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Prime Minister. ⁽²⁾
For information only
at this stage.

PRIME MINISTER

9 July 1985

MEA 12/7

DRUG SQUAD VISIT

Last Friday, I was able to inspect the drug squad operation in Bristol under the Chief Constable of Somerset and Avon, Mr Ron Broome, who chairs the Committee of the Association of Chief Police Officers on Drug Misuse. I attach his report which will be formally issued on Friday 12 July. The conclusion is flagged and highlighted. (You have now seen this)

Key policy points that were revealed are:

1. The desperate need to ensure co-ordination between 43 police forces in the country. For example, a police investigation on a drug ring in Bristol involved over 6,000 attendances by police officers. This resulted in the prosecution of a small ring of pushers in Bristol, and led to a trail ending up in Derby which was shown to be the source of supply for hard drugs from where the large drug dealer operated. Derby police were unable to mount the concerted action necessary to corner the culprit who is still trading from a Pakistani ghetto there.
2. It is crucial that we have the capacity to use Pakistani or Columbian look-alikes who can speak the relevant languages and can act as under-cover agents. The Bristol/Derby example above illustrates this.

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3. Many petty ordinary crimes are now being linked with drug offences and petty criminals are being led by the dreams of easy money into racketeering.

4. There is lack of any uniformity in sentencing. A sentence in Bristol Crown Court of only 2 years would have warranted at least 6 years in London courts.

The drug abuse problem is deepening in the West Country and parents in Somerset and Devon demonstrated their fears to me. No Action is recommended. Our research continues!



HARTLEY BOOTH

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MR BOOTH

DRUGS

Thank you for your note of 5 June.

On the WHO Conference, if the suggestion is that the Prime Minister should lead this office, we shall need a proposal from DHSS/FCO. It won't surprise you to know that March is going to be a difficult month.

On the visit to Customs and Excise, to look at their drugs operation, I should prefer that any briefing visit by you should await the response to our letter to the Treasury. Presumably we are expecting a response from Mr Hayhoe, supporting the idea of a visit and suggesting Heathrow, shortly.

As you know, we have no objections to your visiting a drugs squad on a familiarisation visit in the near future. I am glad you are keeping your lines clear with the Home Office Private Office. We shall need to pursue the possibility of the Prime Minister seeing police work on drugs at first hand, in whatever way seems appropriate, when we get the go-ahead from Customs and Excise.

MARK ADDISON

6 June 1985

MR ADDISON

5 June 1985

DRUGS - FOR YOUR INFORMATION

1. John Patten's office are eager to put on record that the WHO have sparked and are leading an initiative in which Britain is to host a major international conference next March in London.

2. Mr Godfrey, the Deputy Secretary at Customs investigation, has invited me to check out and brief on operations. Barney Hayhoe confirms Heathrow will be the place for a visit. Jean Caines usefully pointed out last time on Suffolk House that it would be helpful if we went together prior to any Prime Ministerial visit on other occasions. I suggest, as Heathrow is easy to reach, that I make an initial visit and go again with Press if necessary.

3. Chief Constable Ron Broome (Chairman of the Chief Constables' Committee on Drugs) would be happy for me to join a drug squad in Bristol. I propose a visit in the next fortnight. The Chief of the Metropolitan Police Drugs Squad confirms that a visit to an operational drugs squad is totally unsuitable for any Minister, but it is possible for them to prepare a "presentation" - samples of drugs, forensic exhibits etc. I am keeping the HO Private Office informed of this direct contact. In both cases the police are content to speak, etc. Mr Broome

If the report is to be made is to lead me shall need a proposal for NP/PC

I should prefer that any briefing visit meeting should await the response to our letter to Ch/Bach.

We shall need to make a decision of a visit to see who will be the go ahead.

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invited me and the Drugs Squad Chief Inspector telephoned me yesterday.

4. The Ministerial Drugs Meeting will be at 10.30 am today. I will inform you of any relevant decisions.

Hm.

HARTLEY BOOTH

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