



Children's Charities' Coalition for Internet Safety

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10th February, 2005

I hope this letter finds you well.

I have recently read your reply to a question from Mr Djanogly MP in which you say

".....(NHTCU) will form part of SOCA. In relation to the paedophile unit, we are reviewing aspects of work that is currently undertaken by some organisations to see how and whether they would fit into the new structure. I cannot be more definite at the moment, but we are considering a number of issues in terms of paedophile activity and wildlife crime, animal extremists and other areas. We are considering the nature of those crimes, how they fit into the concept of serious and organised crime and which organisation is best directed to carry out the work of tackling them, but we have not ruled any of them in or out."

I think paedophile activity and crimes against or about animals are very different indeed, both in terms of their scale and scope, as well as their nature. Moreover a substantial part of the existing National Hi-Tech Crime Unit is dedicated to addressing paedophile crime and this is for the very good reason that such a lot of it revolves around the online world. If the NHTCU is to go into SOCA it would seem logical that this large chunk of its work goes with it.

Recent international police operations have shown there are substantial and increasing crossovers between organized criminal gangs and the gangs who work in the field of online child pornography and online child sex abuse. They know there are large sums of money to be made from selling child pornography. They do not draw neat lines between trafficking children for sexual slavery and photographing them being sexually abused. Similarly there are overlaps between this type of online crime, money laundering and crooked bankers overseas.

Good international liaison and co-operation is therefore crucial to the success of work in this area and that speaks to it being properly resourced and integrated into a national UK platform. It is impossible to imagine, for example, how the Virtual Global Task Force would ever have been developed if it had simply been an idea that emerged

within a regional or local constabulary.

The internet is making national and international boundaries irrelevant so removing responsibility for this area of work from a clear, high profile national framework, will not only make it appear as if the work is being demoted, and it will therefore lose status within the police force, I fear it will also inevitably create operational difficulties when working internationally.

Within its limited resources the Paedophile Online Investigation Unit has been a great success and in part its success is due to its location within a key national, policing resource. We are, if anything, hoping for POLIT to be expanded and for its resource base to be increased but, again, that only makes sense if it is firmly anchored within a national framework and that, in turn, in the new context ought to be SOCA,

I would, of course, be happy to discuss this further with you if you think that would help at all.

John Carr
Secretary, CHIS

Copy to: Rt Hon Charles Clarke MP

Paul Goggins MP

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