

Prime Minister (4)

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An update on drugs from
Herby Boot. The meeting
of Cabinet Ministers has
3 May 1985 been fixed for
4 June.

PRIME MINISTER

DRUG ABUSE - WEEKEND UPDATE

MEA 3/5

Following your discussion at Bonn:

(A) The politics of the issue:

This phenomenon is the most serious criminal problem in
the USA and we look set to follow this trend. As the 'law and
order' Party we must be seen to give maximum priority to this
appalling menace for our children and young people. You have
heard the Lord President's view that you should not assume
personal responsibility for a problem that cannot be solved in
the short term. However, this is not the only political
factor. You have two trumps which you may feel it appropriate
to use, not to promise miracles but to demonstrate your deep
concern about this crisis.

Firstly, this issue is a family one. Parents care
desperately about their children abusing drugs. Your theme of
concern for the family can cover this issue. The public will
respect this.

Secondly, the opportunity to introduce legislation to
forfeit the assets of the drug chiefs will be seen as the
strong approach, not only from the Treasury angle and the
punishment view, but also because drug empires often flourish
while their chiefs are in prison, unless their illgotten

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assets are seized. There is evidence that the amounts to be taken will be substantial. Last year in the USA, \$253 million worth of assets were seized.

(B) The legal side of asset seizure

We need two arrows in the quiver:

(a) The power to sequester and to examine all bank accounts here and abroad in criminal cases.

(b) The presumption that convicted drug dealers, who cannot explain how they acquired substantial assets, did so out of illicit funds (Hodgson Committee recommended a weak version of this. There is a precedent for such a presumption of guilt in the 1953 Preventative of Crime Act covering Offensive Weapons).

(C) Research Resumé

(i) Visits (including a rehabilitation hostel funded by DHSS and another which is private)

Spoke to several who said "but for this place I would be dead by now". the DHSS establishment (Phoenix House, Dulwich) had a 30% success rate in keeping patients off drugs. The Private Centre (Park Place, Dorking) claimed 70% success. The

former kept addicts for 10 months on average and the private centre managed on 6 weeks. The DHSS paid supplementary benefit and grants to top up charitable funds for Phoenix, while the latter is funded by Private Health Insurance (cost £100 per day). The performance of the second was not only better but cheaper, and used the Total Abstinence (Minnesota Method) to which you referred at the Meeting of Ministers last week. DHSS are still evaluating it.

Attended a Narcotics Anonymous meeting. The work of this and other voluntary organisations is first rate.

(ii) The ACPO Conference this week

Attended Association of Chief Police Officers' Conference in Lancashire on Drug Misuse. Chief Constables were gratified by your concern about this subject.

Their lectures illustrated that even a "Police State" cannot stamp out the scourge of drugs, totally and Yugoslavia is a transit country for heroin.

Reports from nearly all parts of Britain illustrated that high-grade cocaine and heroin are

available. It was said to be cheap, but in fact costs vary between £40 to £120 for a daily 'fix' - enough to force even the richest to crime or prostitution.

The Customs seize 90% of all illicit drugs ^(not all intercepted in UK) and to do so costs the nation £10-15 million. The Police seize 10% in many small cases (23,000 cases per year - Drug Possession or Trafficking). The cost of the Police drug squads, etc is £19 million.

(iii) Internationally

The threat to withdraw aid (either from EEC, USA or ourselves) if done with a season's time lag to allow crop substitution, is one of the most powerful international levers against South America.

A cheap and effective Foreign Aid is Police or Customs exchange to help train foreign enforcement agents.

The Dutch have reinforced other arguments against legalising soft drugs. There, they have split the law against hard and soft drugs. The disastrous result is that the soft drugs profits finance hard drugs.

The Geneva WHO Conference is next Thursday:- John Patten will speak on Drug Misuse. He will have private talks with Health Ministers of Bolivia, India, Thailand, Colombia, Turkey and Pakistan.

(v) Personal

Ann and Mary Parkinson have been most helpful. Mrs Cory Wright, who is known to you, has also assisted.

Conclusion

Your interest in this subject is noted and well received. No further action for the moment. Your meeting with senior Ministers is fixed for 4 June.

H. Booth

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