



BF with  
TMT response  
~ on Friday

QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

CENO

21 October 1985

Dear John,

Seen by the Prime  
Minister 30/10,

METROPOLITAN POLICE CASH LIMIT

Further to my letter of 11 October, I have now discussed with the Commissioner of Police the financial consequences of the recent disorders.

The Metropolitan Police are faced with additional expenditure under three main headings: overtime, riot damage and equipment. The force had to work substantial amounts of overtime during the disorders, and the tension in some areas of London is such that a great deal of overtime still has to be worked. It is impossible to say how long this will have to go on; but the cost will clearly run into several millions of pounds.

The first payments have already been made under the Riot (Damages) Act 1886 for damage caused recently at Brixton. Again, it is impossible to say what the claims will amount to. The bulk of the expense will probably fall in 1986/87, and our officials are in contact about increasing the estimated net revenue expenditure for that year. But there will be some expenditure, as yet unquantifiable, in 1985/86.

I asked the Commissioner to let me know what extra equipment the force needs in the light of the unprecedented level of violence used in the Tottenham riot. I enclose a list of his initial proposals. We are looking at this urgently. Some of the equipment, such as the extra shields and lighting equipment, ought clearly to be bought at once; other items, such as the vehicles and communications equipment, need to be looked at more closely and could not in any event be bought in the current financial year.

The Commissioner has had to absorb 20 million pounds in additional costs this year, and he cannot absorb any more without reducing manpower, which is unthinkable in present circumstances. He must also be allowed to incur unavoidable overtime costs to carry out essential operations and I have told him so. I should like to be able to tell him that the cash limit for 1986/86 will be increased at the appropriate time by whatever amount is needed, taking account of any offsetting reductions he is able to make, to pay for (a) the additional overtime that has had to be worked because of the recent disorders, (b) the additional expenditure under the Riot (Damages) Act, and (c) such of the equipment on the attached list as I consider necessary after further examination and can be bought in 1985/86; and that unless

The Rt Hon John MacGregor, M.P.

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offsetting reductions can be found in 1986/87 the cash limit for that year will in due course be increased by the amount needed to pay for the rest of the equipment which further examination leads me to decide is necessary. I very much hope you will feel able to agree to this.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for the Environment, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours,

Douglas.

## Riot equipment for the Metropolitan Police

### Shields, protective clothing etc.

1. 500 long shields (£35,000). The authorised stock is 1200, but because of financial stringency the actual stock is only 800.
2. 600 round black shields (£15,000) for arrest squads.
3. 144 round clear shields for supervisors (£7,500), to bring the stock up to the authorised level.
4. About 15,000 anti-riot helmets and fireproof overalls (£2,000,000), to enable them to be issued to all male uniformed officers. At present only the 5000 shield-trained officers have them, and so some officers engaged in the Tottenham riot were not protected.
5. 200 sets of body armour (£34,000) to enable the Special Patrol Group to be equipped.
6. 1500 long staves (£10,500) for use by arrest squads. At present the force has only a small number, for dealing with armed criminals.

### Protected vehicles

7. About 80 protected transit vehicles (£1,500,000). At present the force has 82 such vehicles, which is not enough if there is widespread disorder. Some unprotected traffic warden transits and hired private coaches had to be used to transport men to Tottenham.
8. A protected JCB (£45,000) and a low loader to transport it (£35,000). A JCB is a tactically important device which pushes aside barricades such as burning cars. The force has only one at present.
9. 24 long wheel-based Land Rovers (armoured personnel carriers) (£840,000). The force has none at present.
10. 8 high vision vehicles for command purposes (£560,000).

Communications

11. 750 radios and batteries (£750,000). Not enough were available for Tottenham.

12. Radios for NATO helmets (for sergeants and above) (£163,000).

Lighting etc.

13. High intensity lighting (£5000); at present there is only enough for one site of disorder.

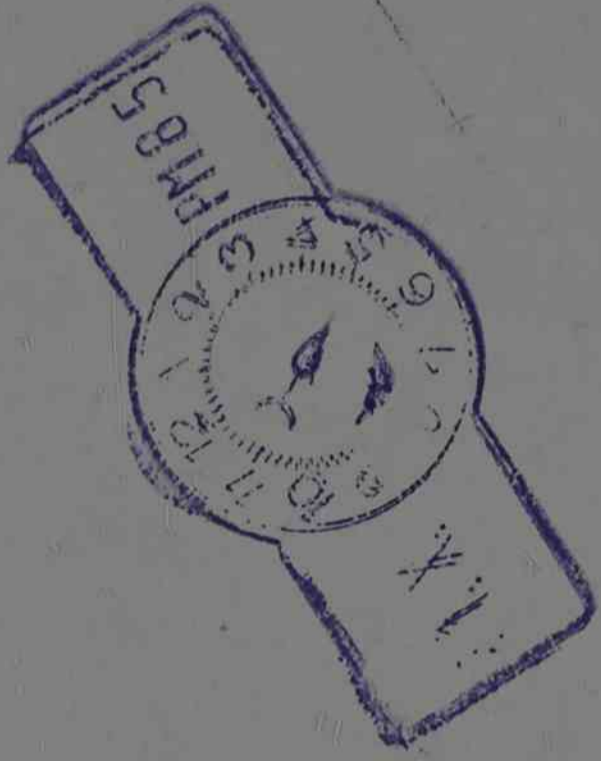
14. Dragon lights (£5,000) - like a very powerful torch, useful for dazzling rioters and for arrests.

15. Photographic equipment (£14,000). This is excellent for gathering evidence, and resulted in numerous convictions after the 1981 Brixton riots. The force's entire supply was at the Tottenham riot; more is needed.

Firearms

16. 16 night sights (£24,000). The force's existing ones are 12 years old.

17. 10,000 baton rounds (£50,000). The force has 10,000 in store at an RAOC depot in the Midlands, for use by all forces. They need to bring them to London for additional training.



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Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

The Rt Hon Douglas Hurd MP  
Secretary of State  
Home Office  
50 Queen Anne's Gate  
London  
SW1H 9AT

*Seen by the Prime  
Minister 30/10.*

29 October 1985

*Dear Secretary of State,*

**METROPOLITAN POLICE CASH LIMIT**

Thank you for your letters of 11 and 21 October.

I share your concern of course about the recent disturbances and the need for the police to be able to respond to them firmly. I also accept that this will inevitably put additional pressure on police budgets. That is why in my letter of 14 October I proposed a means of channelling additional financial assistance to police authorities in whose areas riots have occurred.

I know that the recent disturbances have borne particularly hard on the Metropolitan Police, and I accept that a further increase in the cash limit will be unavoidable, though I could not agree to open-ended increases as you propose. Whatever we agree will have to be quantified and announced in due course if the cash limit is to retain any credibility. Our officials have discussed the difficulties in assessing accurately what the Met are likely to spend; but I do not think that we can reach agreement on any cash limit increase until we have agreed on the terms under which special assistance for the riots will be paid. I hope therefore that you and Kenneth Baker will soon be able to let me have your considered response to the proposals in my letter of 14 October.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for the Environment, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

*Yours sincerely*  
*John MacGregor*  
JOHN MacGREGOR

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*Approved by the Chief Secretary  
and signed in his absence*