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cc Healey Boots  
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PRIME MINISTER

DRUG MISUSE

I know that, like many of us, you are growing increasingly concerned about drug misuse and what we are doing to combat it. This matter was discussed in H last week, and the purpose of this minute is to put you in the picture on the recent initiatives which we have taken to tackle the problem and to let you know how I propose to carry the matter forward in the next few months.

ACTION TAKEN

.... The Government's strategy for tackling drug misuse was first set out in the speech (copy enclosed) which I gave to the London Diplomatic Association in December 1983. This emphasised the need for a comprehensive, coherent policy which tackled not only the supply of drugs (through international action, Customs and police enforcement and tight control over licit sources) but also the demand for drugs (through measures to prevent, treat and rehabilitate drug misusers).

.... Last summer we set up David Mellor's Ministerial Group on the Misuse of Drugs to review and develop our policies and it was their interim report (copy enclosed) which H considered last week. The annex to the Group's report provides a convenient summary of our strategy and of the range of measures we have taken over the past year or so. A fuller account is given in the enclosed review "Tackling Drug Misuse: A Summary of The Government's Strategy", which the Group prepared and which we published last week.

The following initiatives are already under way:

- (1) the provision of 160 additional permanent Customs posts;

Not enough

- (11) the launch of a £2M education and information campaign in England and Wales, and of a separate campaign in Scotland. The provision of advice leaflets for parents and professionals in England and Wales will be followed, in mid-May, by a major advertising campaign on the press and on television aimed at discouraging young people from using heroin;
- (111) the introduction by DHSS of a £10M scheme for pump-priming local treatment and rehabilitation projects (and similar schemes in Scotland and Wales); and
- (1v) the implementation, in Keith Raffan's Private Member's Bill, of our undertaking to increase to life imprisonment the maximum penalty for trafficking in drugs such as heroin and cocaine.

#### THE NEXT STEPS

The Group's interim report emphasises that we are faced with a serious problem which is likely to get worse before it begins to get better. Increasing numbers of young people from all sections of society are misusing heroin. We are also threatened with a massive increase in the use of cocaine as traffickers seek new outlets in Western Europe to supplement the saturated North American market.

H agreed that the momentum had to be maintained and that further measures would be necessary if our response was to be seen to match the gravity of the problem and the extent of public and Parliamentary concern (which will no doubt be heightened by forthcoming reports from the Home Affairs and Social Services Select Committee). My main concern, however, is that it will be extremely difficult to maintain this momentum unless we face up now to the hard decisions which will be needed on the deployment of resources. Both the Group's interim report and my covering note referred specifically to this. If there is one message from the H discussion which I would commend to my colleagues, it is the need

for everyone to take the resource implications of new measures fully into account in the consideration which they are now giving to their expenditure programmes.

The Ministerial Group's interim report listed a number of possible areas for new initiatives. These include:

- (1) further reinforcement of Customs' controls including the possibility of further overseas postings, plus money to research and develop technological aids. It is clear that intelligence work is very time consuming, and quite different people are involved in heroin and cocaine importation. We expected increased efforts to import both these drugs, and perhaps a dramatic increase in the latter. Customs resources must be seen to match the threat;
- (11) enhancement of the capacity of the police, at regional level, to tackle high-level dealers;
- (111) further improvements in treatment and rehabilitation facilities. I know the DHSS want to keep up the momentum by further pump-priming initiatives and direct funding of rehabilitation facilities. It would be useful, perhaps crucial, to be able to announce a further round of pump-priming later this year;
- (iv) arrangements for securing inter-agency co-ordination and co-operation;
- (v) provision of appropriate training for teachers and of suitable teaching materials. I understand that the DES have put in a bid for a £5M programme which had been evaluated by David Mellor's Group. A sustained effort in schools is considered vital if prevention policies are to work;

- (vi) financial assistance for crop eradication/  
substitution and law enforcement programmes  
in drug-producing and transit countries.  
We feel we must be seen to respond to the  
cocaine threat by a fuller participation in  
UNFDAC programmes in South America.

On my side, and in addition to (vi) above, I am also  
developing proposals for legislation to trace, freeze and  
confiscate the proceeds of drug trafficking (and possibly  
other major criminal activities). We are also pursuing with  
the Metropolitan Police the points which Sir Kenneth Newman  
recently mentioned to you.

Further work on these initiatives is going ahead urgently  
and the next step will be for David Mellor's Group to submit a  
full report with specific proposals, which should come before  
H Committee in July. I would urge colleagues, however, to  
make sure now that their expenditure programmes will be capable  
of accommodating initiatives on these lines. We would not want  
implementation to be delayed because of any failure to take the  
necessary preliminary steps.

I shall, of course, ensure that you see the Group's final  
report as soon as possible.

I am sending copies of this minute (without enclosures)  
to Cabinet colleagues and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

L. B.

3<sup>d</sup> April 1985