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PRIME MINISTER

In my minute to you of 31 May on possible initiatives for stepping up the fight against drug trafficking and abuse, which you considered at your meeting on 4 June, I referred to the report which we expected from the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) on organisational changes which they would like to see, at a cost of some £5 million; additional resources which you indicated at the meeting should be made available.

....

I have just received the ACPO report, of which I attach a copy. It contains the proposals I foreshadowed for strengthening their regional and local intelligence and operational efforts, at the cost envisaged. As you will see from the summary of recommendations on pages 71-77, the report goes much further, however, in a most welcome way, in recommending a National Co-ordinator to pull together the intelligence and police operational functions. They envisage a National Drugs Intelligence Unit (NDIU) in New Scotland Yard to supersede the existing Central Drugs Intelligence Unit, with Customs participation and a single, shared data-base in place of the present dual data-base. This NDIU would be under the control of the National Co-ordinator, who would also be responsible for the Regional Crime Squads (RCS), each of which would be strengthened by the addition of a new drugs wing.

I very much welcome the ACPO approach which, together with our strategy document "Tackling Drug Misuse", provides an excellent basis for improving the Joint police/Customs efforts against drugs and other types of serious crime, which are becoming increasingly inter-linked. If the report is endorsed as expected by the ACPO Council tomorrow, I propose to have urgent discussions with the police and Customs to develop their proposals into the package of new and more effective arrangements which I consider are needed.

First, I am sure that we must have a police/Customs Joint NDIU sharing common information, and I know that Customs agree to that, subject to the necessary details being worked out.

Second, a new National Co-ordinator is needed, but I do not consider that the existing RCS Co-ordinator can simply extend his role to embrace the NDIU as the report proposes. I believe that we need a senior and authoritative policeman at Chief Constable level to take charge of this vital job of co-ordinating intelligence and police operations against drugs. The Commissioner and ACPO accept this. I have in mind Mr Colin Hewett, who is currently the Head of Special Branch and the Anti-Terrorist Squad, who has shown his ability to co-ordinate the Metropolitan Police and provincial forces in the combination of intelligence and operations which is needed now against drugs. I am sure that this appointment, which is strongly supported by the Commissioner, would of itself signal our determination to launch the sort of concerted campaign against drugs that we have shown against terrorism. Customs would also need to appoint a high-ranking official on their side.

Third, I am firmly of the view that we must have a Steering Group of senior officials from the Home Office and Customs with this National Co-ordinator, reporting to me, to provide us with an authoritative appreciation of the nature and extent of the drugs threat and with considered advice on the effectiveness and cost of alternative strategies for meeting it. This is welcomed by ACPO, the Commissioner and Customs.

Finally, there is obviously further work to be done on the details, but I would propose to announce next week the measures in this minute, including Mr Hewett's appointment, as a considered package, with an indication of the additional resources which we are making available. It should make a major impact, to be followed up by the work of the Steering Group and the new Co-ordinator.

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I am copying this minute to Willie Whitelaw, Geoffrey Howe, Nigel Lawson, Keith Joseph, George Younger, Nick Edwards, Norman Fowler, Peter Rees and Douglas Hurd, and to Sir Robert Armstrong. To them I am sending a copy of the summary of the recommendations of the report.

L. B.

10 July 1985



Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

Mark Addison Esq  
Private Secretary  
10 Downing Street  
London  
SW1

11 July 1985

*Dear Mark*

**DRUGS MISUSE**

The Chief Secretary has seen a copy of the Home Secretary's minute to the Prime Minister of 10 June seeking approval of his plans to announce a package of measures for combatting drugs misuse.

The Chief Secretary wholeheartedly welcomes the Home Secretary's proposals which he thinks should be a real help in demonstrating how seriously the government is taking the problem of drugs misuse. He is aware that the Customs are as fully seized as the police of the need for cooperation, and are working closely with them on the detailed mechanics of the new arrangements. (This would, incidentally, make it premature in the Chief Secretary's view to accept recommendation 26).

The Chief Secretary welcomes the Home Secretary's intention to devote further police manpower to the Regional Crime Squads specifically to deal with drugs offences. He accepts the Home Secretary's judgement that adequate coordination requires an additional senior post, although ACPO did not themselves recommend this.

However, the Chief Secretary did not entirely concur with the Home Secretary's reference to "additional resources". The Chief Secretary understands that it was agreed at the Prime Minister's meeting on 4 June that (as the Prime Minister said in summing up) heightened priority should be given to tackling this problem by all departments concerned, as far as possible within existing resources.

Most of the sum involved (which the Chief Secretary is advised could be around £6.4 million) is local authority relevant current expenditure. If this cannot be accommodated in the police's share of the £500 million addition which has been agreed, then the Chief Secretary thinks he would have to ask the Home Secretary to find offsetting savings from within his programmes. The Chief Secretary assumes that the Home Secretary's announcement of these measures next week will be on that basis.

I am copying this letter to Joan McNaughton (Lord President's Office), Len Appleyard, (Foreign Office), Rob Smith (Education), John Graham (Scottish Office), Colin Jones (Welsh Office), Graham Sandiford (Northern Ireland Office) and to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

*Yours sincerely*  
*Richard Broadbent*

**R J BROADBENT**  
**Private Secretary**



JAB

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SECRETARY OF STATE  
FOR  
NORTHERN IRELAND

The Rt Hon Leon Brittan QC MP  
Secretary of State for the Home  
Department  
Home Office  
50 Queen Anne's Gate  
LONDON  
SW1H 9AT

24 July 1985

NBPM

Dear Leon,

DRUG TRAFFICKING AND ABUSE

I have seen your minute of 10 July to the Prime Minister about the report of the Association of Chief Police Officers on organisational changes to counter drug trafficking and abuse.

The proposals do not affect Northern Ireland as far as they relate to rationalisation and strengthening of the central and regional drugs units, nor should they materially affect the existing arrangements whereby the RUC relate to the Central Drugs Intelligence Unit. However, I am sure you would wish to know how Northern Ireland fits into the national picture.

The RUC has had a Drug Squad for many years and it has recently been strengthened even though the drugs problem in Northern Ireland is not nearly so serious as that in the rest of the United Kingdom. The squad strength stands at 26 detective officers (led by a Detective Chief Inspector) supported by 9 uniformed officers on a rotating secondment basis. Thus the RUC is well placed to combat the drugs problem in Northern Ireland and to deter its escalation to the level experienced elsewhere.

/Nevertheless

Nevertheless we are by no means complacent and, when the RUC receives the report, it will be examined in detail to see if anything else needs to be done.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Willie Whitelaw, Geoffrey Howe, Nigel Lawson, Keith Joseph, George Younger, Nick Edwards, Norman Fowler, Peter Rees and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Younger,

Douglas.