

Prime Minister. (2)

SPIC NW
SBS.

A progress report from Hestley Booth on drugs.
I think however you would ~~be~~ be better to
discuss the international position with the Home

11 April 1986

PRIME MINISTER

Secretary of your bilateral letter this month,

DRUGS - REPORT AND ACTION NEEDED

rather than write
at this stage.

Latest Information

MEA 11/4

Although the Government campaign is making some progress, it is experiencing choppy water. There is ample evidence that cocaine is becoming more popular, though the predicted tidal wave has not yet swept over us.

Progress is demonstrated by the fact that the price paid to drug couriers to bring illicit drugs to the United Kingdom is higher than payments made to similar couriers to most parts of Western Europe. On the other hand, the trough of our performance is measured by the fact that the street price is down. The average price is £60 per gramme of heroin compared to about £80 last year. The purity of heroin is high, 40% compared, for example, to New York where it is only 6% pure. It is plentiful. Seizures in all the main substances have increased except for cannabis. Seizure statistics are contained in the attached Customs document (Flag 1).

Action Already Taken

In addition to the list of initiatives in the strategy document (Flag 2), one of the most imaginative recent

Government actions was for the Customs to install a freephone to elicit information about drug pedlars and traffickers. This is likely to be highly successful. The telephone has also been one of the principal tools of the vastly successful BBC 'Drug Watch' programme. A booklet, to be published shortly by 'Drug Watch', is attached to this minute (Flag 3). Propaganda and education, both Government and private, is increasing. The "Just Say No" campaign of the BBC is so excellent that even the Home Secretary decided to pin on one of their badges this week!

Current Needs and Priorities

1. There is a continuing and growing problem with the Customs, who see themselves paid considerably less than the police for very dangerous work of a similar kind.
2. The top priority for the Government campaign must continue to be education, but we must also arrange better international agreements. We have identified the following four areas that need urgent co-operation agreements:
 - a. Agreements mutually to disclose bank records.
 - b. New records to provide data on the international movement of significant sums of money. US legislation might be a precedent.

- c. Agreements to allow the freezing of foreign assets and bank accounts.
- d. Easier extradition.

These would be good material for the UK Presidency of the EEC.

3. The Police and Criminal Evidence Act allow the detention of suspects for a maximum of 96 hours. Couriers who have swallowed drugs can hold out longer than this period. We must explore whether there is a case for amending this Act.

4. Liaison between Britain and other countries is admitted by many officers to be poor.

5. We may miss an important opportunity to engage sport in our drugs campaign. DoE sport have not yet been included in our Ministerial Committee, even though David Teasdale says we have a significant problem with drugs in sport, and we have undertaken some initiatives in sport already that have not been linked with our main effort.

International

Newcomers in the world drug trade are Japan and parts of Africa. The Chinese Triads are increasing their activity in Western Europe. The South American cocaine threat continues.

Neville Nagler

Conclusion

We recommend that you write to the Home Secretary:

- proposing an international initiative for mutual assistance to tackle drug abuse coinciding with your Presidency of the EEC;
- urging that sport be included in the Government campaign against drugs.

Following the receipt of the 'Drug Watch' book, it would also be helpful if you were able to write to the BBC saying you support what they are doing.



HARTLEY BOOTH