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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

4 December 1985

Dear Stephen

MR. MELLOR'S VISIT TO PAKISTAN

The Prime Minister held a meeting this afternoon with the Home Secretary and Mr. David Mellor, at which Mr. Mellor reported on his recent visit to Pakistan. Mr. Hartley Booth was also present.

Mr. Mellor said that overall, he thought his visit had been a very useful one. He had been convinced that Pakistan, under President Zia's leadership, was taking effective steps to tackle the problem of heroin production.

President Zia had agreed to impose mandatory sentences for drug offences. There seemed, however, to be some delay in introducing these measures. The Prime Minister thought it would be premature to raise this with Pakistan. But she would bear in mind the possibility of referring to the point when she next wrote to President Zia, if the timing seemed appropriate.

The evidence was that Pakistan was getting on top of the drug production problem. The acreage used for poppy production had been enormously reduced in recent years. But difficulties remained around the Afghan border. President Zia believed that the Soviet Union was deliberately using the drugs trade to try and destabilise his country. Certainly very large quantities of heroin had been seized near the border. Mr. Mellor was, however, concerned about the security with which these drug hauls were stored; the Prime Minister wondered whether the United Kingdom might give Pakistan some help on means of safe disposal.

Mr. Mellor believed that, as drug controls were increased in Pakistan, and particularly at Karachi Airport, much of the traffic was now taking the land route to India. This would inevitably have an impact on the extent of heroin used and production in India itself. India might replace Afghanistan and Pakistan as the major world supplier. He was concerned about delays in securing India's agreement to the secondment of two Customs Officers. The Home Office would consult the Foreign Office to discuss the most fruitful way of tackling this.

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The Prime Minister thanked Mr. Mellor for his report. She congratulated him on his work on co-ordinating drugs policy. She noted that his speech at the Party Conference had been well received; a wide range of people had been impressed with the steps the Government were taking.

I am copying this letter to Peter Ricketts (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and John Duke-Evans (Home Office).

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Mark Addison

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Stephen Boys Smith, Esq.,
Home Office

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