 want people there, in my own operations room, who have
 8 all the technology and all of the radio links to the
 9 people who are on the ground and then you need people on
 10 the ground clearly in charge who are able to be the
 11 single point of communications and the single version of
 12 truth(?) back upwards.

13 That is an easy thing to say in an incident of this
 14 magnitude. I will tell you I have never seen an
 15 operation in over 28 years go perfectly as described by
 16 the very doctrine that I help sign off and write and it
 17 just doesn't happen that way. There is always -- I'm
 18 a boxing fan so I always use the boxing analogy of
 19 everyone's got a plan until they're punched in the face.
 20 Dealing with one of those incidents is like being
 21 repeatedly punched in the face and then probably placed
 22 on the ground and repeatedly kicked. The only thing
 23 that enables officers of the calibre of these people to
 24 survive is training and experience because it is so
 25 unbelievably hard.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. So that leads me to the second
 2 question, which I have already forewarned you of,
 3 certainly in relation to the police: how easy is it to
 4 get across to people that what they are being trained
 5 for is something that is quite likely to happen to them?
 6 So for people involved in Manchester to be actually
 7 aware on 22 May, we are under severe risk of an attack
 8 taking place within Manchester.

9 A. You're absolutely right, it's one of my key
 10 responsibilities alongside the security service and the
 11 government, with its counter-terrorism strategy, to make
 12 sure when the threat level is as it was then at severe,
 13 meaning an attack is highly likely, that people have the
 14 capability and capacity and ability, the competence to
 15 respond. So an amount of training and exercising goes
 16 on to enable us to do that, an amount of compliance and
 17 assurance goes on, including from Her Majesty's
 18 Inspectorate, to make sure that individual forces are
 19 capable of responding.

20 Mark Rowley himself, after 2015, made it absolutely
 21 clear that we needed to step up armed capability in this
 22 country. The reason so much armed asset was available
 23 in 2017 was because we had spent 2 years developing that
 24 across the country. All of these things are important.
 25 So I will say what I've previously said to people: in

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1 some respects I wish we were like the military, which is
 2 80% of training to deploy at a very high level 20% of
 3 the time. Policing just isn't like that because we are
 4 all constantly doing the job, which means it's a very
 5 experiential job, and God forbid anyone would have to
 6 deal with these incidents more than once in their entire
 7 career. So the difficulty of actually trying to get
 8 people at such a high level of state that they can bring
 9 their A game every time this happens is immense.

10 We place people -- it's the reason why we have CT
 11 commanders who receive extra specialist training. It's
 12 the reason specialist firearms commanders have
 13 specialist pass or fail training. They've got to show
 14 that they're accredited. It's the reason why we do
 15 continuous professional development to keep them at
 16 a level whereby they're competent to do that job. To
 17 say you're always going to get it right every time is ...
 18 You know as well as I do --

19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: There will always be lessons to learn
 20 from everything, no doubt.

21 A. Which is why inquiries like this are so important.
 22 I said right at the start of my evidence, I have never
 23 been in a part of policing which has so vigorously
 24 attempted to find out exactly what went -- what
 25 happened, how it happened, whether there was anything

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1 else that could be done, quite often alongside while
 2 we're still actually investigating the offence in order
 3 to try and improve ourselves.

4 I spent a long time alongside Sir Mark and various
 5 other people going round the world saying we have the
 6 best counter-terrorism machine in the world in this
 7 country and I still think that is true. But you know,
 8 out of that operational improvement review, which is
 9 always described as Lord Anderson's review, and I hope
 10 David will forgive me but he knows it was our review.
 11 He came and made sure we were doing it properly, but it
 12 was our review. We found 103 things to do better.
 13 That is a humbling moment, but we do it, but you can't
 14 exercise all of the time when you're doing the day job.
 15 We do the very best that we can so that people in this
 16 position -- I was very fortunate on the night this
 17 happened as SNC because I had real experience, calibre,
 18 capability, doing these jobs. It would have been
 19 incredibly difficult to have people with none of that.

20 In fact, all the actions that were put in place by
 21 ACC Ford and Russ Jackson I may have had to have
 22 directed because if the person wasn't experienced enough
 23 to do it, I would have had to have done that.

24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. But what perhaps we can agree on
 25 is when you do an exercise -- and you can't be

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1 exercising all the time -- but if lessons come out of
 2 those exercises, you make sure they are learnt and put
 3 right, not in the future, but actually quickly because
 4 that attack may be coming round the corner.
 5 A. Yes, as quickly as possible. I mean, pragmatically,
 6 sometimes it takes -- in terms of resource and training
 7 and capability and the number of people who have to be
 8 trained, it's not an easy process. A good example of
 9 that -- well, I think Richard Thomas -- you may want to
 10 take him there -- how Plato developed post-2011,
 11 post-Mumbai, and then how it developed post-2015, how it
 12 was then inspected, and then how we try and train every
 13 firearms professional in the country what it needs.
 14 These things take a long time and meanwhile there's an
 15 attack that might happen tomorrow.
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you very much.
 17 MR GREANEY: Sir, I'm just going to pick up on one thing,
 18 before we go to the core participants, so it doesn't
 19 cause any public concern.
 20 You referred along the way of your answer, assistant
 21 commissioner, to the fact that the final operational
 22 improvement review identified over 100 recommendations.
 23 A. That's correct.
 24 Q. You also added that this was a humbling moment for you
 25 and your colleagues.

1 A. Very much so.
 2 Q. But what you didn't say, and we should perhaps add,
 3 is that even at the time of writing your statement,
 4 almost 90% of the recommendations had been delivered?
 5 A. Yes, that's correct.
 6 MR GREANEY: What I would like to do next, sir, with your
 7 agreement, is to seek to identify whether we need to
 8 have a one-hour break, or a 15-minute break, or
 9 I suppose possibly no break at all. I'm going to simply
 10 call upon those who submitted Rule 10 documents to
 11 identify if they have questions, and, if so, how long.
 12 First of all, may I ask Mr Horwell on behalf of
 13 Greater Manchester Police if he does have questions.
 14 MR HORWELL: Sir, if you can hear me, 5 minutes and no more.
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Right. Five minutes for Mr Horwell.
 16 MR GREANEY: Thank you, Mr Horwell.
 17 Next, Mr Atkinson, please, who is taking the lead in
 18 relation to this witness on behalf of the families.
 19 MR ATKINSON: It rather depends on Mr Horwell's 5 minutes as
 20 to whether I have anything, and if so, how much, I'm
 21 afraid.
 22 MR GREANEY: Perfectly reasonable. Again, this may be
 23 dependent, but can I ask any other advocate on behalf of
 24 the families whether he anticipates any questions.
 25 MR COOPER: For our part, no, I don't anticipate any

1 questions.
 2 MR GREANEY: And I don't believe Mr Gozem intends to ask any
 3 questions.
 4 So finally -- again this may need to be
 5 contingent -- Mr Butt on behalf of CTPHQ, do you
 6 currently propose to ask any questions?
 7 MR BUTT: At present, sir, no, no questions.
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think Mr Weatherby has come into view.
 9 MR GREANEY: I'm so sorry. Mr Weatherby, do you expect to
 10 have any questions?
 11 MR WEATHERBY: No, I don't. Thank you very much for asking.
 12 MR GREANEY: Shall we take a short break of 15 minutes for
 13 the benefit of the stenographers?
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We can either do that or we can keep
 15 Mr Horwell to his 5 minutes if the stenographers can
 16 stand that and no doubt they will tell you if they
 17 can't.
 18 Mr Horwell.
 19 Questions from MR HORWELL
 20 MR HORWELL: I will keep a close eye on the clock, sir.
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So will I, Mr Horwell.
 22 MR HORWELL: I have no doubt.
 23 Mr Basu, it's a point that has probably already been
 24 dealt with, but I just want to be quite certain that
 25 we are clear as to your answer. You were asked about

1 the use of the word "next" in Deputy Chief
 2 Constable Ford's statement and the suggestion that this
 3 might have meant that there had already been an SCG by
 4 the time of the meeting at 23.25. You'll remember the
 5 point, I'm sure.
 6 A. I do.
 7 Q. Mr Basu, there had not been an SCG by that time and the
 8 note that we have from Detective Chief Constable Ford's
 9 staff officer, Alison Thornton, simply records that at
 10 that meeting there was mention of an SCG Gold needed
 11 later. No suggestion that there had already been one.
 12 If Detective Chief Constable Ford gives evidence to the
 13 effect that all that she was saying at that meeting was
 14 that there was to be an SCG in the future, you wouldn't
 15 dispute that for one moment?
 16 A. No, it was my comment to the chair that actually but for
 17 an apostrophe, it completely changes the meaning of that
 18 sentence. So it might have been simply a list of the
 19 next meetings to take place as opposed to "next SCG".
 20 Q. Thank you, Mr Basu. It may become an important point in
 21 the future. I wanted to deal with it through you now.
 22 That night, you said in your evidence earlier, and
 23 I'm reading from the transcript that we have, that you
 24 were fortunate on this occasion that you had
 25 a Gold commander who also happened to be head of

1 counter—terrorism and organised crime in the north—west
2 region, albeit I think ACC Ford had been in post for
3 6 months. But she knew the job and she knew her
4 counter—terrorism head in DCS Russ Jackson and that was
5 of some comfort to you.

6 In your witness statement at paragraph 168 you said
7 that:

8 "My professional view from those initial briefings
9 in the first 24 hours is that GMP and, in particular,
10 Gold Commander ACC Ford and the lead detective for
11 NWCTU, DCS Russ Jackson, did an exceptional job in
12 horrific circumstances."

13 That was your opinion then, Mr Basu, and that is
14 your opinion now?

15 A. 100%.

16 Q. A experienced and safe pair of hands for an operation of
17 this nature?

18 A. Absolutely.

19 MR HORWELL: I hope I have kept to my 5 minutes, sir. Those
20 are my questions. Thank you, Mr Basu.

21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You were only four!

22 MR HORWELL: Thank you.

23 MR GREANEY: Can we return to Mr Atkinson and see what
24 emerges out of that so far as he's concerned?

25 Questions from MR ATKINSON

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1 MR ATKINSON: Sir, can I say first that in due course the
2 families will have questions relating to the assistant
3 commissioner's Prevent and Pursue roles, whether of him
4 or of others, to investigate, for example, issues of
5 radicalisation. We recognise that's not a topic for
6 now. We also have questions in relation to the reviews
7 that the assistant commissioner can talk about, and
8 again whether those are questions of him or of others,
9 we're happy to discuss with your legal team in due
10 course.

11 But can I just deal, assistant commissioner, with
12 that very last point, which was, I'm afraid, what
13 I anticipated Mr Horwell was going to ask you about,
14 namely your professional view of ACC Ford and of the GMP
15 response. I hope we can do this briefly, if not I will
16 indicate to the chair and we may have to have a break.

17 The reality, assistant commissioner, is that you can
18 only express that opinion on the basis of what you were
19 being told by them that they were doing?

20 A. Yes, that's absolutely true.

21 Q. And against the background that you made very clear
22 earlier in your evidence that significant parts of the
23 strategic decision—making that was needed for an
24 incident like this was being made by them without your
25 intervention or without indeed any consultation with you

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1 first ?

2 A. Yes, that's correct.

3 Q. So by way of example, decisions as to the multi—agency
4 response that was needed were not decisions that you
5 were involved in?

6 A. That's correct.

7 Q. The decisions in relation to the implementation of
8 Operation Plato and the guidance issued as to how such
9 an operation should be undertaken was not something that
10 you were involved in as it was happening?

11 A. No, that's correct.

12 Q. Nor in relation to the proper operation of a major
13 incident response by reference to GMP or
14 Greater Manchester related guidance?

15 A. No, these are the responsibilities of the force Gold.

16 Q. So your opinion — without any disrespect to you at all,
17 I hasten to add — is based on those elements of the
18 response to this incident that you had a role in working
19 with them for?

20 A. Yes, it is.

21 MR ATKINSON: Thank you, sir. That's all I need to ask at
22 this time of this officer.

23 MR GREANEY: Sir, unless anyone indicates to the contrary,
24 I believe that deals with all of the questioning by core
25 participants of the assistant commissioner.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm very grateful to you for giving the
2 time. You obviously have a great deal to do, so
3 thank you very much for coming and helping us in the way
4 you have.

5 A. Thank you, sir.

6 MR GREANEY: Sir, that is as far as we can take it today.
7 As you know, we're having to plan in very different
8 circumstances than we would like to plan in. We'll have
9 tomorrow Chief Inspector Thomas, as he was at that
10 stage.

11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think one of the important factors, it
12 may not be the critical one, is that we are actually
13 making some progress even with the difficulties we are
14 facing.

15 MR GREANEY: We're making real progress, sir, yes.

16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.

17 (1.24 pm)

18 (The inquiry adjourned until 10.00 am
19 on Wednesday, 3 February 2021)

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1 I N D E X

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3 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER NEIL BASU1

4 (affirmed)

5 Questions from MR GREANEY1

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7 Questions from MR HORWELL127

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9 Questions from MR ATKINSON129

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