

# *The Police Foundation*

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TOWARDS A COST EFFECTIVE SERVICE TO POLICE THE 1990s

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## POLICE FOUNDATION SPEECH

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### TOWARDS A COST EFFECTIVE SERVICE TO POLICE THE 1990s

#### INTRODUCTION

I was delighted to receive the invitation from the Police Foundation to speak to you tonight; delighted because although the Foundation is a relative newcomer, it has firmly established itself as a major contributor to policing research in the U.K.; and delighted because it affords me an opportunity to raise serious issues with a well informed audience. There are two major issues I shall be tackling tonight. The first is an examination of police response to the value for money debate. I view this as necessary for it is important for all to understand the significant steps taken in recent years to acknowledge the issues and achieve value for money.

The second major topic flows from the first. For in examining value for money in a policing context, it becomes apparent that not all aspects of policing lend themselves to the numerical measurement of results but that should not cloud the fact that value for money is still being achieved. For example, there are the grey areas where the apparent absence of a particular problem is regarded as an indicator of success. There is no greyer area than organised crime. By its very nature, it shuns publicity and defies easy detection. Once established in society, it can erode the economic and moral base of that society. Continued effort and considerable investment are needed if it is to be prevented from becoming established. The question I shall be posing today is whether the existing structure of policing is adequate to respond to this challenge - and to those others we shall have to face in the early 1990s - or

whether a different structure is desirable which will be both more effective and efficient. I shall not shrink from being provocative for it is my belief that unless action is taken soon, the police service will not be able to continue to provide that high quality and all embracing service which we rightly expect of it.

## VALUE FOR MONEY DEBATE

### Policing Purpose and Values

This last decade has seen many changes in our society. I would not attempt to provide a retrospect of those changes but some of the effects on the police service have been profound. They have stimulated a general debate within the police community on our structure, style and very reason for being. It has generated a positive and dynamic feeling within the service on which we should now capitalise.

I perceive a strong need at the start of this next decade for a restatement of the purpose of policing, coupled with action, to ensure that police continue to provide the most appropriate service to the public, in a manner which meets the expectations of that public and yet befits the honourable traditions of the service. To that end, as Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, I have recently issued a statement of our purpose and shared values to act as a benchmark for the organisation and a re-affirmation of the basic principles of policing. It will take both time and commitment to action before its full impact is realised but it is a vital initial step on the road to removing uncertainty and maintaining the commitment of all to give of their best.

However fine words must be supported by deeds if they are not to be seen as empty platitudes. Part of that response must be a realistic and convincing demonstration

that we are providing a service and giving value for money across the whole range of our activities. It would be unrealistic to expect increased funding, or even the maintenance of existing levels, if the present use of resources is not seen to be giving a fair return on investment. Manpower related costs account for approximately 85% of our annual funding so it is crucial that we demonstrate value in the way in which we deploy our personnel. I shall confine my next few remarks to my own Force although I know of equally good work and similar initiatives being pursued in many other places.

#### Action on Value for Money - Operational

For several years now, our management structure has placed responsibility on local managers to set targets after consultation with the community, to monitor progress and to evaluate those results. This system has enabled us to concentrate on those matters which most trouble our customers, the public. Not all elements of policing are quantifiable; indeed to place unnecessary emphasis on numbers would be to lose the essential character of policing by consent which places a heavy dependence on friendly day to day contact with our public. In policing terms, value for money must be judged on a mix of the quantifiable and the qualitative - and the latter is absolutely vital.

There is a very British reticence when it comes to describing achievements; we seek to qualify success, undersell our efforts and be cautious with our claims. This reluctance itself creates doubts and enables detractors to indulge in that other very British pastime of knocking our own public institutions. In straightforward policing terms, we have put more uniformed officers on the street, over and above any increase in establishment; we have answered more calls, dealt with more crime and achieved a better level of output from our officers. Whereas some of the other

public sector bodies are focussing their efforts more narrowly, we have taken on more. This ranges from increased statutory responsibilities under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act through asset seizure, firearms control to multi-agency child abuse teams. All are important areas; all use manpower; yet much of that effort will not translate directly into financial terms or measurable results.

### Action on Value for Money - Support Systems

There has been a wealth of activity in developing value for money on the support side. The range includes efficiency scrutinies; extended contracting out; a review of our provisioning activities; the appointment of a procurement expert recruited from the private sector; a review of our requirements for accountancy skills; and the extension of devolved budgets. The report by the National Audit Office which was recently the subject of a meeting of the Public Accounts Committee, indicated ways in which we need to improve the management of our property. Much work has been done and is in hand to improve our performance in this area, but we are suffering from the effects of years of under-investment. I have recently agreed a new building strategy which will bring the average age of our police stations down to a proper level, though it will take a long time to remedy the effects of past financial constraints. Treasury rules have made it difficult to manage an estate with commercial efficiency, and I will admit to being quite excited at the option suggested in the National Audit Office report, of being able to enter into partnership with commercial concerns if it provides greater flexibility and better value for money.

But as we approach the last decade of the 20th century and the challenges it poses, we must be mindful of the continuous need to retain the balance between value for money and the quality of policing. Let me examine that balance with reference to a contemporary problem - serious national and international crime.

## VALUE FOR MONEY - DEALING WITH ORGANISED CRIME

Crime covers a wide spectrum of behaviour from the less serious acts of rowdyism, criminal damage and theft, which quite rightly concern the local community, through international fraud to the horrendous acts of barbarity and destruction such as Lockerbie.

The Police Service has to cope with this whole range of activity responding both to street level crime, much of which is opportunist in nature, through gradations of seriousness to the sophisticated world of national, international and organised criminality. The growth of this more serious type of crime is hidden, other than from a minority of specialist officers. Whilst not seen, it clearly poses a threat to the quality of life of individuals and the economy of a country. The public is protected by a backcloth of unawareness, oblivious of the way organised crime is becoming a feature of criminality within our society until the cure may seem more painful than the disease.

The definition of 'Organised Crime' as a type of criminal activity has been given many meanings, varying from one jurisdiction to another. In the United Kingdom it exists amongst indigenous professional criminals, not in the way usually perceived as a formally structured, hierarchical organisation with one individual controlling and running his operations, but as a loose knit web of association where individuals are taken on board for their particular skills.

The flexibility of this concept allows major criminals to band together when necessary to commit serious crime. Features of a business enterprise are recognisable with individuals specialising on the operational side (acquisition, marketing and distribution) whilst others provide the support services (finance, accounting and legal). Some

major drug deals are put together by criminals either pooling funds or accepting credit on large consignments pending their sale and such criminal enterprises are not restricted by national boundaries.

The approach of 1992 and proposed establishment of a unified internal European market may offer new incentives to the international organised criminal - but it does not mean that Customs and Excise will cease to exercise preventive control at the frontiers to deal with prohibited goods such as drugs, firearms or pornography, or that no-go areas will be established for other policing matters. The Home Secretary in a speech on 7 June in Dusseldorf said that the United Kingdom wants as much as any EC member state to see a reduction of frontier controls within the Community and he added that Britain's objective is the minimum possible checks and the removal of all non-essential controls for European Community nationals; but he reminded his audience of what Chancellor Kohl had said at his press conference with Mrs Thatcher at Frankfurt in February, which was to the effect that "... what we must do now is to find a proper balance between the opening of the frontiers on the one hand, and the compelling needs on the other hand, of fighting against crime". Some controls - as Mr Hurd has confirmed - will certainly be needed to protect the innocent against drugs smuggling and terrorism. Recent years have seen a rapid expansion in international crime, international terrorism, international drug trafficking and international fraud. It is important that the elimination of fiscal controls at frontiers, if that is to be the case, and greater freedom for trade should not also allow freer movement of drugs, instruments of terrorism and so on, between countries. What the changes mean is that law enforcement as we know it must necessarily be refined to deal with this developing concept of easier movement of goods and people. Quite naturally it has prompted great debate over the most appropriate police structure to deal with this wide range of law enforcement demands.

Recommendations have been put forward by a number of eminent commentators to change the structure of the police service in order to provide a more efficient and cost effective service as we move into the 1990s. The merging of forces into larger regional forces and the establishment of a national police force have both been suggested.

I do not intend to analyse the arguments for or against these proposals. However, before any decision is taken to change the current tripartite arrangements which presently exist between individual police forces, local authorities and the Home Office, the pros and cons of the argument must be very carefully considered.

The foundation stone of policing in this country is embedded in the consent of the community and efforts are being made by the police service to strengthen these links through consultative groups, neighbourhood watches and the Special Constabulary.

This process, reinforced by the individuality and closeness to the community of the 43 separate and independent police forces in England and Wales, must, I believe, continue so that the roots of co-operation and understanding which are already deeply established in the majority of local communities will be even further strengthened. It would be ironic, just when the first glimpses of improvement in the crime situation are beginning to appear, if we were to change the whole structure of the service at this level and perhaps undermine that very relationship which is a crucial part of the contract of co-operation between the police and public.

Although the police service of the future must look beyond our shores, the priority of policing within must be based on the needs of the local community. This being so, could the forty three police forces also realistically respond adequately and professionally to the international policing demands that will be placed upon them?

Perhaps the time has come to differentiate with greater clarity between on the one hand general crime and on the other hand, national, international and organised crime where a different policing approach is required.

### The Present National, International and Organised Crime Situation

Let us then look at the national, international and organised crime situation.

In the 1960's and 70's organised crime was mainly centred on particular criminal families and their associates who were responsible for committing a whole range of serious crime from murder to high value burglary. Our response was to establish Regional Crime Squads to deal with this type of criminal who travelled across Force boundaries.

During the early 1980's society experienced a surge in the quantity of illicit drugs which were trafficked into the country. The criminal fraternity began to treat drugs in the same way as works of art, antiques and high value motor cars - just another profitable commodity. As a result drug trafficking has become inextricably connected with other forms of profitable traditional crime.

The drugs factor, re-inforced by the increasing incidence of international fraud, has resulted in more frequent international movement of both criminals and criminal money. It has encouraged the spread of organised crime throughout the world and linked criminal groups which would probably not otherwise have come together. The lucrative market place of Europe is increasingly becoming a target for international criminal activity.

Large profits from illegal drug trafficking, international fraud and other serious crime means that the criminal has to establish systems to handle, absorb and legitimise these illicit profits. Money laundering is the life blood of organised crime. It requires the skills of lawyers, accountants and bankers to provide procedural and legislative expertise. The illicit money management schemes devised can penetrate and taint legitimate business, corporate structures and financial institutions. The perverse effect of this black economy undermines economic and political systems. Corruption is inevitable.

Experience and professional judgement indicates that organised crime is on the increase in this country. At the same time the level of sophistication of criminal groups is clearly growing. This is evidenced by their regular use of technical equipment and anti-surveillance measures; their increasing tendency to go international; and the businesslike manner in which they conduct their affairs.

The better organised it becomes and the more it spreads across national and international boundaries the more it costs in terms of manpower, technical assistance and time to cut it out. Those jurisdictions which do not have the ability to cope with this development will increasingly become attractive as a base for those criminal organisations.

Before I give you my views on the way forward, let me briefly touch upon the current structures for dealing with national, international and organised crime.

The current structures for dealing with national, international and organised crime -  
their advantages and disadvantages

Although changes have been effected by the Police Service in an effort to respond to the overall international dimension, a comprehensive national strategy is still to be devised.

I recognise the positive steps the Government has already taken through TREVI and the Council of Europe Pompidou Group to enhance co-operation between member countries to deal with major international crime. In particular they have improved communication and co-ordination against terrorism. This Government has taken the lead by promoting National Drugs Intelligence Units throughout Europe, and establishing international agreements to remove the profit element from drug trafficking and other serious crime.

However, within our own jurisdiction I do not believe there is currently sufficient co-ordination of law enforcement activities once criminality rises into the areas of national, international and organised crime. The response is fragmented.

At a local level the public has little perception of this type of criminality. It does not touch them directly and therefore it plays little, if any, part in their immediate considerations. Investigations into organised crime require long term investment and many of the smaller Forces are unable and I believe, should not be required, to sustain prolonged enquiries which may involve a substantial international - and indeed financial - element.

The Regional Crime Squad structure also cannot provide the complete answer even with the recent enhancement of Drugs Wings to investigate major drug trafficking.

They are still regionally based but, probably more importantly, regionally funded. This does not encourage a long term investment into an international investigation which might not have local implications. Is it right that most of this cost should then fall locally?

My Specialist Operations Department at Scotland Yard has historically assumed a leading role in the investigation of international matters, and is traditionally - and understandably - the conduit for most of the direct enquiries from our colleagues overseas, even though the branches involved were not specifically designated with that responsibility. The situation has evolved without a real national mandate and inevitably the result is a less than co-ordinated approach across the country, lack of overall strategy and goals, difficulty in setting priorities and evaluating results, and the absence of any one individual within the police service to give overall national direction to these valuable police resources.

Systems to process information and intelligence are crucial to combat serious organisational crime. The National Drugs Intelligence Unit (NDIU) was a big step in that direction although I believe it did not go far enough. Its formation did not recognise early enough the inextricable connection between drugs and other crime. Consequently a precise assessment of the true extent of serious organised crime in this country and the relationship between drugs and other major crime, drug traffickers and other criminal types cannot accurately be established. We do not have a central unit officially established to receive and process non-drug crime intelligence from abroad and there is, we must admit, little co-ordination between various national indices. There has been a lack of investment, a slowness in developing an overall intelligence strategy and perhaps even a lack of understanding of the intelligence concept itself.

More recently in the UK it has been recognised that the international fight against crime is increasingly dependent upon effective arrangements for mutual assistance. New extradition arrangements, assets seizure from drug trafficking, other serious crime and terrorism, and the admission of written evidence from abroad have all been addressed in recent legislation. Even so, there are many other areas identified where current legislation does not enable the UK to participate in mutual assistance to the extent detailed in the European Convention. A Mutual Assistance Bill is contemplated and it is important that Parliamentary time is made available for it.

Interpol has, and will, continue to play an indispensable role in ensuring and promoting the widest possible co-operation between police forces. However, it is not an international operational enforcement agency, but more in the nature of a clearing house for information and the channel through which international enquiries may be pursued. Although important in the collation of strategic and tactical information and intelligence, as well as the instrument for bringing together national representatives with common interests, it has been found that in day to day operational matters where speed is of the essence, personal and direct contact between nations is required. Interpol has significantly improved its communications and its charter allows for direct contact where necessary, but it may need to promote its services more effectively.

A major problem facing law enforcement officers in the UK at the moment is a lack of any clear understanding or agreement as to how law enforcement and its supporting framework will look as we progress into the 1990's.

Ideas for future policing structures

So, if that is the case, what ideas can be put forward for policing structures for the future?

At the start of this presentation I described the action currently taken to make the police service more efficient and effective. The success of that thrust is more easily discernible at a local community level although still applicable to organised and international crime.

The current policing model is very much locally based and there is a strong argument for retaining a structure which encourages local identity, accountability and consultation. The merging of forces into regions or into a national police force could undermine that basic concept and dilute the feeling of ownership which many communities have in their own police force.

Some would say that a national police force already exists within England and Wales and point to such organisations as The Association of Chief Police Officers which encourages a common agreed approach by Chief Officers, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary which is increasingly attempting to achieve standardised performance between forces, the Regional Crime Squads, the Mutual Aid Co-ordination Centre, the National Drugs Intelligence Unit, the National Identification Bureau, the Serious Fraud Office, and even the Crown Prosecution Service which can directly affect police action by the rationalising of national prosecution policy. We must also take note of the influences on national standards which come from the Audit Commission examinations and the Home Affairs select committee.

Quite clearly these are mainly supportive rather than a permanent feature of local policing over which the Chief Officer, within certain parameters, still has virtual autonomy. Nevertheless one must also add to the list the role of some of the specialist branches of the Metropolitan Police which includes the responsibilities of Special Branch relating to Irish Republican Terrorism and the Personal Protection responsibilities of that department and the Royalty and Diplomatic Protection Department. These all indicate the half-way house which already exists towards a centrally controlled national body. And I acknowledge that national co-operation, by clearly specifying primacy to one body in a designated role has been seen to work in those fields.

It is not my intention to offer detailed solutions for the future, more to open up the debate and put forward some ideas. There will probably be more questions than answers at the end but I hope it will stimulate debate. For change, if change is thought necessary, will take time. Action to formulate future national strategy should already be taking place.

I believe it is now the time to propose and to examine the establishment of a new structure to deal with policing matters which have a national dimension. It is certainly not a new idea. Most of our European colleagues benefit to varying degrees from this system and similar structures have been established in our closest common law countries of the USA, Canada and Australia with different levels of success. Problems with internal state jurisdictions prompted this overlay in some cases, but in each, it has provided a better vehicle for dealing with international and organised crime. The more acceptable parts of these systems may have value to us, recognising our own particular needs. It would of course mean that we as chief officers may have to give up some of our sovereignty so that the national agency embracing amongst others the Regional Crime Squads - and I include here the No. 9,

London Regional Crime Squad, which has traditionally and perhaps wrongly stood somewhere to the side of the Crime Squad system, - can provide a really effective operational detective unit across the whole country.

The proposal would enable the police service to retain the best of its policing system at the community level and, at the same time, develop a more accountable and therefore I believe a more effective response to that different tier of policing.

This overlay would have to encompass the following services; operations, intelligence, support and mutual assistance.

The formation of this new National operational arm will not only require Government commitment and resources but also a significant change in attitude within the enforcement agencies, and that includes mine. The nucleus of a national investigative agency already exists in a number of separate and mainly unco-ordinated parts. The amalgamation of these law enforcement bodies into the new national structure would have the responsibility for investigating the most serious of national and international crime including organised crime, terrorist related crime, drug trafficking and serious food contamination and extortion cases.

It is I suggest imperative that this body is established as the lead agency and all current overlapping responsibilities are drawn within it. In this respect we must learn from the experience of other countries. Competing enforcement agencies benefit only the criminal.

I suggest also that it is now time to implement previous recommendations for a national intelligence system which encompasses all elements of criminality. Financial disclosures and other financial information relevant to drugs, serious crime and

terrorist activities, together with the various separate national indices should be integrated. The system should also aim for complete interface with the Customs and Immigration intelligence systems.

The National Drugs Intelligence Unit is already a suitable model. However, unlike NDIU, it should have the ability both to develop and proactively seek information in a more directed and meaningful way. All law enforcement liaison officers abroad should be part of this intelligence system and report directly to it. The NDIU would in effect be embraced in a much broader criminal intelligence unit so as to provide the United Kingdom end of the inter-Nation links which are going to be necessary before long.

A computerised intelligence facility on the next stage of the Police National Computer is already being considered to link Regional Criminal Intelligence Units and the NDIU. Through this system NDIU will, I am glad to say, be able to co-ordinate drugs intelligence far more effectively. A further step embracing all criminal intelligence of a serious nature would provide a totally integrated national computerised intelligence system.

The Serious Fraud Office has shown the benefit of involving lawyers and accountants in the investigative process and like the American FBI, these professionals should be recruited directly into the national agency.

Whilst on the subject of lawyers, consideration should be given to the employment of specialist prosecutors in cases of national, international and organised crime. The more sophisticated criminals become, the greater the need to consult, at an early stage, with those prosecutors who are experienced in this area of work and understand the issues involved.

Even the judicial system may require some modification. The Australian National Crime Authority allows individuals to be called before a Judge and questioned regarding their activities. Witnesses may also be summoned to give evidence. A similar system exists in the USA and we may even have seen a move in that direction with the new Criminal Justice Act powers to demand documents and answers in fraud cases being undertaken by the Serious Fraud Office. Although useful in itself to elicit evidence in major criminal cases, it could constitute the first building blocks of the bridge between the accusatorial and inquisitorial system of law on the Continent. My own unease, which I know is shared by many others, at the adversarial game which is sometimes played in our courts is however not a subject for this lecture.

(Once legislation is passed to allow the full effect of the European Convention to operate, it is anticipated that the number of enquiries for assistance will rise considerably. It would be appropriate for the national structure to play an important part in dealing with these enquiries and recording any useful intelligence which emanates from them).

I now come on to the very important area of accountability. A national strategy to deal with national, international and organised crime has to be approved by parliament, priorities established and objectives set. There must be continual monitoring of enforcement activities and a detailed evaluation of the results achieved. (However, all this must be set against the fact that infiltration of organised criminal groups takes time, is manpower intensive and requires technical resources. The participants involved at this level of criminality certainly have the initiative regarding type and location of activity together with massive resources to back them up).

Accountability for this national body should, I believe, be through the Home Secretary to Parliament with a consultation process through a body similar to the Drugs Intelligence Steering Group in which representatives from relevant organisations, including Chief Constables and HM Customs, could help determine national priorities. The issue of accountability is complex and details will need careful attention. However the need for clear lines of accountability must be developed. European countries have faced such difficulties but overcome them to provide their own national accountable enforcement agencies.

I have pursued the argument that present policing arrangements are unsuitable both for interaction with our European colleagues and also our response to major international crime in the future. Those who are currently advocating a European investigative or intelligence organisation, whether it be for drugs, serious crime or terrorism are perhaps expecting us to run before we have shown we can walk. Each of the member states must develop their own national policing structure to enable them to fit into a European model with particular emphasis on standardisation in the fields of computing, telecommunications and harmonisation, fingerprint recognition and D.N.A. profiling, and - insofar as it is desirable to achieve it - in procedures and practice.

Until a reasonably advanced level of compatibility is achieved, a multi-national operational agency is not, I believe, a viable proposition. In the meantime we in the UK have to establish the right enforcement structure for our own national needs and one which will enable an appropriate response to the developing European situation.

## CONCLUSION

Let me conclude my talk to you by summarising in less than one minute the main thrust of my lecture and then I hope you will allow me to make a confession. I have outlined the significant steps we as a Service have taken to achieve and give value for money on the operational and support side of the organisation; I acknowledged that in practice one cannot always identify the precise manpower and other inputs that bear on a particular operation or line of work but argued, I hope convincingly, that good value for money can be judged on the basis of professional assessment - ie. qualitatively - where actual measurement is intrinsically impossible. I do not yield to the notion that if something can not be measured, then for that reason alone, it is not good value for money. I then discussed organised crime particularly in the context of the opportunities that may be offered to the international criminal from 1992 unless the Government, other law enforcement agencies and the police service take strategic decisions in the near future which will provide the right law enforcement structure for the next decade. My thesis is that the existing territorial policing structure does not need radical alteration, nor is the time right to consider a European police force, but I believe that to counter major national and international crime there should be a federal or national overlay for the collection and evaluation of crime and criminal intelligence and for the investigation of the most serious of national and international crime including organised crime, terrorist related crime, drug trafficking and serious food contamination and extortion cases.

Now for the confession. Having set out the bare bones of the case for a national type agency I really am not sure whether Parliament, Police Authorities, other agencies, or the Police Service in itself is ready yet to go towards it. My contention is that in achieving value for money through efficiency measures and

ensuring effectiveness, part of that effectiveness must be to ensure we have the right structures to deal with organised crime; but to restructure for that and the challenges that the new Europe will bring will need some considerable investment. I don't pretend it will be easy. There will be many problems with staffing, funding and accommodation, as well as issues of primacy, overlapping of interests and inter-force or inter-agency rivalries and jealousies with which to contend, and I harbour my fair share of these human frailties and doubts. In the face of these difficulties there will be those who will argue that society cannot afford it; I leave you with the question - can we afford not to do it? And I also make the plea - don't wait for crisis to force us into it, let's think it through and act now.