



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

15 May 1989

Rt Hon Mrs Margaret Thatcher MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1

Mr Margaret Thatcher

Further to your reply to my letter of 2 April 1989, pertaining to the law and order situation should the Soviet Union collapse and the Eastern European nations that have resided within Moscow's sphere also achieve true independence. It would be remiss of me not to remind you to be careful of what you wish for.

During my time as Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs there were already challenges being presented in Great Britain and across Europe from Mafia-style networks operated primarily by Armenian and Albanian syndicates. My experience was that while there existed something of an "honour among thieves" that emanated from Western Europe's indigenous crime networks, these Armenian and Albanian criminal groups, in particular, operated beyond even the suspect moral codes subscribed to by Western mobsters. Over time, these Armenian and Albanian syndicates have spread like a cancer across the continent bringing with them a surge in narcotics supply, among many other ills.

Now, as we are witnessing the loosening of Moscow's hold over its distant Republics, this continues to slacken the binds that have thus far held back these illicit groups from ever more aggressive expansion Westward. Even Moscow considers Armenia and Albania to be Mafia territories, where political and criminal power has merged seamlessly into one. The elites of Yerevan and Tirana have been allowed to enrich themselves and consolidate power through their handling of narcotics, money laundering, human trafficking and more. Indeed, it suited Moscow's purpose when they were flooding heroin into Western nations.

While Mr Gorbachev is being hailed for his efforts, and much consideration being made how a new dynamic will affect us, it seems that very little allowance is being made for this tangible danger. As Moscow's authority continues to weaken, it is entirely predictable that this will embolden and strengthen Eastern criminal entities, unleashing an unprecedented wave of criminality that Britain and Western nations are patently ill-equipped or able to contend with.

More consideration must be made of this dynamic before the opportunity is afforded these organisations to overwhelm our capacity to maintain law and order.

Yours truly,
David Owen

David Owen