



- MR SIBSON
- MISS LONDON
- MR CAFFAREY
- MR PARTRIDGE ^{MR FANKWIL}
- MR HEAD
- MR MOWER
- MR EMES
- MR NAGLER
- MR T MORRIS
- MR R. HARRIS

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DMS
18/6

QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

12th June 1984

1) Mr Fletcher 2) Prime Minister (4)
 To be aware of this proposal
 for new inter-departmental
machinery on drugs.

2 Nov

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE MISUSE OF DRUGS: PREVENTION REPORT

DMS
14/6

I wrote on 19 April to you and to other colleagues most directly concerned about the arrangements for the publication of the report on prevention of drug misuse which the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs has recently completed. We have now had a meeting to discuss the issues raised in this report, and I have also had a brief discussion with Keith Joseph.

Following those discussions, and taking into account the comments which other colleagues have made in correspondence, I am now circulating a draft announcement. The prevention report is due to be published in the week beginning 25 June and, subject to any comments which you or other colleagues may have, I propose to make my announcement (in the form of a written answer to an arranged Parliamentary Question) on the day of publication.

One of the major recommendations of the report is that I should assume responsibility for the co-ordination of drug prevention policy. The Home Secretary has traditionally had the leading role in respect of Government action to tackle drug misuse, and it could be argued that in its report the Advisory Council is seeking to do no more than confirm this. It seems clear, however, that the Council would like me to develop a more positive role in prevention policy, even though this might well cut across existing departmental responsibilities. I believe that this would be undesirable both in terms of public and Parliamentary accountability and as regards relationships with health and local authorities who are responsible for the provision of services. Nevertheless I shall clearly be expected to respond positively to this recommendation, and would wish to do so.

In my view, the way in which the drug problem in this country is developing has made it imperative that we should be able to demonstrate that all the various strands of our strategy for tackling drug misuse are being brought together effectively. We are seeing a most worrying increase in addiction to hard drugs which is, rightly, a cause of increasing public concern. We will come under increasing pressure to tackle more directly a problem which many people will argue demands very urgent action. This is not, of course, something which can be dealt with overnight. But we are, in my view, very vulnerable to the criticism that responsibility for the various remedial measures - whether in the field of interception of supplies, enforcement, prevention, treatment or education - is at present too widely diffused within Government for any overall strategy to be effective. The existence of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, helpful though it is in providing expert advice, does not meet this criticism. We both agree that what is needed is efficient machinery which will enable us, on an interdepartmental basis, to look at the effectiveness of our existing policies on combatting drug misuse, to monitor the implementation of those policies, to develop proposals for any new measures that may seem necessary, and (a matter to which I attach particular importance) co-ordinate the approach of the various Departments and agencies.

/Following our

The Rt Hon Norman Fowler, MP

Following our meeting, I have been further considering how we might fill this gap. In the light of this, I now propose to announce the setting up of an Inter-Departmental Group of Ministers and officials, under David Mellor's chairmanship, which would bring together and develop the various strands of our policy to combat drug misuse. I attach a note setting out possible terms of reference for the group.

I am very grateful for your ready agreement that John Patten should assist David Mellor as a member of the group. The other Departments most directly concerned with the likely work of the group are Customs and Excise and DES, and I would expect that, for the most part, it will be convenient for them to be represented by senior officials. But if Nigel Lawson and Keith Joseph agree, I should be grateful if they could each nominate a colleague to attend meetings of the group as the need arises. Subject to the views of other colleagues, I suggest that the remaining departments with an interest (including the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Scottish Office, the Northern Ireland Office and the Welsh Office) might normally be represented by senior officials. Although I do not intend to make an announcement about the terms of reference and membership of the group, I should of course, give details if asked.

I would hope that the group would be able to hold its first meeting soon after my Parliamentary announcement and get down to its work as a matter of urgency. Once the group has made some progress and has something to report, I think it might well be useful to arrange a wider discussion of our strategy - perhaps in H. I think both you and Keith Joseph also attach importance to this and I hope that such a meeting will be possible before too long.

I am copying this letter and enclosures to the Prime Minister for information. I am also copying them to all members of H Committee, to Geoffrey Howe and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Law,
Lan

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DRAFT ARRANGED QUESTION ON THE PREVENTION REPORT

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to publish the report of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs on prevention; and if he will make a statement

DRAFT REPLY

I am publishing this report today. Copies are available in the libraries of both Houses and are being sent to a wide range of statutory and voluntary bodies, inviting them to comment on its conclusions and recommendations.

The Government welcomes this report; and is grateful to the Council for its careful study of a difficult and growing problem which is a matter of increasing public concern. The Government fully shares this concern, and the report's recommendations - which are concerned primarily with ways of preventing drug misuse through the provision of information and education - represent a most valuable contribution to its strategy for tackling drug misuse. This strategy is based on measures to stem the flow of illicit drugs into this country in co-operation with producer and transit countries, to provide for effective enforcement of and adequate deterrents in the law, and to make available help and guidance to those who are misusing or are tempted to misuse drugs.

The Government is therefore taking immediate steps to implement the Council's major recommendations. We accept in particular its basic conclusion that there is a need for more effective broadly-based programmes which will provide information about drugs and their

E.R.

effects and have the positive aim of promoting healthier lifestyles. Education of the young must be a priority; but help and guidance must also be made more readily available to those who may be able to influence the young, whether parents, teachers, youth workers or other professionals.

The Government's strategy - of which follow-up action on this report forms an essential part - covers a wide range of Departmental interests. I have, therefore, decided, following consultations with my rt hon Friends, to set up an inter-departmental group of Ministers and officials under the Chairmanship of my hon Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, ~~at the Home Office~~ (Mr Mellor). The task of this group will be to develop the Government's overall strategy for combatting drug misuse and to oversee its implementation, having particular regard to the priorities for the allocation and deployment of resources and the co-ordination of the work of the various central and local agencies, both statutory and voluntary. As a matter of urgency, the group will put in hand the work needed to carry forward the recommendations contained in the Advisory Council's report on prevention, taking into account comments on the report as they become available.

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL GROUP ON DRUGS

Proposed Terms of Reference

To develop the Government's strategy for combatting the misuse of drugs of addiction and to oversee its implementation, having particular regard to:

1. The development of proposals for the more effective implementation of that strategy;
2. priorities for the allocation and deployment of resources in the various preventive, treatment and other services which play a part in countering drug misuse;
3. the arrangements within and outside government for the coordination, development and enforcement of policy on drug misuse;

And to make such recommendations from time to time as seem to be appropriate.

SPEECH ON TACKLING DRUG ABUSE GIVEN TO THE LONDON DIPLOMATIC ASSOCIATION
ON 14 DECEMBER 1983 BY THE RT. HON. LEON BRITTAN QC., MP, SECRETARY OF
STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT.

I want to speak today about a subject for which I have a considerable degree of Departmental responsibility, but which is also of the greatest international concern. I hope that by sharing my thoughts with you today it may be possible to further international understanding and co-operation in this area. The subject I have in mind is tackling drug abuse.

In a whole series of areas the Governments of the world and their enforcement agencies recognise ever more clearly how interconnected their and their people's interests are. The tragic and indiscriminate nature of terrorist outrages has over the years brought us closer together in tackling this international problem. Today I ask that the undeniable rise in drug trafficking and addiction should also provoke a determined international effort to clamp down on the equally despicable criminals whose trade is in other people's misery and death.

For our part, the British Government needs no prompting to take such action both at international and national levels. Here in Britain we are witnessing an alarming upsurge in the abuse of dangerous drugs. The statistics on seizures and on addiction show only the tip of the iceberg. But those statistics themselves are clear enough. It is the rise in the availability of and addiction to heroin which is most dramatic.

Between 1980 and 1982 the quantities of heroin seized by the police and customs increased no less than five-fold. During that same period, the number of addicts reported to the Home Office by doctors increased by 70 per cent to over 4,100. The street price of heroin is relatively low: and the quantities coming in are all too great. There are also worrying signs that the misuse of cocaine is increasing. The quantity seized this year so far by H.M. Customs is already five times larger than during last year. And then there are the synthetic drugs, from tranquillisers to powerful opiate substitutes; and, of course, cannabis.

Let us be clear. The effects of that trend will be with us not for months, but for years. No matter how vigorous the action we take to stem the flow from abroad and control availability at home, the price will continue to be paid in addiction and associated crime for some time to come. Neither preventive action - whether through new controls or education - nor treatment and rehabilitation offer anything like a complete answer to the problem. This will be particularly so as long as the use of some drugs is deemed socially acceptable.

But I am determined that realism about the intractability of this problem should not become an excuse for complacent inactivity. Over the last few months I have been conducting with other Government Departments a review of our policies to tackle drug abuse. We are making progress on five fronts.

First, we are stepping up action to stem the flow of drugs from abroad. Only last week-end our customs seized at Dover one and a half tons of cannabis resin, the largest ever seizure in the United Kingdom of this particular drug.

Drug abuse is an international problem of the very first order. International co-operation in turning off the flow of dangerous drugs is vital if we are to prevent the crime, corruption, misery and death which drug abuse brings in its wake. Such co-operation has been effective in the past. For example, in a recent major drug smuggling conspiracy, involving the trafficking of large amounts of heroin and cannabis as well as amphetamines, the United Kingdom end of the operation involved a good deal of close co-operation with the authorities in the Netherlands, Australia, Canada, France, Spain and India. I am glad to say that invariably such co-operation is willingly given. It must continue to be so.

/The framework....

The framework for such co-operation is already in place. Through the United Nations, the Council of Europe, Interpol, the Customs Co-operation Council and through bilateral contacts, Governments can and do pool experience and intelligence. We shall redouble our efforts in all these areas.

Last year over 80 per cent of the heroin seized in this country was shown to have come originally from Pakistan. The authorities there have been making energetic efforts to curb the flow. But policing the often lawless areas where the drug is produced is difficult and costly. The British Government is already working closely with the Pakistan authorities to strengthen law enforcement there. Now we are increasing our commitment. This financial year we have doubled to £100,000 our regular contribution to the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control. In addition, subject to Parliamentary approval, we are making available through the Fund a further £180,000 to combat illicit drug production in Pakistan - the money will be used to buy vehicles and equipment, and to help with training.

The Government has also decided to strengthen the already close liaison between our own law enforcement agencies and those of Pakistan. Consequently, we are sending a British customs officer full-time to Karachi. He will arrive early next year and, working closely with the Pakistan authorities, will send us back intelligence about the traffickers' plans.

If Pakistan is the main source of heroin, the Netherlands is a major centre for the distribution of drugs in Europe. And it is through the Netherlands that many drugs come to Britain. So we need regular intelligence from there, too, in order to co-ordinate customs and police activity on this side of the Channel aimed at intercepting the drugs before they penetrate our own drugs market. I have therefore agreed at a recent meeting with the Association of Chief Police Officers that a Senior British police officer should be posted to the Hague to work with the Dutch authorities and feed back information to the Central Drugs Intelligence Unit at Scotland Yard.

Yet, at the end of the day, the heaviest regular burden of detecting and stopping the inflow of dangerous drugs must fall on our own Customs. There is a limit to the number of hours of customs officer time which can be spent on this. That reflects not just limited resources, but also the limits on passengers' patience when the searching of people and baggage causes unwelcome delays. What we can do, and have been doing, is to concentrate customs efforts selectively where they are most likely to yield results. Since 1974 the number of customs specialist investigators dedicated to drug work has nearly doubled. And in particular, since this Government took office in 1979 we have doubled the number of those specialising in the detection of heroin.

The final area in which international co-operation can yield results is the enforcement of international agreements on the production and supply of drugs. You may know that the British Government has hitherto not ratified the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances. We still have some reservations. But co-operation requires effort on all sides. I can announce today that we have decided that the United Kingdom should ratify the 1971 Convention. We are, of course, already a party to the United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, which provides for the control of opium and its derivatives, cocaine and cannabis. By ratifying the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances, we shall now be giving our backing to international controls on synthetic drugs like barbiturates. We shall shortly start consultations with the trade and professions on the detailed changes required for compliance.

/The second area....

The second area in which we are making progress relates to the control of drugs produced and prescribed here in Britain. Again, I have some announcements to make.

No-one should underestimate the extent of the problem. Diversion for illicit use of pharmaceutical preparations like Diconal, Palfium and injectable Methadone is widespread. Recent research on drug abuse in Piccadilly suggests that those who prescribe drugs to addicts in the course of treatment bear much of the blame. And only last month there were two raids on wholesalers' warehouses in London in which drugs with a blackmarket value of over a quarter of a million pounds were stolen. Pharmacies, warehouses and even doctors' cars provide attractive targets for criminals. For, in contrast to most other stolen goods, the street value of drugs on the blackmarket is much greater than their normal commercial value. Nor should we minimise the amount of synthetic drugs which are illicitly manufactured. In 1982 five illicit drug laboratories making amphetamines and LSD were discovered and shut down.

This situation requires action of two kinds.

First, I want to see better security. The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs has recently come up with new proposals. Under these, trained crime prevention officers, backed up by powers for the Home Office to issue enforceable directives, would inspect premises where drugs are stored. Urgent consultations are under way; and I hope to announce my conclusions soon.

I am also tightening up domestic controls on the supply of drugs by doctors and chemists. I have decided that there should be special restrictions requiring doctors to have a licence if they wish to prescribe dipipanone to addicts. After heroin, dipipanone is the most common drug of addiction reported by doctors to the Home Office, and it is also particularly dangerous. Before the end of the year I shall be making the necessary regulations, which will place this drug under the same restrictions as heroin and cocaine. Needless to say, applications for licences will be scrutinised very carefully. Beyond that, I am considering extending this licensing restriction to a much wider range of drugs - in fact to all opioid controlled drugs.

I already make full use of my statutory powers for dealing with doctors who are shown to have prescribed controlled drugs irresponsibly. In the last few months I have, on the advice of tribunals, issued directions to stop three doctors prescribing certain controlled drugs. In addition, the procedures for investigating cases of alleged irresponsible prescribing have been reviewed and streamlined.

However, I am also concerned that before a case is actually proven the doctor under suspicion may well be able to continue to exercise his power to prescribe drugs. So today I give notice that I shall have no hesitation in issuing a temporary direction to stop doctors prescribing while any such case is being examined.

Finally, I intend to widen the scope of the Misuse of Drugs Act. Although heroin is the most widely misused drug, many addicts will use whatever drug they can obtain. One such group of drugs which has in the past been widely misused is barbiturates. This must end. I shall be introducing the necessary Order and regulations to bring barbiturates under control.

The third front on which firm action has been and will be taken is policing.

/The police know....

The police know full well that drug trafficking lies at the heart of many criminal conspiracies involving robbery, vice and violence. They know that increasingly the armed robbers and gang leaders of yesterday are turning their attention to drug trafficking. In the recent drug smuggling case which I mentioned earlier as a prime example of international co-operation, the criminal conspiracy also involved armed robbery and the counterfeiting of foreign currency, credit cards and other such documents on a large scale. The problem for the police in tackling such networks of criminal activity are increased by the fact that there may be several links in any chain between the key figures involved and sales on the street. Moreover, around the chain of "professionals" a range of gullible, greedy people in any and every walk of life are tempted to commit drug offences by ease of concealment and expectations of reward. Around the handling and sale of such drugs a web of corruption grows up. Huge sums are available to be paid to airport staff and employees of dock authorities, to take but two examples of people in positions of trust. All of this increases the problems of prevention and detection.

The Chief Constables and I have discussed the different problems which they face. They have assured me of the very high priority they will continue to give to measures directed against drug traffickers. Through the Central Drugs Intelligence Unit at Scotland Yard, staffed by police officers from forces countrywide and with active co-operation from the Customs, too, they pool and use intelligence and experience gained from units all over the country and overseas. I am urgently considering proposals to update the computer at the centre of these operations through which this information is processed and disseminated. I am determined to ensure that the police do not lack the means to give the highest priority to bring drug traffickers to book.

The fourth area in which I have already made some changes and now propose more is that of deterrence.

We must hit the criminals who profit from the misery of drug addiction - and hit them hard. The penalties for major trafficking offences must be sufficient both to deter would-be offenders and to reflect society's abhorrence of this type of crime. The courts already have the power to impose very heavy sentences, up to a maximum of 14 years. The Lord Chief Justice has indicated that very long sentences should normally be imposed for large-scale importation - and I very much support that view. For my part, I have recently announced my intention to restrict the granting of parole in the case of serious offences of drug trafficking. And let me make it quite clear that I shall certainly not raise objections if citizens of the United Kingdom are severely punished in other countries for drug offences that would be serious offences here.

Drug traffickers make fortunes out of the misery of addiction. They can net millions of pounds in a very short time and then launder the money through legitimate activity. In some cases traffickers are prepared to serve a prison sentence in the knowledge that they can enjoy the fruits of their crimes on release. Allowing this to continue would make a mockery of the penalties available. I am determined that we should find more effective ways of depriving drug traffickers of the proceeds of their crimes.

Successive Governments in this country have grappled with the complex problem of finding some satisfactory judicial procedure to this end. And there is, of course, an international dimension, too. But we in the United Kingdom can and must follow the example of some other countries and make real progress in this area. I am now awaiting the report of a committee

/set up by....

set up by the Howard League for Penal Reform under the chairmanship of Mr Justice Hodgson which is considering general questions of forfeiture and compensation. I shall seek to introduce legislation during the life of this Parliament to provide for confiscation of the proceeds of crime.

Finally, we have an obligation to warn against the dangers of drug abuse - and to treat those who have become the pathetic victims of their own folly and others' greed.

There is definitely a limit to what can usefully be done through publicity campaigns against drug abuse. There is always the danger, recognised by experts in this field, that the higher the public profile the greater the glamour attached to and the wider the interest aroused in drug abuse. But it is clear that ways have to be found of dissuading people, particularly young people, from embarking on the disastrous course of experimentation. At the very least, focussing parents' attention on the need to dissuade their children and giving them guidance on how to detect the first tell-tale signs of abuse must be valuable. We are looking closely at the whole of this area and now look forward to receiving the report of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs on prevention.

As for treatment, the Government has already made an additional £6 million available over the next three years to support local schemes designed to help addicts. In this area the role of Government must be to learn from and then put to good use the wisdom of the professionals. We are currently studying a detailed report by the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs covering these matters and we shall be announcing proposals shortly.

Drug abuse is a disease from which no country and no section of modern society seems immune. It brings ruthless, hardened criminals and weak, self-indulgent users together in a combination which is potentially lethal for good order and civilised values. Stamping it out will be slow and painful. It requires co-operation between Governments, law enforcement agencies, professionals, schools and families. The rewards are great if we succeed - and the price of ultimate failure unthinkable.