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Prime Minister. (2)

HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SW1H 9AT

18 July 1985

See information. You will
remember you endorsed the
ACPO report, and asked the
Home Sec and Chief Sec to sort
out the resources point. MEM 18/7

Don Mark,

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... I attach a copy of the statement the Home Secretary is issuing at a press conference this afternoon in response to the ACPO Working Party's report on drug related crime.

If pressed on the question of additional resources, the Home Secretary will indicate that police authorities' expenditure on recruiting additional police officers to replace those seconded to Regional Crime Squads will attract 50% police grant in the usual way; and to mark the importance the Government attaches to this initiative it is ready to disregard their share of this extra expenditure for grant penalty purposes. He has agreed this line with the Secretary of State for the Environment. If the question of the RSG settlement is raised, he will note that the Secretary of State for the Environment will be making an announcement of the provisional settlement next week which will take account of this initiative.

I am copying this letter to Joan MacNaughton (Lord President's Office), Len Appleyard (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Rachel Lomax (HM Treasury), John Ballard (Department of the Environment), Rob Smith (Department of Education and Science), John Graham (Scottish Office), Colin Williams (Welsh Office), Steve Godber (Department of Health and Social Security), Richard Broadbent (Chief Secretary's Office, HM Treasury), Jim Daniell (Northern Ireland Office) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely
Hugh Taylor

H H TAYLOR

Mark Addison, Esq

HOME SECRETARY'S STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ACPO WORKING PARTY
REPORT ON DRUG-RELATED CRIME

Eighteen months ago, in a speech to the London Diplomatic Association, I set out, for the first time, a comprehensive Government strategy for tackling drug misuse. This strategy was designed to attack the drugs problem at every link in the chain from, action at one end to combat drug production in the source countries to, at the other, measures to help those who have become dependent on drugs.

We had by then come to realise that we faced - in common with many other countries - a major threat to the health and stability of our society. It was and remains a growing threat. And one sustained by the greedy and evil men who trade on the weakness of others for quick gain.

We are fully aware of the large task ahead of us in meeting this threat: and our strategy - co-ordinated by David Mellor's Ministerial Group - has developed a great deal since I made that speech. I have further extremely significant developments to announce today. But, before I do this, I should like briefly to remind you of the whole of which this forms a part.

Reducing the supply of drugs

First, we have taken a number of steps at the international level to reduce the supply of drugs. We have provided funds to help eliminate opium-poppy production in Pakistan; we posted abroad

/Customs and police

Customs and police liaison officers in order to improve our intelligence about drug smuggling to the UK: we have taken the lead in pressing for international action at the recent Bonn Economic Summit and putting forward positive proposals for a new United Nations Convention on drug trafficking.

Strengthening deterrence

Secondly, we have strengthened the deterrent effects of the law against drug traffickers by restricting parole; by supporting Keith Raffan's recent Bill to increase to life imprisonment the maximum penalty for trafficking in Class A drugs; and by preparing tough new provisions to deprive drug traffickers of their assets. These will be ready for introduction next Session.

Prevention, treatment and rehabilitation

Thirdly, we have made major advances in the field of prevention, treatment and rehabilitation. A few months ago we launched a substantial £2m education and information campaign. This has reached out to parents and professionals, through leaflets and advertisements, and to young people, through television and youth press advertising and posters. We are also reaching out to young people in schools. The Department of Education and Science is providing some £4m over 2 years so that every local education authority can appoint a member of staff to co-ordinate and stimulate activity within the education service. In the last 18 months my colleagues in the DHSS have insisted that health authorities review their services for drug misusers. £11½m is being made available to pump-prime local treatment

/and rehabilitation

and rehabilitation projects. Clinical guidelines on the treatment of drug misusers have been issued to every doctor in this country.

I come now to the prevention and detection of major drug trafficking in this country.

Customs

The work of HM Customs in preventing and detecting the illicit importation of drugs is of crucial importance. The Government has substantially enhanced the capacity of Customs to deal with increasingly sophisticated and well-organised drug smugglers. Since 1979 the number of Customs specialist drugs investigators has increased from 121 to 212, and a further 50 are being appointed. 100 new Customs preventive posts are also being provided this year specifically to combat drug smuggling. The calls which are sometimes heard for countless more "uniformed officers" to man the Green and Red channels ignore the fact that random checks have only a limited impact and that it is impossible to search every passenger and item of freight without bringing international traffic to a complete standstill. The traditional detection skill of "uniformed officers" will continue to play an important role and should not be underrated. But the emphasis must lie in building up intelligence and in using resources in a selective and purposeful way. Customs' recent well-published successes clearly demonstrate how effective this policy has proved to be.

Police

This brings me to the latest development in our strategy: the

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enhancement of the police enforcement effort and its co-ordination with HM Customs.

The police devote considerable resources to drug-related investigations. Every force in England and Wales - and all but one in Scotland - now has a specialist drugs squad. The strength of those squads has also risen rapidly: by 10% in the twelve months to 1 January 1985. Regional Crime Squads are devoting between a third and half of their resources to drug-related work. This already represents a substantial commitment.

Last year with my full support the Association of Chief Police Officers set up a working party to consider whether they could improve the effectiveness of their operations against drug-related crime by examining their structure at all levels for combatting drugs offences. It is a measure of the importance which the police service attaches to this work that in their report, whose conclusions were made public last week, they have come forward with many constructive and far-reaching proposals. I repeat the warm welcome which I gave to their report and congratulate the Chairman, Mr Broome, and his colleagues on their work.

As a measure of the importance which I attach to effective police and Customs enforcement, I am acting immediately on the report's key recommendations.

First, Regional Crime Squads in England and Wales will be strengthened by the addition of dedicated drugs 'wings' and I am ready to consider any appropriate requests for the necessary

/adjustments in

adjustments in establishments. I have in mind an increase of more than 200 officers. As I mentioned earlier, these squads already devote a substantial proportion of their time to drug-related investigations, for example by targetting the organised criminal groups which have moved into this evil trade. The addition of dedicated drugs wings to RCSs will increase very substantially the capacity of the police to take out these major trafficking groups. The Commissioner has agreed to make a substantial increase in the strength of the Metropolitan Police Central Drug Squad.

Second, I have accepted the recommendation that there should be a new National Drugs Intelligence Unit, superseding the present Central Drugs Intelligence Unit. The new NDIU will be staffed by both the police and Customs services and have an enhanced intelligence-gathering and analytical capability sharing common data in place of the present divided system. In drugs, as with terrorism, the need for good intelligence is paramount. The new NDIU will give us the intelligence capacity needed to counter today's sophisticated drug trafficking groups.

Third - and this is a development of a proposal in the ACPO report - a new senior post of National Drugs Co-ordinator is being created in New Scotland Yard to head the new NDIU and co-ordinate drugs intelligence with the operations of Regional Crime Squads. This will enable a greater concerted and co-ordinated attack to be mounted on drug traffickers. The first holder of this new post is Mr Colin Hewett, at present Deputy Assistant Commissioner in charge of the Metropolitan Police Special Branch and Anti-Terrorist Squad.

/Fourth, I am

Fourth, I am establishing a top level Steering Group, on which both police and Customs will be represented, to keep the working of the new arrangements and the effectiveness of liaison between police and Customs under review and to give me periodic assessments of the nature and extent of the drugs threat.

The initiatives which I am announcing today represent, I believe, a most significant advance in police operations against drug offences. They build on the proven work of the RCSs and the already close and effective co-operation between police and HM Customs, to which I am happy to pay tribute. I repeat that we can in no way be complacent about the threat that faces our society. But I am confident that the police and Customs services will, as a result of these changes, be better placed than ever before to take forward the fight against the drug traffickers.



*For the
Drugs file*

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Home Office

NEWS RELEASE

50 Queen Anne's Gate London SW1H 9AT
Telephone 01-213 3030/4050/5050
(Night line 01-213 3000)

July, 17 1985

Controlled Drugs (Penalties) Bill: Royal Assent

The Controlled Drugs (Penalties) Bill yesterday received the Royal Assent. The Act increased the maximum penalty for the production, supply, and possession with intent to supply of Class A drugs (essentially the opioids - see Notes) under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 from 14 years to life imprisonment. The legislation was introduced as a Private Member's Bill by Keith Raffan MP, with Government support.

Welcoming the Act, Mr David Mellor MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Home Office, said:

"Major drug traffickers pose as severe a threat to our community as do murderers. It is absolutely right, therefore, that the penalty for their activities should be equated with murder.

While the use of the maximum penalty will be confined to the worst cases, its availability is a strong deterrent to all trafficking. Just as importantly, it clears the way for the tariffs for those serious drug trafficking offences which are not thought to merit life imprisonment to be raised from the locals established under the present 14 year maximum, if the Court of Appeal wishes to promulgate new guidelines."

Notes for Editors

1. The Government stated its intention to increase the maximum sentences for Class A drug trafficking from 14 years to life imprisonment last October. In the event, Mr Keith Raffan, who came thirteenth in the Private Member's