

PRIME MINISTER

Thank you  
and

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The Home Secretary is preparing a minute to you about his further plans in the drug abuse field

DAILY MIRROR - DRUGS

This note summarises your discussion with Robert Maxwell yesterday over hard drugs.

FRB  
28.3

Mr Maxwell began the conversation by urging you to appoint a Ministerial supremo, with a small executive to spearhead a real drive against the menace of drug abuse in this country.

He recognised your reluctance to appoint Ministers for such specific tasks but argued that the menace of drugs was so great that exceptional action needed to be taken - and to be seen to be taken in this highly visible way.

The threat was not simply to the drug taker, or prospective addict; the drug scene represented a threat to the very fabric of our society. Britain was blessed among nations because of its relative freedom from corruption, but the money available for corruption in the drugs world was phenomenal. Already, he claimed, police and Customs Officers were being corrupted - though he offered no evidence.

When I asked him if he proposed to expose this corruption, Mr Maxwell said it was difficult, but if necessary his newspapers would.

The Mirror has, of course, conducted investigations into the drug scene and has exposed the use of pubs in London - and Joe Haines yesterday especially mentioned South London - where drug pushing regularly took place.

Mr Maxwell said he had specifically charged Sir Tom McCaffery, his Head of Public Affairs, to handle this

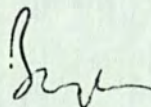


subject and liaise with the relevant Departments. Sir Tom said that the autonomy of individual departments and lack of liaison between them, remained the problem it was when he served in the Home Office.

Mr Maxwell's case for a Supremo was, however, predicated more on the need to defend and save the uniqueness of British society from the inevitable corruption that drugs would bring than on the need either for better coordination within Government or for the rescue of addicts.

He indicated that the Mirror Group would greatly welcome legislation which would provide for the confiscation of the proceeds of drug crime.

Sir Tom McCaffery agreed to send a report to you this week, and reaffirmed his intention to do so before I left.



BERNARD INGHAM  
28 March 1985