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PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

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The Leader of the Opposition was briefed this afternoon on the reasons for, and the timing of, Australian Federal Police decisions to connect, disconnect, reconnect and disconnect certain authorised telephone intercepts.

He was briefed in my office by the Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police, Mr R.A. Grey, as to the facts.

Mr Peacock was told that all decisions to discontinue telephone intercepts were made by Commissioner Grey personally and that no political or other pressure was brought to bear upon him in respect of such decisions.

Some intercepts were later reinstated at the request of Mr Justice Stewart.

The Government would, in normal circumstances, be most reluctant to disclose any details of police operations.

However, I was gravely concerned at the imputations by the Leader of the Opposition that the AFP had been influenced by political pressure in the conduct of a drug offences investigation.

No more serious charge could be made against the integrity of any police force.

Because of the damage these allegations could do to the standing and morale of the AFP if left unchallenged it was decided that Mr Peacock should be made aware of the facts and the complete lack of foundation for the imputations he has made.

In these circumstances, and with the knowledge that he now possesses, Mr Peacock should immediately withdraw any imputations against the integrity of Commissioner Grey and the AFP.