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A.G.

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

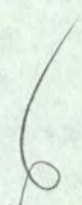
5 October, 1983

The Prime Minister was grateful for your Secretary of State's minute of 4 October about life sentences and violent crime. She agrees, subject to any further points from colleagues, that he should announce a minimum period of 20 years for terrorist murders. She also agrees that parole should be restricted for drug traffickers, as well as violent offenders.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Private Secretaries to the recipients of your Secretary of State's minute.

(David Barclay)

A.R. Rawsthorne, Esq.,
Home Office





PRIME MINISTER

Prime Minister

Are you content with
Yes a) a 20 year minimum
No b) restricted parole for
Yes drug traffickers?
No subject to any further points
from colleagues JB
4/10

Since we discussed my proposals on life sentences and violent crime, I have consulted our Ministerial colleagues most directly affected and also the Lord Chief Justice and the Chairman of the Parole Board (David Windlesham). My proposals have been found generally acceptable, subject to two amendments which have been suggested, and which if you are content, I propose to make.

Jim Prior is very anxious about the effect in Northern Ireland if I were to announce a thirty-year minimum for terrorist murders. Whereas in England all judicial recommendations in terrorist cases have been for thirty years or more, in Northern Ireland, where the number of cases is so very much greater, judicial recommendations have generally been for very much shorter periods. Jim would, however, be content for me to announce a minimum period of twenty years for terrorist murder. But I would make it quite clear that many such murderers would serve a much longer period. I think this change would be justifiable, and it would bring terrorist murders in line with the other categories I shall be specifying.

David Windlesham, the Chairman of the Parole Board, takes the view that if parole is to be restricted for violent offenders the same restriction should apply to drug traffickers. He considers they are responsible for more deaths than conventional offences of violence. I agree, and propose to amend my announcement accordingly.

I am sending a copy of this minute to the Lord President, the Lord Chancellor, the Secretaries of State for Northern Ireland and Scotland, and the Attorney General.

L.B.

4 October 1983