

Subject  
c. opsi  
master.



PRIME MINISTER'S  
PERSONAL MESSAGE  
SERIAL No. T 77186

advanced copy

The Right Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher M.P.  
Prime Minister,  
Downing Street 10

I was told that, during the reception given by the British Government at Lancaster House on Wednesday 19 March for delegates attending the Conference of Ministers of Health on Narcotic and Psychotropic Drug Abuse, you had a brief conversation in the presence of the Right Hon. Mr. Norman Fowler, with Mr. R.J. Samson, who represented at the Conference the Netherlands Minister of Welfare, Health and Culture. If I am well informed, you then expressed concern about problems for the British Authorities caused by illicit drug trafficking from Amsterdam airport.

In this context I would like to stress that, certainly, the Netherlands too give a high priority to the struggle against trafficking, nationally as well as internationally. I can assure you that we are eager to contribute to multilateral and bilateral cooperation to fight this very serious problem which confronts us all.

Recently our "Opium Act" was amended with a view to facilitate effective action against illicit traffic of drugs in particular by incriminating certain preparatory acts and by extending extraterritorial jurisdiction over such acts, as well as acts of participation in and attempts to drug trafficking or its abetment. Earlier this year our parliament approved a policy to use under-cover investigation.

Ratification of the 1972 Amending Protocol to the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 can be expected in the near future. Possibilities for extradition of drug traffickers will thus be significantly enhanced.

The Netherlands are actively participating in the work of the Pompidou Group also with regard to law enforcement issues. I have in mind the current proceedings of the Group concerning forfeiture of assets obtained from drug trafficking and illegal trafficking by commercial carriers.

At the executive level many formal and informal contacts exist between our police Authorities and those of neighbouring countries like yours. Furthermore, Dutch liaison drug officers are attached to Netherlands Embassies in a number of countries all over the world.

If, in your opinion, the already existing bilateral cooperation between the United Kingdom and The Netherlands should be improved, we could use the existing infrastructure which has already proved to be of great value.

We strongly believe in a balanced approach and we wish to link our enforcement policies closely with our health and social policies.

In this context I may add that we fully recognize the importance of an improved coordination of the intersectorial efforts at the executive level for the gradual decrease of drug abuse, inter alia in Amsterdam. The results are encouraging and we will continue our efforts in this field.

I understood that the Home Secretary, Mr. Hurd, will visit The Hague next week, where he will meet the Netherlands Minister of Justice, Mr. Korthals Altes, and the State Secretary of Health, Mr. Van der Reijden. I think this may provide a good opportunity to explore more in detail possibilities for further bilateral cooperation.

I am looking forward to seeing you again during the next economic summit in Tokyo.

